

Qualitative  
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Nexus VI

Irina Maslo,  
Mechthild Kiegelmann,  
& Günter L. Huber (Eds.)

**Qualitative Psychology in  
the Changing Academic  
Context**

2008



Qualitative Psychology Nexus: Vol. 6

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Irina Maslo,  
Mechthild Kiegelmann,  
& Günter L. Huber (Eds.)

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2008

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© Zentrum für Qualitative Psychologie e.V.  
(Center for Qualitative Psychology)  
c/o Günter L. Huber  
Viktor-Renner-Str. 39  
72074 Tübingen  
Germany  
Tel./Fax +49 7071 885147  
e-mail: [webmaster@aquad.de](mailto:webmaster@aquad.de)  
Web-Page: <http://www.qualitative-psychologie.de>

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# Introduction and Overview

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*Irina Maslo & Mechthild Kiegelmann*

## Introduction

The sixth volume of the Qualitative Psychology Nexus comprises documents and contributions of the sixth international meeting on qualitative psychology, organized by EARLI SIG 17 "Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Learning and Instruction". The meeting was organised by the Centre for Qualitative Psychology and the University of Latvia to deepen our joint understanding of learning and instruction in the changing academic context. It took place in Riga (Latvia), October 20-22, 2006 as the SIG 17 meeting between the biennale EARLI conferences. The workshop was held in the guest house Medzabaki, in Lilaste, about 30 km from Riga. There were 28 participants from 7 countries – Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Canada, Sweden and Latvia. The participants focused on discussing the contributions of qualitatively oriented psychologists in Europe and the changes that are taking place currently in the European academic world following the Bologna process.

This year's topic was "Qualitative approach in the changing academic context". The presenters touched upon really topical issues concerning changes in higher education following the decisions of Bologna Process, the latest ideas concerning qualitative research and how qualitative methods work in pedagogy and psychology:

- *The role of the Bologna process for the institutionalization of qualitative research methods;*
- *Teaching qualitative methods in the BA/MA system;*
- *The role of qualitative research methods in the restructuring-process;*
- *Implementation of Qualitative research in the BA/MA programmes;*
- *Potentials for interdisciplinary approaches;*
- *Purpose of qualitative methods in psychology and pedagogy;*
- *Contribution of the presenters' researches to favour the development of academic psychology and pedagogy.*

The program included presentations and work in groups on themes connected with learning and instruction that had been developed within various international contexts. The work was organized in a plenary meeting, parallel workgroups and research consulting session (refer to Annex 1).

After the opening remarks of *Mechthild Kiegelmann and Irina Maslo*, the introduction of the participants and the projects, and a presentation of a philosophical fairy tale "Once upon a time there lived three doctoral students..." (refer to Annex 2) on doctoral students' choice of research approaches written by *Karine Oganisjana* and presented by the doctoral students of the University of Latvia, the plenary meeting focused on a

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discussion concerning contributions of qualitatively oriented psychologists in Europe and the changes that are taking place currently in the European academic world following challenges of the Bologna process.

## Overview

*Irina Maslo and Liesma Ose*, as co-speakers of a research team of the host university, presented the case of educational research of doctoral students in pedagogy at the University of Latvia. Within international framework, according to the Bologna process the orientation of doctoral studies in Europe tends to reach substantial improvement of a new generation of competent researchers. The authors assume that the purposefulness of their research in different rapidly changing and turbulent context reinforces the needs of all stakeholders – children, families, professionals and the policy audiences. It is evident that pedagogical research is complex in nature and none of the existing methodological approaches can be sufficient to discover its complexity. The speakers emphasized the need to develop the collaboration of researchers in order to confront the existing complex phenomena and see them in unity thus providing a solution for the common phenomena and creating new theories that could be used both in the doctoral studies and in the international research. Independent and responsible researchers, original in terms of viewpoints and opinions, mode of life, capable of long learning and competent action in diverse situations are of the greatest importance for the development of human beings, institutions, society and mankind; researchers who are able to use more than two languages to form diverse collaborative networks for the creation of new knowledge.

The presenters discussed the opportunities of doctoral students' collaboration both in doctoral studies and in an international context in order to discuss the complexity of the research goal, research questions and to reveal the necessity of the use of mixed methods. It has been illustrated by using examples of internationally consulted doctoral research of learning and reflection, the qualitative evaluative research implementing qualitative-quantitative data analysis and interpretation, one-way t-test and regression curve for qualitative quantitative data processing, which resulted in the modelling of the constringe system of the organization of socio-cultural learning and evaluation.

The speakers believed that the international labour-consuming process of the use of mixed methods and qualitative and quantitative data analysis is aimed at the improvement of data reliability and validity and in the long term it is the best way to serve the complex needs of stakeholders – children, families, professionals and the policy audiences.

*Pascal Dey and Dörte Resch* initiated a discussion probing the opportunity of qualitative research as 'Disturbing Practice'. Their presentation addressed the Bologna Reform as a process of educational restructuring in order to speculate on the relationship between the mentalities/logics

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proclaimed by educational policy documents and the space qualitative research does or can inhabit therein.

The presentation culminated in the proclamation of the potential (though as yet not merited) tenets of qualitative research in prospective BA, MA and PhD programs from doctoral students' viewpoint in order to pinpoint the obstacles and hardships related with qualitative research.

Positing that it had become mandatory for scholars to treat knowledge as a commodity that can be sold either at the tertiary education market or through consultancy services, they get to use these insights to exemplify how the performativity imperative in turn makes it increasingly difficult for qualitative researchers to render visible value of their work and, by implication, to legitimate their existence. In the last part of the presentation the authors probed the unique 'promise' of qualitative research in the context of prospective BA, MA and PhD education.

Though they restrained from promoting qualitative research as an antidote to mainstream research, nevertheless they suggested that the heritage of qualitative research has much on offer when it comes to the non-economic justification of research. In particular, they concluded that qualitative research defies a consumerist attitude towards knowledge since it notably stresses that social life is more complex, paradoxical and undeterminable than assumed by normal science) and further muse on the political implications of quality research so as to proclaim that qualitative research can be useful for unsettling the methodological conservatism of prevailing research. In full awareness of the utopian connotation of their own plea, the presenters established qualitative research as an ethical practice which nurtures sensitivity for difference and changes.

*Samuel Gento, Antonio Medina and Concepción Domínguez* presented an Interuniversity joint Master Degree curriculum on educational treatment of diversity directed to educators and professionals working or who will work in education with people having some kind of diverse special needs derived from their own personal necessities, from their own individual situation in a particular circumstance, or from a specific deprived context. The program was developed on the basis of the qualitative analysis of the Bologna documentation which was stressed in this presentation.

The Course was imparted by some Universities whose, previous institutional agreement, had decided to offer this interuniversity Master with the commitment and intervention of all of them. This way, different participants in various countries will follow the same Course and those who will succeed in the administrative and academic requirements will receive the academic accreditation offered by all the participant Universities.

The presenters explained the aim, objectives and competencies to be acquired in interuniversity programme according to the recommendation of the European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, who issued the Communiqué on "The European Higher Education Area achieving the Goals" after their meeting in Bergen, in 2005 May 19-20 and the European University

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Association (EUA), on a report on “*Developing Joint Masters programmes for Europe* (Results of the EUA Joint Masters Project, March 2002 - January 2004).

*Tiberio Feliz Murias and Mari Carmen Ricoy Lorenzo* stressed that practical training in the professional contexts and a competence approach for implementation of the Bologna process in the European Space of Higher Education is the main challenge that the European University has to face in the coming years.

The Bologna process supposes deep changes both in the structure of the degrees, and in the teaching and learning methodology. Due to the historical development of each country, the real, European space of University Education is nowadays very diverse in the structure and nature of the degrees. At the same time, the university teaching has developed different approaches from the most transmitting ones to the most research-based ones. In the basis, the competency definitions have the main role. The competency approach guides the content and structure of the degrees; on the other hand, the training of competencies requires a specific kind of learning and teaching. One key of learning when based on a competency approach is the practical training in professional contexts. Ducci defined the labour competences as the social construction of significant, useful learning for the productive performing in a real situation of work that one obtains, not only through instruction, but also - and in great measure - by means of learning by experience in concrete situations of work. This construction process is very difficult if it is limited to the academic contexts, as schools, training centres, and universities. The experience in definite work situations is only possible in professional contexts.

In fact, the presenters focused on the possibilities of the qualitative approach to define the competencies. Taking into account the Bologna process, it is necessary to review the main implications on practical training in professional contexts, and the reasons why we support the most appropriate strategies to implement this kind of training – and mainly the construction process of the knowledge, the reflection on the action, and the evaluation mechanisms – are the qualitative ones.

## **Discussions in the Interest Workgroups**

In four workgroups, chaired by *Mechthild Kiegelmann and Irina Maslo*, potentials for interdisciplinary approaches, purpose of qualitative methods in psychology and pedagogy, the role of qualitative research methods in the restructuring-process, and the research in the development of academic psychology and pedagogy were discussed in accordance with the proposal of EARLI 2007 12th Biennial Conference for Research on learning and instruction „Developing Potentials for Learning”.

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The discussions in Workgroup 1 focused on potentials of interdisciplinary approaches and the purpose of qualitative research methods in psychology and pedagogy.

*Heidi Flavian* emphasized the potentials for interdisciplinary approaches and the purpose of qualitative methods for the research of Role of Teachers of different school-subjects - or - What Do Teachers Really Need to Teach? The main essence of this presentation was to analyse in detail the goal every educator should follow while developing new curricula. The world we live in is a dynamic place that changes constantly through all domains of life. Different cultures no longer live as separate and isolated ones, but integrate through a variety of communication channels. Among all the changes around us, the teachers' role has always been the same: "to better prepare children to life". Nowadays, when it is easy to get information through a variety of options, the focus of the teachers should mainly lay on understanding and using the knowledge, rather than providing it.

Guiding teachers throughout her work made the author conclude that one of the reasons they have difficulties in implementing the above approaches is their lack in understanding their role as educators. Apparently, some teachers do not always understand how to practice the idea of teaching how to think, and they approach it with stress and confusion. Moreover, some of the teachers admitted that focusing on thinking processes seemed to be less popular from a professional point of view. From the above reactions and others like those the researcher realized that teachers should learn more about the importance of thinking processes and how they use them, before they teach the subject to their students.

The presentation offers an approach that helps the teachers become more reflective about their way of teaching by emphasizing understanding of thinking processes both among their students and themselves.

*Cristina Sánchez Romero* explained the purpose to use qualitative research methods such as analysis of interviews and focus groups discussions in the context of studying learning strategies in primary school observing students' foreign origin.

The methodology used to study the learning strategies in primary school observing students' foreign origin is qualitative-quantitative. In the context of workshop the author gave an analysis only of the instruments of qualitative data collection used in her investigation: an interview and a focus group. The presenter had used these instruments to explore the opinion of different persons of Educational Community: teachers, inspectors, directors of school, assistant teachers, etc.

The goal of the study was to find answers to the situation of intercultural diversity in the educative classrooms of the educative centres of the community with respect to the increase of matriculation of students of foreign origin and the implementation of education strategies to improve these students' learning process in primary school.

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*Rita Birzina* explained the possibility of interdisciplinary approach to exploring the learning situation of ICT of adult students with different professional background. The main pedagogical question was – how to support the ICT learning for adults. The author’s research was related to the research question – to evaluate the adult educator’s role in the creation of the learning environment as well as to evaluate adult students’ readiness to self-directed learning in the acquisition of personal computer competences. The author used quantitative and qualitative research instruments to identify the computer skills of adults, accessibility to the computers, appropriate instruction and learning methods, and attitude using the computers in their daily work. Indicators for finding the connection between (a) adult student’s competences, (b) adult educator’s teaching methods and (c) learning environment were determined; on the basis of this research description of four different types of computer users from adult students’ point of view to effective teaching and learning were elaborated. To facilitate the process of coding and to analyse the data, AQUAD 6 software was used.

*Andra Fernate* actualized the potential of transdisciplinary approach in the study of learning processes. Based on new progressive educational ideas and reinforced by insights from constructivism and system-theories as well as neurophysiology, a didactical intervention model emerged which transfers large parts of the learning situation to the responsibility of the learner. Mathematics is in the tradition of transdisciplinarity. The concept of transdisciplinarity fills a three-dimensional space.

Transdisciplinarity proves one of the vectors of a multidimensional transformation of science. Knowledge of transdisciplinary research methods, including both natural and social science methodology as well as multiple complex systems perspectives that encompass both the parts and the whole in dynamic interactions were revealed in the study. It means paying more attention to cumulativity. The globalization process highlights the importance of “multi-literacy”. Literacy is an active phenomenon, deeply linked to personal and cultural identity. Its power lies in an individual’s capacity to put competencies to work. The concept of physical literacy is defined as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, understanding and knowledge to maintain physical activity at an individually appropriate level, throughout the life.

On the basis of theoretically argued and empirically (the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods) approved facts of physical literacy, facilitating athletes’ development, developing the basic structure of athletes’ integrative work capacity, the author has developed a model that creates a humanistically oriented, theoretically based transdisciplinary approach to the learning - training process which would facilitate the possibilities for orienteers to improve their sport proficiency. To facilitate the process of data coding and analysis AQUAD 6 software was used.

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The contributions of Workgroup 2 stressed the role of qualitative research methods in the restructuring-process of higher education.

*Tiberio Feliz Murias and Mari Carmen Ricoy Lorenzo* gave an introduction in the research to support the Bologna Process. The Spanish universities have internal institutes oriented to the development of continuous training of teachers. These institutes – called usually *Institutes of Educational Sciences* (Spanish: *Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación, ICE*) – have developed several kinds of training strategies but they generally offer short courses to improve primary and secondary teachers' knowledge (for instance, 30 hours distributed in 10 sessions) and longer courses to provide the specialization of teachers in specific areas (for instance, foreign languages, or information and communication technologies). As the public institutions have developed progressively their own institutions to meet the needs to focus on continuous training of the teachers, there is less and less demand for ICEs. In a parallel process, evaluation processes of universities and the evolution of technological means for teaching caused the apparition of new training needs for their own professors. Consequently, a few years ago, such kind of institutes began focusing on these internal needs of training and they have developed specific training actions oriented to their own professors.

An important transformation of technological support in the university context based on computers and the Internet caused a new orientation which was one of the main reasons to develop the professors' skills, but we have another one at this moment: the Bologna Process. The experience of the transformational processes of the educational system reveals that indirect actions, starting from the persons-in-charge, the staff, or the norms are easily questioned by the workers and are rarely efficient in the development. At this general perception, we have to add another consideration about the specific profile of the university professors. We do not accept easily to be questioned in our teaching and we think that our teaching is ever the best or, at least, the best possible one. The resistance to change is generally a problem to develop the workers but it is really a hindrance in the university context. The professors are experts; they have to be experts both in their sciences and in teaching. Or the teaching is considered implicitly in the scientific knowledge, or it is a secondary question. The main question is the scientific knowledge. Starting from this perspective, it is very difficult to accept that the professors have to learn to teach or, at least, they could improve it.

The presenters emphasize a new approach to develop the ICE intervention (*Alicante University*). This approach has to promote the development of training nets, involving teachers in teams researching their own teaching. The ICE supported the nets with economic and human resources, and training according to their demands. Similar to cooking, we could say that they offered a training *à la carte*. This change of general orientation was continued when the Bologna Process originated. Three years ago, the ICE of the Alicante University focused its official announcement of training on the Bologna Process.

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Therefore, the nets had to address the questions and problems of this process. The speakers demonstrated the possibilities of a qualitative approach to define competencies.

In order to go into detail of the implementation of the Bologna process, it is necessary to review the main implications on practical training in professional contexts, and the reasons why we support the most appropriate strategies to implement this kind of training. The construction process of knowledge, reflection on the action, and evaluation mechanisms are mainly the qualitative ones.

*Andreas Witzel* introduced an empirically founded concept for building and organising an archive for qualitative data interviews. These considerations were based on the results of a study which explored the feasibility of a service infrastructure for qualitative research and which examined the demands of the scientific community regarding technical and organisational arrangements securing a trouble-free secondary-use or data dissemination.

Conclusions from the just finished study point in the direction that on the one hand an archive has to make an effort to preserve the threatened data material and to develop the concepts and guidelines for preparation and documentation of this data. On the other hand, an archive also has to deal with the reasons for the still not widely accomplished re-usage of qualitative data in Germany. Thus, it seems necessary to accompany the process of building an archive, with exemplary scientific projects and on that basis, with the provision of information to the scientific community about the potential of re-using qualitative data and about the solutions for the connected methodological challenges.

Using experiences from the British institution ESDS Qualidata in Essex and in close collaboration with the German Social Science Infrastructure Services (GESIS) and especially with Reiner Mauer, a member of its local centre in Cologne – the Central Archive for Empirical Social Research (ZA) – he has developed an innovative concept in order to ensure reliable and permanent services regarding data collection, consultation, training.

*Christine Moritz* introduced the research project „Dialogical Processes in Music Teaching (Grounded Theory)“, which is an approach to a subject in teaching music (playing the piano). The focus of the presentation laid on the unavoidable complexity of social reality and how it could be mastered in qualitative methodology. How can researchers reduce the amount of data in qualitative research? And how do we establish giving some aspects an importance or significance during the development of theory? The research project focuses on the exposure of special aspects of relationship between educationalists and their pupils in the educational process. Although the thought, that relation in educational science is important at all seems to be ordinary, the explication of particular items remains unclear.

Due to the complexity of the research question an exploratory qualitative design, grounded theory, was chosen.

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It was possible to determine a category system, which describes the process of communication in the sense of the research questions. Part of the qualitative analysis was the formation of meta-categories: the first meta-category described the kind of relation between communication partners in five degrees; the focus on “dissens” (“The Other”), initialised by teacher or educator (deliberate or not), became important. The second meta-category referred to the activity which seemed to be necessary for the individuals. “Cognitive components”, “communicative action”, some kind of “physiological activities” and beneath that, more inner activity called “Resonances” was going to be coded. These “resonances” – observed by the teachers and educators - became more and more important in the study, thus four sub-categories were defined: “positive and negative emotions”, “mental resonances”, “physiological or vegetative reactions” and “genuine musicological perceptions”. The exposure of resonances by one participant of the communication process was connected with high efficiency. The third meta-category was defined for coding the “degree of consciousness”: important events often appeared in the background of consciousness that influenced the effect of instructions.

The expectation is that “dialogical communication” depends on the complexity and intensity of communication. Both of them require high competence in an area, which is not included in specialized knowledge about music.

In Workgroup 3 contributions of the presenters’ research for the development of academic psychology and pedagogy were discussed.

*Tamara Pigozne* explained her qualitative approach to research of integration as value orientation of youth in Rezekne (region of Latgale, Latvia) in multicultural media environment as a learning place. Lately the processes of integration in Latvia have been treated from political, social and economical aspect. Nowadays the term of integration has become interdisciplinary. In her research integration was analyzed as a pedagogical category from the subject and object perspective, where the understanding of integration as a process was particularly stressed. On the one hand integration is an objective reality and a condition for development, but on the other hand it is an ability, which requires acting. Thus integration is the process of socialization of a personality in dialogical communication of cultures, whereby the term of culture is reduced not as usual exclusively to national cultures and languages, but culture is understood as the culture of learning to collaborate and to live together in multi-cultural media-supported communication. This understanding of learning in the systemic construed aspect focuses on subjectivity of integration as a value orientation, which is designed by youth themselves in experiences of the participation at processes of integration (in macro, mezo and micro level).

According to the researcher’s opinion in this research project participation was used as an indicator of integration as value orientation for

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research purposes. The purpose of the study was to determine the opportunities of the school (mezo level) in fostering the participation of the youth in the research, providing the youth had already been involved in multicultural media environment investigation. The research questions were as follows: whether there existed differences in integration as value orientation between Latvian and Russian youth and whether there was a coherence between participation experiences of the youth at integration as learning processes on the micro (class), mezo (school) and macro (the region of Latgale) level and integration as value orientation and, finally, how the value orientations changed, what social pedagogical tools could support the understanding of integration as an opportunity in the participating research of a regional multicultural media in a secondary school.

The conducted qualitative research analyzed integration as value orientation using a questionnaire and interview statements of participation, cooperation and joint decision as structure components of the participation at processes of integration on micro, mezo and macro level. For the analysis thereby the multicultural media environment was used as a learning place of the youth. To facilitate the process of coding and data analysis, AQUAD 6 software was used. The author presented the methodical procedure and the results of the qualitative research to the scientific discussion.

*Annette Ullrich* stressed parents' perspectives on fostering self-determinations skills in their children with disabilities. The author examined the roles parents play in helping their children acquire SD skills and provided an insight into what parents do to promote SD skills in their children with disabilities. The research methodology was qualitative, using a case study design ethnographic interview techniques. To identify ten participants' purposeful sampling procedures in two of the six exemplar sites of the SDSP project in New York and Colorado were used. Interviews were guided by a semi-structured questionnaire with open-ended questions. They were audio-taped, transcribed and followed up by phone calls if necessary. The author explained the problems encountered during the research process had been related to the fact that some participants could not be interviewed face to face but over the phone. To facilitate the process of coding and analysing the data, AQUAD 6 software was used. The analysis also incorporated observational data. Six themes were found to be relevant, (a) different ways of communication, (b) why SD skills are important, (c) how SD skills can be fostered, (d) choices and decisions, (e) balance between dependence and independence, and (f) vision and dreams.

The relationship to the general topic is that qualitative approaches play an important role in the changing academic context but also in the paradigm shift from segregation and welfare to inclusion and self-determination currently happening in the field of disability.

*Antonio Medina Rivilla, María C. Dominguez Garrido and Samuel Gento Palacios* emphasized the design of didactic means and cognitive development for intercultural education. The research project aims to face an

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evaluative model to stress the quality of the didactic means designed and its influence in intercultural education in the area of Castilla la Mancha.

The presenters' objective was to develop an evaluation process of the means used and the impacts of intercultural activities. This evaluation model was composed by different tests, criterion and keys to reinforce the educative process.

The methodological contribution stimulated the quality, the means design and the TIC incorporation: video, internet, weblog, and mobile telecommunication. And the methodological contribution was the preparation of the documents and the development of students' skills from the environment of the city of Mora.

The methodology that they presented combined: the quality analysis of the means; argument groups between teachers, professors, families and experts outsourced; personal interviews; development of the new models to teach through the net and in interaction with other methods.

*Inge Herfort* and *Andreas Weiss* contributed to the improvement of global cultural competencies of engineering students at the university level. The subjects of the study were engineering students at the Vienna University of Technology (Austria). The researchers examined cultural differences, critical success factors and intercultural interaction in international business cooperations. Seven engineering students were conducting and analysing qualitative interviews with international entrepreneurs and managers of Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Sweden to learn about qualitative research methods during a research seminar. The model of global cultural competencies applied for analysing the learning effect of carrying out of this research includes cultural self-awareness; cultural consciousness; leading multicultural teams; negotiating across cultures, and gaining a global perspective. This study was carried out implementing qualitative interviews.

This study discusses the teaching and the use of qualitative research methods in several engineering curricula at the Vienna University of Technology. During the workshop the method of analysis, as well as the results were presented.

Workgroup 4 focused on research consulting. Doctoral students reported about the results of their research work and were consulted by experts from Germany Professor Dr. Mechthild Kiegelmann and Professor Dr. Andreas Witzel:

- *Anna Tapola*: "Science education and ideology";
  - *Ineta Luka*: "Development of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) competence in the studies of a higher educational establishment";
  - *Daiga Kalnina*: "Development of pupils' inquiry skill in science teaching-learning process";
  - *Karine Oganisjana*: "Development of students' enterprise capability in the study process";
  - *Ineta Robina*: "Integration of elderly people in social house";
-

- *Svetlana Surikova*: “Organization of microgroups’ activity for promoting pupils’ social competence”;
- *Linda Daniela*: “Teenagers’ classroom discipline as an expression of their positive attitudes to study process”.

Four doctoral students defended their Thesis in the period of working at this edition. *Svetlana Surikova*, *Ineta Luka*, *Andra Fernate*, and *Rita Birzina* defended their PhD Thesis in 2007-2008. All of them have been awarded Dr.paed. The study research by *Karine Oganisjana* was discussed with professors and doctoral students in a methodological tutorial. The research papers by *Svetlana Surikova*, *Ineta Luka*, *Andra Fernate*, *Rita Birzina* and *Karine Oganisjana* are included as independent papers in this Book.

## Conclusion and Future Perspectives

As a special and unique event, the meeting in Riga was held in co-operation with the Special Interest Group of the European Research. The issue of potentials for interdisciplinary approaches was the central theme of the symposium on conceptualising learning in multicultural communities of EARLI 2007 12th Biennial Conference for Research on Learning and Instruction „Developing Potentials for Learning” held in Budapest, Hungary from August 28 to September 1. It corresponds with the statement of the symposium “conceptualisation of learning in multicultural contexts and response to the challenge of understanding learning in multicultural environments will be the main topic of discussion in the next years. The implications of successful schooling of young people from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds are profound for their own well-being and socio-economic development of societies. The symposium consolidates the practice and promotes successful development of learning potentials in multicultural situations; there is a need for systematic research focusing both on experiences of local level and on comparative perspectives across communities and countries. This research certainly needs far more investment. The research reported in symposium shared a socio-cultural focus, i.e., the emphasis was on investigating experiences, listening to the voices of learners, teachers and parents ... Most educational effectiveness research have explored the size, consistency and correlation of school or teacher effectiveness in primary or secondary schools. The concept "experiences" is broad ...and on how educators can build on these experiences to develop school practices.”<sup>1</sup> That promotes access to social and cultural learning and equity in multicultural education.

Based on empirical findings the authors of NEXUS 6 elaborated perspectives of their theoretical research, stressed potentials for

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<sup>1</sup> from *Abstracts of Symposium to „Conceptualising learning in multicultural communities”*. EARLI 2007 12th Biennial Conference for Research on Learning and Instruction „Developing Potentials for Learning”, held in Budapest, Hungary from August 28- September 1. p.8. <http://www.earli.org/resources/Abstracts%20Budapest%202007.pdf>

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interdisciplinary approaches, defined purposes of qualitative methods in qualitative psychology and quantitative quasi-experimental oriented pedagogy using mixed methods (an example of the case of the University of Latvia), discussed the role of qualitative research methods in the restructuring-process of higher education, and contributed with their research to the development of academic psychology and pedagogy (which are the processes underlying learning in multicultural communities: interaction between learning and identity construction; social representations, foundation of knowledge). The implications of these conceptualisations for the advance of research and educational practices were marked during the meeting in Riga and they have to be further discussed.

The CQP publishes a book containing the presentations. Because all the authors in this book use English as a second or foreign language, the manuscript has been proofread by a native speaker of English. This peer-reviewed document is available from: Verlag Ingeborg Huber (Viktor-Renner-Str. 39, D-72074 Tübingen, E-mail: ingeborg.huber@t-online.de).

### Acknowledgements

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## **Part One: Concerning Qualitative Research in Changing Academic Context**

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### **From Quasi-Experimental to Qualitative Approach: Use of Mixed Methods in the International Collaboration of Researchers**

*Irina Maslo & Günter L. Huber*

#### **Abstract**

According to Bologna process within international framework a stress is laid upon doctoral studies in Europe as it is important to educate new generation of competent researchers. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the opportunities of doctoral students' collaboration in the doctoral studies based on four examples of international consulted doctoral research and in an international context, reveal the complexity of the purpose and the research questions and show the need for the use of mixed methods. The authors believe that implementation of mixed methods and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data in an international labour-consuming process improves the data validity and it is the best way to serve the complex needs of stakeholders – children, families, professionals and the policy audiences.

#### **Introduction**

Within international framework, according to Bologna process orientation of doctoral studies in Europe tends to reach substantial improvement of a new generation of competent researchers. It is assumed that the purposefulness of their research in different rapidly changing and turbulent context reinforces the needs of all stakeholders – children, families, professionals and the policy audiences. It is evident that pedagogical research is complex in nature and none of the existing methodological approaches can be sufficient to discover its complexity (Morse, 2003). Both in doctoral studies and internationally we need to develop collaboration of researchers who are comfortable at implementing more than a single technique. Independent and responsible researchers, original in terms of viewpoints and opinions, mode of life, capable of long learning and competent pedagogical research in diverse situations are of the greatest importance for the development of human beings, institutions, society and mankind; those who are able to use more than two languages to form diverse collaborative networks of researchers for the creation of new pedagogical knowledge.

The purpose of this paper is, based on an example of international consultancy in the research of the University of Latvia to discuss the opportunities of doctoral students' collaboration both in doctoral studies of

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pedagogy and in an international context in order to promote the discussion of the research goal, research questions and the necessity of implementation of mixed methods to find solutions for topical pedagogical issues.

### **Doctoral Studies in Pedagogy at the University of Latvia in the Context of Bologna Process Orientation**

Education, its goal and means has always been influenced by historical, economic and political changes in society. The major part of the population of Latvia were educated in an education system whose goal was the development of the society, and an individual – a versatile, harmoniously developed person – was treated as a means that should promote the development of the socialist society. The generation now in its development binds their values and ideals with a democratic society where the highest value is a human individuality, his/her freedom, independence (autonomy) and responsibility as the core of a personality. The doctoral studies at the University of Latvia have to follow the changes in this context. The *goal* and *objectives* of doctoral studies in pedagogy are defined on the ground of conception that the mission of education is education of doctoral students for sound and independent scientific and academic work. They are based on the analysis of the goals and objectives of doctoral programmes in other countries, the national traditions of doctoral studies in Latvia and the investigation of the tendencies of their development.

The programme of doctoral studies was accredited in 1999. In 2006-2007, 92 doctoral students studied in the doctoral programme in pedagogy, 19 of them were full-time students (3 study years, 52 weeks a year, 40 hours a week) and 73 – part-time students (4 study years, 36 weeks, 40 hours a week).

#### ***Characteristics of the Doctoral Studies and the Programme in National Educational Context***

With the paradigm shift in education, mental development, integration, co-operation and understanding, which in practice are promoted by education, come to the foreground of civilisation.

An educated and well-brought person is knowledgeable, prepared for the changing society, capable of managing complicated situations and knows his/her place in the society:

*“The human approach of doctoral studies in pedagogy addresses a person as the main goal of the society and, thus, comprises its highest value – his/her inner world and the prerequisites of free scientific self-development. The aim of doctoral studies in pedagogy is to promote further development of scientific research, methods of research and theory of pedagogy that would provide the improvement of practice of both academic and qualified scientific staff”* (Doctoral study programme in pedagogy of the University of Latvia, 2003).

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That is why the *goal* of the doctoral studies during the last seven years has been to “offer the new scientists an opportunity to get internationally recognised (valid) doctor’s degree in a particular branch of pedagogy” (Doctoral study programme in pedagogy of the University of Latvia, 2003).

### *Objectives of the Doctoral Studies*

In the context of doctoral students’ needs and interests the objectives of doctoral studies in pedagogy are:

- to draw doctoral students’ attention to topical research directions in Latvia and Europe by organising co-operation with different kinds of research and educational institutions in pedagogy as a prerequisite of scientific activity;
- to promote doctoral students’ abilities, motivation, readiness for scientific research and investigation of practical experience in pedagogy;
- to create an environment of research spirit, corresponding to the goal of the studies.

In the context of the higher educational establishment the objectives are:

- to provide opportunities for the development of doctoral students’ to create research orientated academic activities of doctoral studies;
- to promote integration of educational and research activities of the academic staff and doctoral students.

In the context of the development of pedagogy as science the objectives are:

- to initiate academic staff and doctoral students’ activity at the methodological, theoretical and conceptualisation level;
- to promote further education of the academic staff.

In the context of the national science of pedagogy and tendencies in Europe and the world the objectives are as follows:

- to work and carry out the content of doctoral studies in pedagogy, which makes topical the holistic view on a person, nature and society, and to promote practical use of theoretical findings in pedagogical activities;
- to work out doctoral programmes and institutional and individual plans of studies in pedagogy which would ensure the acquisition of the appropriate education for scientific research at schools, higher educational establishments and institutions of adult education;
- to direct the study process so that a person as is able to develop his/her abilities within the complex social processes, promote the development of the abilities to evaluate the practical and theoretical heritage in the context of national and world-wide development and promote the development of his/her country in the future;
- to ensure the opportunity of many-sided choices in doctoral studies in pedagogy;
- to ensure the supervision of doctoral students’ independent studies.

The goal and objectives of doctoral studies in pedagogy are defined on the ground of conception that the mission of education is education of doctoral

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students for sound and independent scientific and academic work. They are based on the analysis of the goals and objectives of doctoral programmes in other countries, the national traditions of doctoral studies in Latvia and the investigation of the tendencies of their development.

### *Contents of Doctoral Studies*

The *content* of doctoral programme has been worked out to implement the idea of integration of culture, philosophy, psychology, politics, economy and pedagogy by developing the pluralism of science.

The main part of the doctoral programme (216 ECTS) comprises individual research in one of the branches of pedagogy that is chosen by the doctoral student and confirmed by the Council of Doctoral studies. It also comprises publications on the problem of the research and the process and results of the study. Alongside with the individual scientific research (172,5 ECTS), the studies include theoretical studies that are evaluated at 3 promotional examinations (General Pedagogy, one branches of pedagogy and one European Foreign Language) and practice of being a professor's assistant (43,5 ECTS). The independent research in the chosen branch of pedagogy is completed if independent theoretically and methodologically based empirical research has resulted in scientifically original and tested results, which, in their turn, are based on historical experience and scientific analysis of recent practice. The results of the research are discussed at the Council of Doctoral Studies in Pedagogy, which takes a decision about directing of the doctoral thesis to the defence at the Promotional Council in Pedagogy of the University of Latvia.

As one can see, the number of credits which is unified for whole Latvia does not correspond to the EU recommendations (compared to bachelor and master studies in which the transition to unified ECTS system of credits is finished). One of the reasons is the difference in the period of the terms and in study weeks which has to be solved in a complex way in the country. According to international agreements there is still time to do it till the year 2010.

### *Organization of Studies*

According to the yearly planning of the Council of Doctoral Studies in Pedagogy, lectures and doctoral students' seminars in the doctoral programme are organized every second week; colloquiums, scientific seminars under the guidance of professors – every month; a conference or doctoral students' symposium – minimum once a year. Tutorials with the supervisor and branch professors of the University of Latvia, other universities of Latvia and abroad are organized according to the individual plan as well.

Doctoral students practice as professor's assistants:

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- in scientific discussions about methodology;
- in the preparation of publications and the collection of publications;
- in the acquisition of innovative experience visiting lectures and doctoral students' seminars and organizing them;
- in the grant financed research and applied research;
- in organizing projects, carrying them out and managing them;
- in designing methodological materials.

Doctoral students are widely involved in the scientific research of the Department of Pedagogy and the Institute of Pedagogical Science by forming research groups under the guidance of professors where academics, the students of the bachelor and master programmes participate.

### ***The Doctoral Studies and the Programme in European Educational Context***

The content of the doctoral programme in pedagogy completely corresponds to the demands of the doctoral programmes of the University of Latvia (LU) but it is much wider in comparison with other European doctoral programmes. At European universities, doctoral programmes in pedagogy are structured in a very different way. There is a frequent tendency to specialise the programme in a particular branch of pedagogy, for example, school pedagogy. At some universities, on the contrary, a unified doctoral programme is worked out for all the humanities and the social sciences, for example, at the Universities of Tuebingen, Stockholm and Odense. The duration of doctoral programmes is not usually limited. The credit value of theoretical courses is not determined either if the student has acquired a full academic programme at a university.

Although the idea of narrower specialisation of doctoral studies, including the doctoral programme in pedagogy, was discussed at the LU Council of Doctoral Studies, these studies should remain wide enough and ensure integration of several sciences. It is impossible to imagine a transition to the pedagogical orientated education without it. For example, one can give a negative evaluation to research in subject didactics if the research is not based on the pedagogical goals and understanding of learning as an individual process and individual's development in co-operation with others. Unfortunately, the professionally oriented doctoral programmes can be made only with the programmes that have already been elaborated. However, it is well known that at present European universities are carrying out new reforms that aim at considerable change in the content of the programmes. Already now it is possible to find some shortcomings in the content, for example, it is necessary to include the pedagogy of mass media in the content of studies. Therefore, due attention is paid to educate well-qualified specialists in this branch of pedagogy. During the self-evaluation of the content of studies, other shortcomings were also eliminated. The annotations of the content of the studies were expanded with new themes and theories, which doctoral students discuss at seminars, for example, the issues of intercultural and bilingual

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education which are the object of the researches and other issues. In spite of full-time work of some professors (at present it exceeds 1400 hours a year, without taking into consideration the work as an advisor and expert at all level educational establishments in the process of “renaissance” of pedagogy and during the reform of education in Latvia), the above-mentioned courses were included into the doctoral programme until 2000-2001.

The organisation of the programme is different if compared to other ways of carrying out the doctoral programme in pedagogy. Doctoral programmes of other universities (for example, of the University of Odense in Denmark) are carried out at two-to-three day seminars twice a month or one-day weekly seminars, and at two-week summer schools. Such an organisation could be possible in Latvia if there were more than 5 professors and 23 associate professors for the academic programmes of pedagogical education at all levels and part of them could work just in the doctoral programme in pedagogy. Such an organisation of the programme has significant advantages because it gives an opportunity for doctoral students from other countries to attend doctoral studies if they had the necessary financial support. At the same time, it would cause additional difficulties, connected with the family problems and their stay in Riga (in contrast to doctoral students from other countries, doctoral students of Latvia basically have families, but part-time students are working).

### ***Provision of the Research Quality in Academic Doctoral Studies***

The doctoral programme is provided by the Department of pedagogy in close co-operation with other scientific institutes and faculties of the LU (the Faculty of Pedagogy, the Faculty of Modern Languages, and the Faculty of Philology), the Latvian Academy of Sciences (LAS), and the Latvian Council of Science (LCS) and the Council of Higher Education of Latvia (CHEL).

The quality of the doctoral schooling in pedagogy and the supervision of doctoral thesis are ensured by an experienced scientific potential of 14 professors, 6 associate professors in collaboration with 10 professors of European universities (University of Frankfurt, University of Leipzig, University of Tuebingen, National Distance University in Madrid (UNED) and others).

All professors and associate professors participate in international projects and co-operation programmes with higher educational establishments in Latvia and abroad. Specialists from other higher educational establishments and professors participate regularly and permanently in the work. All professors and only some associate professors as experts of the Latvian Council of Science are supervisors of doctoral students and reviewers of doctoral thesis in their branch of pedagogy.

Links with universities of the European Union promote internationalisation of studies and the acquirement of additional PhD qualifications as well as collaboration in post-doctoral research projects

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outside Latvia. The doctor's degree in pedagogy prepares doctoral students for independent work in science and higher education.

### **Main Challenges in Doctoral Research in the Changed Academic Context**

Thanks to international collaboration with professors of the Universities of Tuebingen, Leipzig and UNED who provide successful, kind and appreciated support, the beginning of the 21st century is marked with challenges in pedagogical research – from quasi-experimental quantitative research to qualitative approach: the use of mixed methods in international collaboration of researchers. In 2001, several doctoral students and their professors in research groups decided to use a collaborative data collection and processing process. Thus since 2001 several doctoral students have worked together to elaborate a unified large scale data bank for use in their individual doctoral theses. Bachelor and master students participated in this processes as well. The main objective is to initiate a longitudinal research project of evaluation of teachers' working models in monolingual in bilingual environment - teachers' instruction styles and teaching models, students' active involvement in the study process expanding their experience of learning, collaboration, and communication.

#### ***Challenges in the Research Approach***

From 1999 till 2003 Latvian doctoral studies were mainly oriented towards independent study under the guidance of the scientific advisor and the research of doctoral studies was conducted in a way traditional to post-soviet space as quasi-experimental studies: experiment to ascertain the situation with many subjects to obtain quantitative data. This stage was followed by an experiment in two groups: a group in which the changes were being promoted and the other one – the control group. This approach was criticised for ethical and methodological considerations. Firstly, it was criticised for the fact that authors were conducting studies in order to prove their own hypothesis (there were no cases when the hypothesis was not proved) and secondly, for the validity of the methods used and the objectiveness and reliability of the results. Gradually pedagogical experiment was substituted by experimental work (without a control group) which, of course, caused certain critical attitude towards doctoral thesis in pedagogy in Latvia. During this period the first thesis implementing qualitative approach were worked out. These first two doctoral studies were conducted in mutual co-operation of doctoral students using the first arisen Erasmus mobility possibilities for the University of Latvia. Although they had been envisaged as qualitative studies they faced serious difficulties in the procedure of handing in the thesis for the defence since the scientific environment of the country was oriented towards traditional pedagogical experiments, which prevailed in the science of

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pedagogy at that time. Therefore the doctoral students were forced to use quantitative data processing methods, as well.

The first research was an explorative research (1996, 2002a) on learning situations in 1997-2002 with additional methods of content analyses (1997, 2000, 2002b, 2005), individual case studies and interviews. Data analysis using qualitative data triangulation was done. "Action research" was chosen for the study. It comprises the scope of the research technologies to examine the processes of gradual actions (or changes) and investigation processes (or comprehension processes). Process is viewed as proceedings in a spiral between actions and critical reflection, but functioning of the previous cycles improves on further cycles, taking into consideration all the received data and their interpretation (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982, 1988; Wadsworth, 1998). The main findings are: understanding of disposition of pupils and students' learning abilities in three different measurements according to the criteria of qualitative analysis (Creswell, 1994, Huber, 2005b) of the results of the exploratory research within data triangulation; exploration of the interaction structures between development of the adolescent learners' learning abilities and the choice of pedagogical tools in data interpretation of the interviews. Exploration of opportunities for improvement of learning abilities was defined. Disregarding complicated discussions this study actualized the presence of the new generation of scientists as well as the necessity for professors to learn and critically evaluate their knowledge and research work (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991a, 1991b) and learn in co-operation with doctoral students.

Due to purposefully organized international seminars and consulting sessions with professor Huber further researches were conducted implementing a mixed method design (see Figure 1).

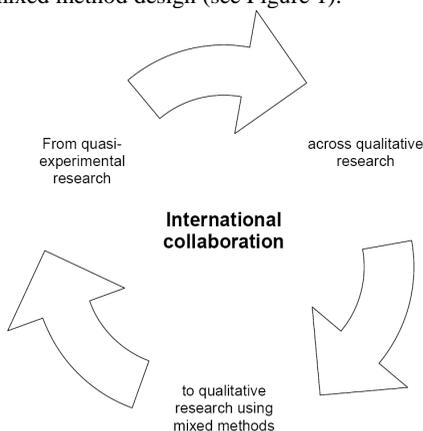


Figure 1: Changes in doctoral research of learning and instruction at the University of Latvia

For example, the next two studies were a result of this international co-operation. The example that follows illustrates the use of methods of data processing of empirical questionnaire by using T-test and dispersion analysis; research of the students' biographies with the help of the narrative interview method and the qualitative data processing with programme AQUAD Version 5 and then 6 (Huber, 1997, 2004a, 2004b). The research on the youth's critical thinking in the study process at the university was conducted from 2001 to 2003. The research was divided in two parts. One of them dealt with the research of critical thinking of the studying youth, the other explored the opportunities to advance critical thinking in the institutional context, i.e., in the study process at the university. Critical thinking of the youth was analysed in mutual meaningful correlation of three dimensions: personal, institutional and public. First of all, this research can be characterised as a student-centred research, respectively, the study process is viewed from the student's perspective (Huber, 1976).

Thus the millennium marked a rapid change from traditional pedagogical experiments to qualitative studies implementing the mixed method design (see Figure 1).

The creation of a new doctoral research system at the University is oriented to offer new opportunities for co-operation among the state, local governments, and schools in the evaluation of educational challenges on the macro-level (State and local politics), mezo-level (educational institutions – schools, educational NGOs etc.); micro-level (class, group) and individual level (student and teacher as individuals). The new orientation is needed in order to obtain new research instruments and methods, which will turn the planned research into real educational situations. This was possible only with international support (refer to Chapter 1).

### ***Main Challenges in Using Research Instruments in Collaboration of International and Doctoral Students***

The subjects of the doctoral research projects today are not only pupils, but their parents, and educators (teachers, social workers etc.) from different educational levels as participants of implementation and evaluation of challenges. The main task of the research was to offer a set of research instruments and data samples for a complete evaluation of the doctoral research projects (see Figure 2).

The following objectives are designed to reach this goal:

- to pilot the questionnaire towards a more standardized set of questions and standardize the analysis by providing detailed instructions about how it was or should be done.
  - to define criteria for analysis of educational situations and indicators for analysis in the framework of the pilot project, as well as to create observation checklists and checklists for analysis according to evaluation (Huber, 2004c).
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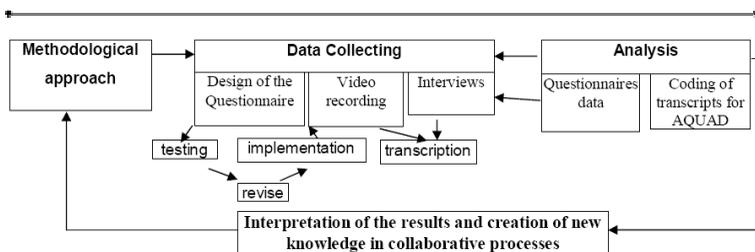


Figure 2: Structure of methodological approach to collaborative doctoral research (compare with Strods et.al. 2005)

In order to identify best praxis, we collected quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (video-transcripts, interviews or focus-group discussions) data. There were several phases involved in data obtaining and evaluation:

- Questionnaire development and field-testing (Held, 2000).
- Videotaping of teaching/learning processes in the real educational situation.
- Identification of the best praxis through analysis of the questionnaire and the transcripts of the videotapes or texts.
- Interviews or focus-group discussions with the selected teachers, students, and parents etc.
- Analysis of codified data using AQUAD 6 ( Huber, 2004a, 2004b, 2005a) program and SPSS, and interpretation of the results.

The doctoral student, who follows this procedure, according to the respondents' replies, in order to obtain realistic data, provides qualitative and quantitative data processing instruments (Held, 1997; Medina, 2005). During collaborative data processing after piloting with a group of doctoral students, we discarded or changed the formulation of some questions/hypotheses. Such procedure gives the doctoral students a possibility to make notes and supportive observations from the first moment of contact with a respondent.

The purpose of quantitative research was to identify the students' socio-demographic data, material conditions, family situation, variety of schools (Latvian, Russian, another minority, two – streams [Latvian – Russian]) and to identify different models of bilingual teaching in urban, and rural schools. After analysis of questionnaire data from selected educational situations, we selected a theoretical sample of respondents with various socio-cultural learning experiences for qualitative research. The qualitative research focused on specifics of socio-cultural experience acquisition in different learning/teaching situations.

Qualitative data (interviews, transcripts of lessons or focus-groups discussions) were obtained from all the educators included in the education process of each class, as well as from students' parents. The purpose of the qualitative data processing ( Huber, 2005b) was to identify differences among socio-cultural learning experiences of children who had the same age but

varied socio-demographic characteristics, different schools, and different socio-cultural backgrounds. Thus we could identify the significance of learning and instruction situations.

As result a new step in collaboration of doctoral students in research process was initiated first by data collecting. As a result of this collaboration there were elaborated two next doctoral theses based on the findings of the first two examples, also the third and the forth in the context of this paper. The third one shows the qualitative evaluating research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Flick, Kardoff, & Steinkef, 2000) in the context of foreign language learning reform in basic education. Theoretical propounding was determined, the program of qualitative evaluated research was created, the analysis of components in order to determine the adolescents' language competencies were carried out, learning and study organization was analyzed, the problem of the research and work hypothesis were forwarded. The first stage 2002-2004 of the qualitative evaluated research: the analysis of context of foreign language social culture learning were completed, the process of adolescents' learning, collaboration and communication experience – experience of social culture learning – construing process, was modelled, the system of social culture learning organization construing was modelled according to the forwarded hypothesis. During the second and the third stage of qualitative evaluated research the first and the second assumption of the hypothesis were tested, as well as the third assumption was forwarded and tested. Under the first measurement of the adolescents' level of social culture competence the system of the third language learning organization was perfected. Used data obtaining methods – observation, discussion, questioning, theme centred interviews and focus group discussions, analysis of documents and separate case studies, questionnaires, analysis of compositions, self-evaluation, and expert's assessment Medina, 1999; Mayring, 1996, 2000, 2002a; Huber, 2005b); and data processing methods: summarizing and grouping of data, analysis of case frequency, method of data graphical interpretation; and methods of data evaluation: qualitative-quantitative data analysis and interpretation, one-way t-test and determination of regression curve - the qualitative quantitative data processing promoted the modelling of the constructing organization systems of social culture learning:

- As a result of the qualitative evaluated research adolescents' socio-cultural competence level was tested using the qualitative-quantitative data processing and analysis methods.
- The qualitative evaluated research results, determined the demands for the third foreign language studies (Rahmencurriculum), in the construed system of tertiary language learning organization in Latvian socio-cultural contexts (Fachcurriculum aus der Lernerperspektive) and demands of possible further researches.

Based on the epistemology of Latvian science of pedagogy in the 1990ies (Špona & Maslo, I., 1991) and its development in didactic theory ( Medina, 2002, 2005), as well as on the cognitions expressed in the three thesis, which were analyzed in this report (Maslo, E., 2003; Rubene, 2003; Tiļļa, 2003), the

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fourth example of the thesis (Ose, 2006) reveals doctoral students' collaboration in the extended international collaboration space (scientific space of Germany and Spain) and the results in creation of new pedagogical knowledge as synergy (from the grec. *syn-ergo* meaning *working together*) refers to the phenomenon in which four discrete doctoral students and four professors acting together create an effect greater than that predicted by knowing only separate effects of individual researchers in one original scientific term.

- Due to the development of the pedagogical science in Latvia the schools are beginning to interpret the pedagogical process as integrated education facilitating learning (Špona & Maslo, I., 1991). Education is more and more an interplay between the teacher and the pupil, taking into account the pupil's initial socio-cultural experience. In this research teachers' pedagogical acting, viewed from a socio- pedagogical perspective, is interpreted as both a social and cultural communication process ( Medina, 2003, 2005 – the pedagogical action as social communication culture).
- Teacher's socially cultural integrative pedagogical acting in this context means the ensuring and creating of opportunities for socio-cultural communication between the teachers and the pupils which results in new socio-cultural experience for the pupils and teachers.

The comparative analysis of the teachers' pedagogical acting in the elementary school classes in Latvian and minority schools was carried out to find out the basic differences between pedagogical process in Latvian schools and minority schools in terms of integration of socio-cultural experience into the teaching process and to develop the model of socially cultural integrative pedagogical working model in different languages using contexts. Implementation of this analysis has meant a comparative research of teachers' pedagogical acting in the 3rd grades of Latvian and minority schools, focused on the integration of the pupils' socio-cultural experience in the learning process and offered the longitudinal research opportunity for further doctoral studies.

The main finding of this research is the description of examples of good practice within the comparative analysis, demonstrating teachers' pedagogical acting in order to integrate and broaden pupils' socio-cultural experiences during the learning process and giving the teachers an opportunity to perform their own action research in conformity with the criteria and indicators of socially cultural integrating pedagogical action.

According to the principle of mixed methods Tashakkori et.al, 2003) observation (video monitoring selections of examples for analysis) has been combined with elements of quantitative research - structured interviews with teachers and pupils' parents about the pupils, conditions etc. Criteria for evaluation of teacher's pedagogical acting models, that have been developed in the theoretical motivation of the doctoral thesis, are tested and modified on the basis of classroom observation, supplementing them with a system of indicators, which overcome the gap to the prescriptive level - that is how a

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socially cultural integrating teacher works with the situation in the classroom, that is how he/she realizes the pedagogical action. Theoretical background and evaluation criteria and indicators for self-analysis of socially cultural integrative acting of teachers providing social-cultural learning opportunities were elaborated (see Figure 3).

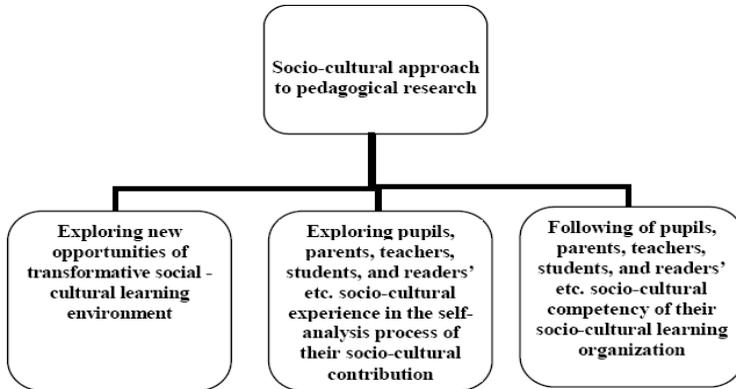


Figure 3: Socio-cultural approach to pedagogical research as result of doctoral research collaboration in international academics studies context

The main idea of collaborative doctoral researcher was to elaborate the approach to accentuate socio-cultural variations of learning and instruction in Latvian context. Thanks to the international support, we found several combinations to verification of the research methods and the opportunities of using new research instruments to obtain more valid results. The main success was the ensured feedback from researchers and educational institutions whose pedagogical staff was interested in active participation (Gento, 1994; Medina & Gento, 1996; Gento, 1999) in this socio-cultural research as a reflexion of exchanges of socio-cultural experience and evaluation of organizational challenges (Maslo, 2006).

### ***Findings from Doctoral Students' Viewpoint***

In order to evaluate the quality of collaborative doctoral research studies in pedagogy and its correspondence to doctoral students' interests and needs, a qualitative research was carried out with the help of an interview. Evaluating the doctoral studies in pedagogy, doctoral students consider that its content completely corresponds to their professional and scientific needs:

*"...I acquire knowledge, which I implement in practice in my pedagogical work, and get some impulse for scientific research. Especially useful are the findings in*

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*psychology and the theory of abilities. I also acquire new methods for the individualisation of pedagogical process of the school” (LU/1).*

*“...The acquisition of research methods gives an opportunity to do research purposefully using either quantitative or qualitative data processing methods” (LU/17).*

*“...Education theory and methods in human pedagogy give an opportunity to understand and, in the pedagogical process, to carry out the orientation to unified development of a person’s mind, feelings and will in the process of personalisation, socialisation and a cultured person” (LU/23).*

The quality of the doctoral studies in pedagogy in the academic year 2005-2006 differs from the previous one. If lectures dominated as a basic form of studies earlier, then in 2005-2006 the stress was laid on independent research in international co-operation with doctoral students and supervisors:

*“...How it is necessary to help the pupils only when they need this assistance by interrogating them – accordingly in doctoral studies, academics stirred our imagination in problem-solving situations by asking questions so that we independently and in co-operation with academics find the answers” (LU).*

Doctoral students evaluate the co-operation with their supervisors as “good” because:

*“...The supervisor, when evaluating the accomplished work, stimulates to independent research and considerations” (LU).*

The evaluation results in 2006 showed that the doctoral students saw much more differences than a year ago:

- a necessity for doctoral students to be more involved in the organization of the studies, especially in international cooperation, thus making visiting professors’ everyday life easier, which may promote further collaboration;
  - they stress that a good team had been created;
  - recognizing their advantages for research when finding out about the difficulties of doctoral students abroad to find a scientific adviser;
  - they shared experiences that in informal discussions with the researchers of other countries it is possible to get a help to solve their problems which they have come across with during the research process, as well as to find out about the differences in doctoral studies abroad;
  - during a focus group discussion with experts from Latvia University of Agriculture the doctoral students and professors demonstrated the specifics of doctoral studies at the University of Latvia and the need for its development;
  - the research conducted at Latvia University of Agriculture (LLU) is more practice oriented, i.e., connected with household speciality. In its turn the aims of the research conducted at the LU are more fundamental; doctoral students of LLU positively evaluate a possibility to study the research of LU which forms a basis for their applied research;
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- they positively evaluated the fact that in the research of LU “the youth dominates”; They paid attention to the original Latvian notion „*dailība*” (attractiveness, beauty, etc.) to be used instead of the term *education* and to its meaning nowadays.

Doctoral students suggested organizing discussions about a particular theme together with the academicians of the home-department and visiting lecturers at the seminars and colloquiums of the professors’ group. Therefore, since the academic year of 2003-2004 international seminars and colloquiums have been offered in the Doctoral programme. Some time ago doctoral students preferred only the scientists of Latvia and only in an individual case they gave prominence to visiting lecturers, but now they take an active part in discussions with the scientists of Latvia and visiting professors.

## Conclusions

The doctoral degree in pedagogy is significant from the standpoint of the development of national economy because in the historical context the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Latvia is the time of human and spiritual values.

Alongside with historical, economic and political changes, education, its goal and means have changed, too. Not long ago the goal of education was society, but a person – a means for its development. The ideals and values of the new generation are linked with democratic society where the highest value is human, versatile and harmoniously developed personality. Thus the paradigm of education is changing. The convergence, mental integration, co-operation and understanding, which are promoted in practice by education, come to the foreground. Doctoral students are schooled to solve these problems for the future.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century doctoral students in pedagogy have increasingly prior significance in Europe. It is connected with the reorganisation of education and education as highly important social phenomena in particular countries, passing over to the orientation oriented education and an individual’s independence and capacity to co-operate in multicultural society. It is determined by the democratisation of mutual relations of countries, economic, cultural and political co-operation. Today the needs of the development of society and science propound a new methodological approach to doctoral studies in pedagogy.

## Discussion

The results of doctoral research of learning and instruction show the qualitative evaluated research, with the use of qualitative-quantitative data processing, analysis and interpretation, resulted in the modelling of the construing of system of the organization of social-cultural learning.

Based on the results of the learning competencies and critical thinking (reflection), one describes cases of good practice within the comparative

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analysis, demonstrating teachers' pedagogical action in order to integrate and broaden pupils' socio-cultural experiences during the learning process and giving the teachers an opportunity to perform their own participatory action research ( Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000) in conformity with the criteria and indicators of socially cultural integrating pedagogical acting.

The authors believe that implementation of mixed methods and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data in an international labour-consuming process would be aimed at the improvement of data validity and in the long term is the best way to serve the complex needs of stakeholders – children, families, professionals and the policy audiences.

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## **Empirical Justification of the Interuniversity Joint Master Degree on “Educational Treatment of Diversity”**

*Samuel Gento, Antonio Medina, & Concepción Domínguez*

### **Abstract**

Four European Universities have agreed to intervene as partners in a project to implement a Joint Master Degree on Educational Treatment of Diversity. This is a challenge that, according to the European tendency of working on setting up a European Framework of Higher Education, represents an attractive opportunity to join efforts and to offer students the possibility of obtaining a Degree issued by these four Universities. At this workshop on Qualitative Psychology in the Changing Academic Context we present, initially, some data corresponding to the opinions in relation to such Master Degree. Afterwards, we describe some relevant aspects of this mentioned Joint Master Degree. The techniques used to collect information have mostly been of qualitative type.

### **Introduction**

For three years, four European Universities have been working to prepare the implementation of a Joint Master Degree on “Educational Treatment of Diversity”. In order to set up the necessary inter-institutional relationship, a general agreement and the corresponding annex (to define the specific activities the partner Universities will commit themselves to work on together) have to be designed, submitted to their legal advisers and, finally signed up by each respective University Chancellor.

When this paper is presented at the Centre for Qualitative Psychology Workshop held in Medzabaki (Latvian), different authors and experts from the partner Universities and from some other specialized Institutions are working to elaborate the written materials that will form the modules to develop the Master Degree contents.

Although before initiating activities to design this Joint Master we had some ideas about the attractiveness of this project for professionals and students involved in different fields of educational treatment of diversity, we have recently submitted this joint Degree proposal to the opinion of a sample of such professionals and students. We wanted to know, with empirical data, if our Master Degree on Educational Treatment of Diversity represents an academic offer that is accommodated to the needs to be formed and to the wishes of students and professionals who are working or thinking of incorporating into activities related to this specific area of educational treatment of diverse needs of people.

To obtain useful information on the relevance and acceptance of our Master Degree, we have used three techniques of collecting information: two of them are fundamentally qualitative: the documentation analysis and the

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discussion group; the other one is a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approach: the enquiry made by an open questionnaire (qualitative approach on its design, quantitative one on the processing of the data obtained).

We offer here the results of our study on our Master Joint Degree relevance and acceptance, according to the information and data obtained by the mentioned techniques. After these evidences, we will describe some features of the Degree project: such description is the result of documentation analysis. This time, we have used the Course Didactic Guide as document to be examined.

### **European Documentation Analysis**

The documentation analysis, sometimes also called “content analysis”, is a qualitative technique useful to discover the content of documents referring to a particular aspect. It can be used to systematically study elaborated documents or specific products referring to the matter one wants to study. The technique is an information source that facilitates knowledge of a specific theme or matter.

With data obtained from the document analysis, one can extract possible contents that may be used to validate a particular proposal, project or written plan. Some features that should be present when we use this technique are the following ones (Pérez Serrano, 1994; G.; Gento Palacios, S., 2004):

- Objectivity: by offering data that can be verified;
- Systematisation: to facilitate the systematic organization of collected data;
- Evidence: by showing clear and manifest data, although some other implicit information could be hinted;
- Generalization ability: by allowing making up principles or theories through inferential processes.

We wanted to know if the Post graduate course we have designed accommodates itself to the recommendations and suggestions issued for courses of this type. For such purpose, we examined the Declarations made by the European Union Ministers responsible for Higher Education. We refer next to contents of such Declarations, particularly to aspects related to our Master course.

#### ***Higher Education Declarations***

The analysis of contents included in the mentioned Declarations gave us some information on the most relevant contribution each one of them made for the European University studies. Some particular features of each Declaration are the following ones. Declarations whose content we studied are the following ones:

- La Sorbone Declaration (May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1998);
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- Bologna Declaration (June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1999);
- Prague Declaration (May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2001);
- Berlin Declaration (September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2003);
- Bergen Declaration (May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005).

The *Sorbone Declaration* (1998) includes the basic statement and commitment of the European Ministers to work on progressively organizing a true convergence among the European national systems of Higher Education.

The *Bologna Declaration* (1999) seems to be the most determinant document to design Higher Education studies in a homogeneous European structure. In this document, the European Ministers declare their commitment to advance in setting up:

- Comparable Degrees;
- The European Supplement to a Degree;
- Graduate and Post graduate Cycles of studies;
- The European Credits Transference System (ECTS);
- The promotion of students and professors mobility;
- Cooperation for quality evaluation;
- The extension of European dimension of Higher Education.

The *Prague Declaration* (2001) reasserts the contents of the Bologna one. Furthermore, it insists on the need of working on the following aspects:

- Promotion of life-long education;
- Extension of student's participation in decisions referred to Higher Education;
- Advancing on attractiveness promotion of European Higher Education throughout the world.

The *Berlin Declaration* (2003) is particularly concerned with systems of Quality Assurance. In order to advance on such quality assurance of Higher Education, this Declaration refers to contents such as:

- The involved sectors responsibility;
- The evaluation of programmes and institutions;
- The extension of a shared system of accreditation and certification;
- The participation, cooperation and promotion of international networks.

The last content of this Declaration is particularly close to our initiative of offering a Joint Master Degree, because such initiative involves the need of establishing international networks of Higher Education institutions. In this Berlin Communiqué Ministers refer to an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Education Area, with the following words:

*“Ministers encourage the Member States to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competencies and profile. They also undertake to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area”.*

The *Bergen Declaration* (2005), which is, up to now, the last one issued by the responsible Ministers, partly represents a continuity of the other

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previous ones. But it stresses and clarifies some particulars as the ones included next:

- Setting up of a system of Degrees with 3 cycles (Graduate, Master and Doctorate), with possible intermediate accreditations and reinforcement of life-long education (throughout general, vocational and training education);
- Extension of a quality assurance system, by assuming the contribution made by the “European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education” (previously “European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education -ENQA-);
- Advancing on recognition of foreign academic accreditations (of European countries) and on implementation of Joint Degrees.

The last mentioned particular of this Bergen’s Declaration reinforces and specifies the last content referred to from the Berlin’s one. This proposal of the European Ministers of offering Joint Degrees imparted by a group of Universities is an important support to our idea of implementing a Joint Master Degree.

### *Development of Competencies*

The European Credit Transference System (ECTS) is based on student’s performance, particularly estimated in terms of competences. By using such competencies, students will use and create knowledge to produce solutions in diverse situations. By following the European Framework of Higher Education, our Master Joint Degree structures and develops its contents to promote the appropriate competencies.

A competence can be considered as the capacity to successfully act in authentic and complex contexts, by integrating and using the suitable knowledge, abilities or skills, attitudes and values. Such competencies must be tested by evident and real manifestations, and they will imply the practical implementation of elements such as values, attitudes, motivation, abilities, and working post (see Figure 1).

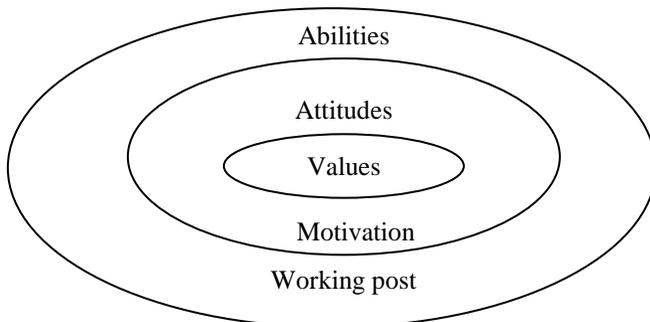


Figure 1: Elements of competencies

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Essentially, contents used to promote competencies will help students to be appropriately prepared to:

- *Know*: what is learned, what is remembered and why it was learnt;
- Know *what and how to do*: ability to choose what must be done and be successful on which is done;
- Know *how to be*: by assuming his/her own duties and responsibilities.

### ***Profile of Master Graduates***

The Joint Quality Initiative (IQI) has defined, as requirements to be accomplished by candidates who will be proposed to receiving a Master Degree, some descriptors put forward by this Initiative at the end of its meeting in Dublin (March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 and October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004). Descriptors that have been established to be accomplished for a candidate to be proposed for being awarded the Master on Educational Treatment of Diversity are the following ones:

- *in knowledge and understanding* have demonstrated knowledge and understanding, that will provide a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context;
- *in applying knowledge and understanding* can apply their knowledge, understanding and problem-solving abilities (applied) in new or unfamiliar environments, within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;
- *in making judgements* demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge, handle complexity and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;
- *in communication* can express their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale (restricted scope) underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;
- *in learning skills* have the learning skills to allow them to continue studying in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.

### ***European Credit Transference System***

The European Credit Transference System (ECTS) is a framework to facilitate measurement and comparison of student's performance on particular programmes of specific Degrees among different sectors, regions and countries. The system comes out from Socrates-Erasmus student's mobility and has been suggested by the European Ministers of Higher Education in the Bologna (1999) and Prague (2001) Declarations.

This European system of credits is centred on student's work to accomplish the programme of studies, and includes his/her activity in aspects such as the following ones:

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- Participation in theoretical and practical lectures;
  - Dedication to study;
  - Participation in seminars, workshops, practices, projects and other similar activities;
  - Preparation for exams and taking examinations.

According to this European system, the average amount of time a student should dedicate for a credit, will approximately be of 25 to 30 hours. For a full time student dedication, the total amount of credits he/she should accomplish through one academic year will be of 50 credits, in an average academic year of 36-40 weeks.

### *The European Quality Assurance System*

If the Bologna Declaration (1999) suggests the cooperation among European countries to promote quality in evaluation of Higher Education studies and institutions, the Berlin Declaration (2003) is the one that stressed the need of evaluating programmes and institutions and that chose a system of accreditation and certification.

The European Council, by its Recommendation 98/561/EC, of September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1998, proposes as objectives of the assurance system the following ones:

- To guarantee the quality of Higher Education;
- To promote and help Higher Education institutions to use the suitable means of quality assurance;
- To encourage the interchange of experiences on quality assurance among institutions and countries.

And in order to guarantee an effective system of quality assurance, the same European Council's Recommendation 98/561/EC suggests as features to be accomplished by such system the ones included next:

- The autonomy of institutions;
- The accommodation of methods and procedures to particular circumstances;
- The use of external and internal evaluation;
- The promotion of interventions of all the involved parts;
- The publication of results of the quality assurance evaluation.

The European Network for Quality Assurance -ENQA-) was established in 2000 to promote European cooperation in the field of quality assurance. In November 2004 the General Assembly transformed the network into the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, although it kept up the previous acronym of the European Network (ENQA).

As it was proposed by the European Ministers of Higher Education who met in Bergen (May 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 2005), the Master Degree will adopt the standards and guidelines for quality assurance as proposed by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. According to such Association, the basic standards for internal quality assurance are the following ones:

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- Policy and procedures for quality assurance;
- Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards;
- Assessment of students;
- Quality Assurance of teaching staff;
- Learning resources and student's support;
- Information system;
- Public information.

### **The Master Degree in the European Structure of Higher Education**

The Bologna Declaration of European Ministers (2001) established two basic Higher Education cycles: Graduate and Post graduate. The latter one includes Master and Doctorate levels. But the Bergen Declaration (2003) considers a system of studies with three cycles: Graduate, Master and Doctorate. Apart from that, this last Declaration mentions the possibility of intermediate academic accreditations and it recommends the reinforcement of life-long learning.

Whatever type of cycle or level the Master Degree be, candidates who wanted to initiate courses of Master will need to have obtained an accreditation of Graduate (or the equivalent corresponding accreditation) and to have obtained at least 180 credits of ECTS.

Once the previous requirements have been accomplished, candidates may register themselves to a Master course. For this course, it is suggested to pursue the following aims:

- The advanced specialized or multidisciplinary training;
- The academic and professional specialization;
- The promotion of initiation on research tasks.

As a Master Graduate tries to prepare for a particular specialization, it may offer alternative options to be followed by those who want to develop a specific area of academic, professional or research orientation. Perhaps due to this proximity or reality, the implementation of a Master course may involve the collaboration of non university Professors and the participation of non university institutions.

### **Discussion Group**

The discussion group can be considered as a modality of the “conversational analysis technique”. Although not every time this technique is used to obtain information on a particular theme, it is frequently used to get some information from those people whom the conversation is maintained with (Walker, R., 1985). The main objective of the conversation is that the participants express their opinions or ideas in a spontaneous way and that they show their opinions without any inhibition at all. This way, those participants will show their real and authentic knowledge on the theme that is treated, although perhaps they will not do it in a systematic or scientific manner.

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A discussion must be formed by a small number of people (8 to 10 may be an appropriate size) who, throughout some time (usually from 30 to 120 minutes) discuss around a specific theme (Krueger, R.A., 1991; Lederman, L.C., 1990; Morgan, D.L., 1988; Tempelton, J.F., 1987). Some authors (Frey, J.H. & Fontana, A., 1991; Watts, M. & Ebbutt, D., 1987) call this technique “group interview”.

Of course, for an effective way of using discussion groups, it will be necessary that one of its members act as moderator-coordinator, in order to facilitate that the discussion will focus on the specific theme to be spoken about. In relation to this theme, the group members can express their opinions, beliefs, ideological approaches, interests, expectancies, etc. In summary, by their interventions one can know how they perceive, know and use a particular reality or specific aspect.

A possible sequence of phases to be successively followed in a discussion group is this one:

- Definition of the number of groups (preferably a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 10);
- Determination of the number of people who will form each group (preferably a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 10);
- Selection of the particular people to be members of each group;
- Specification of place, day and hour for the group meeting (by expressing the starting and the ending hour);
- Definition of the moderator’s role (basically, to create a relaxed atmosphere, to provoke all members intervention, and to concentrate the discussion on the specific theme or matter);
- Clarification of the system of registering information made up by the group (for example, by using a tape recorder or video-recorder);
- Collection, analysis and systematization of the produced information;
- Elaboration of a report that will include the basic conclusions;
- Validation of the report with the group;
- Production of the final definite report.

To obtain information about opinions of some experts or the people involved, we held a meeting at a Spanish Parador (in Alarcón, Cuenca) with a small group of 10 people: some of them were University Professors (3), teachers working on Special Education (3), or Tutors of a Teacher Training Programme for Special Education (4). Throughout 4 hours, the group presented and discussed opinions related to the offer of a Joint Master course on Educational Treatment of Diversity. The ideas that emerged during this discussion group are included next (see Appendix A), by forming the following groups: advantages; problems; proposals to be considered.

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## Enquiry

To collect structured information on some aspects related to the Master availability, we elaborated an open questionnaire with some questions easy to answer for those who were going to answer it. As such questionnaire, this instrument included some written questions, structured around a theme: in this case, our Master on Educational Treatment of Diversity. The contents were proposed by a group of 12 Tutors of a teacher training course in Special Education, who participated in a “brainstorming” technique (of qualitative approach)

A questionnaire is used, generally, to know opinions and attitudes on different aspects (Tenbrink, T.D., 1981). The use of questionnaires is frequent to implement enquiries (De Ketele, J.M. & Roegiers, X., 1995). When it is used to collect information from a specific population or universe, it is close to an opinion poll or survey. As it would be difficult to ask all the members of such population or universe, the questionnaire is used with a sample.

In our study, we tried to obtain some information in relation to the Master course on Educational Treatment of Diversity. For such purpose, we used an open questionnaire that was submitted to 120 teachers for them to answer it. The questions included in such instrument referred to the following aspects:

- Interest for the Master;
- Advantages;
- Difficulties;
- Suggestions on its implementation;
- Suggestions on contents;
- Necessary clarifications;
- Other comments.

We processed 100 questionnaires answered by teachers: 80 were of Primary Education; 20 worked in Secondary Education. From all the teachers, 65% were female and 35% were male. We refer next to their answers on the mentioned aspects.

### *Interest for the Master*

As it can be seen from the table (see Table 1), the highest collected percentage of answers were referred to very much (42%) or much (also 42%) interest. As we said before, the people who answered the questionnaire were mostly teachers of Primary Education (80%); the rest of them were of Secondary Education.

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*Table 1*

Interest for the Master on Educational Treatment of Diversity

Total	Very much	Much	Quite	Very little
100	42	42	16	0

Apart from students from the Faculties of Education and Psychology, Teachers may be the more numerous populations who would, probably, register for this Master course. As a consequence, the results on the interest of such course reveal a quite optimistic situation

### ***Advantages***

According to the results obtained in this criteria (see Table 2), the main advantage (40%) assigned to the Joint Master Course is the possibility of knowing the reality of other countries in relation to the educational treatment of diversity. Other, although less important advantage (with 20% of answers) is the possibility of interchanging experiences among members of the participant countries; other advantage is the knowledge of diversity (on its multiple manifestations) to work in schools and classes that progressively become more and more inclusive (15%).

*Table 2*

Advantages of the Master Course

Knowledge of reality of different countries	40
Interchange of experience of diverse countries	20
Diversity knowledge to work on inclusive schools	15
Distance modality flexibility	15
Preparation to solve real problems	10
Total	100

The modality of distance education was also considered as an advantage of the course (15% of answers), due to the flexibility it implies (not need of attending classes, flexible time organization, etc.).

The answers on the preparation to work on solving real problems (10%), also mentioned as an advantage, could be considered similar to the preparation for the knowledge of diversity to work on inclusive schools and classes.

### ***Difficulties to Start and to Follow Throughout the Course***

The difficulty mentioned by most of the participants in answering the questionnaire (see Table 3) is the cost of the course (50%). Although they did not yet know what such cost would be, perhaps they supposed that it would be

quite similar to other Master courses (although in education it tends to be lower than in other fields)

*Table 3*  
Difficulties to Start and Follow Throughout the Course

Cost of the course	50
Difficult compatibility with labour dedication	33
Length of the course	17
Total	100

It looks also relevant to mention that, as the respondents of the questionnaire were working teachers; one important difficulty for them to follow through the Master course is the interference of the time dedicated to such course with the one they must dedicate to professional work (33%). Time dedication seems also to be present in the answers referred to the length of the course of 2 academic years (17%).

### ***Suggestions for the Course Implementation***

The proposals made by teachers in relation to the course implementation (see Table 4) insist on the need of stressing the practical aspects of educational treatment of diversity: with such approach, they suggest the use of expertise interchange in such educational treatment (29%) and the practical incidence in the reality of this treatment (29%).

*Table 4*  
Suggestions for the Course Implementation

Interchange of experiences	29
Practical incidence	29
Videoconferences and face to face tutorial sessions	14
Good didactic material	14
Interuniversity groups (of work and research)	14
Total	100

With similar percentages, the participant teachers suggested as proposals to have a profitable and effective course: the use of videoconferences, some face to face sessions and attention to students by telephone (14%); the elaboration of good material to be studied and consulted (14%); and the setting up of inter-university groups to work on research projects, on production of didactic material and on interchanging practical expertise (14%).

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***Suggestions on the Contents of the Course***

Suggestions proposed to the course contents (see Table 5) highly insist, once again, on the need of projecting the practical and true reality, with contents oriented towards solving of practical problems (62%).

*Table 5*  
Suggestions on Contents of the Course

Real and practical repercussion	62
Innovative contents	12
Behavioural modification and multiculturalism contents	13
Curriculum adaptations contents	13
Total	100

As it usually happens, teachers are more concerned about being prepared to act in authentic real situations than knowing of theories, approaches and other speculative lucubration.

With similar percentages (13%), teachers suggest: innovative contents; and contents treating problems of disruptive behaviours and of multi-culturally education. Both aspects are, undoubtedly, emerging features appearing in our systems of education.

With a lower percentage of propositions, teachers suggest the need of offering contents referred to curriculum adaptations (12%). This is a technical aspect that teachers working on educational treatment of diversity need to work on: consideration of this proposal as a necessary one to train teachers and educational professionals working on this line seems to be reasonable.

***Necessary Clarifications***

The teachers who answered the questionnaire made some suggestions on some particulars of the Master course that would be necessary to clarify (see Table 6). The content of the programme was mentioned by the higher number of such respondents (25%): they want to know the syllabus of the Master. As it was mentioned above, they expressed their opinions that the contents to be treated and worked with should be useful in practical and real situations.

*Table 6*  
Necessary Clarifications

Methodology to be used	20
Tutorial assistance	20
Evaluation system	20
Programme contents	25
Professional repercussion	15
Total	100

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Other particulars of the Master course considered important to be clarified are the following ones, all of them with the same percentage of answerers (20% each): the tutorial assistance; the system of evaluation; and details of the programme such as calendar, timetable of activities, Professors and Tutors, timetable of tutoring and how to connect to receive tutorial assistance, etc. Although the percentage of these proposed clarifications is somehow lower than the one mentioned in the first paragraph, they represent important details to be clarified, mainly when the option is distance education. As in distance education the student does not have regular face-to-face contacts with Professors, the particulars lately mentioned are highly important. All of them should be included in a strategic document, as the one used in our University and that receives the name of "Didactic Guide".

There is, finally, another relevant aspect whose clarification is totally necessary: the professional repercussion of the Master Degree (15%). Usually, the impact of a particular Degree on the professional life of students who receive such accreditation is the most important reason for them to register and to follow through a course. More than for their own academic training and acquisition of knowledge, registered participants will be thinking on how useful for their professional life and promotion the corresponding accreditation will be.

Nevertheless, the last demanded clarification is not easy to answer, as Universities are institutions issuing academic Degrees; but they are not responsible for validating Degrees as professional requirements for offering jobs to their graduates. However, the analysis of the situation of our societies and of our current systems of education makes us assume that there is a reasonably high demand of well prepared graduated professionals who will be able to contribute to the necessary educational treatment of people having diverse needs.

### ***Other Comments***

Finally, the open questionnaire included another open question where the participants could express other comments referred to our Master course (see Table 7). By being coherent with the basic approach of the course, offered as an inter-university joint Degree, the highest percentage of answers (30%) were related to the international focus: one observation suggests the need of improving international research on educational treatment of diversity; the other one specifies the need of interchanging international expertise on such educational treatment.

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Table 7  
Other Comments

Need to promote international research	30
Need to interchange international expertise	30
Utility of increasing knowledge of diversity	20
Need of focus on real situations	20
Total	100

The participant answerers insisted on the usefulness of increasing the knowledge of diversity in its different manifestations (20%). It is, in effect, an impending requirement for educational intervention, because it does not seem possible to educate people with diverse needs unless you have some information on such needs and on how to act on them.

The last observation (also with 20% of answers) refers to the need of focussing on real situations. This suggestion has been made on other items. But the insistence reflects, once more, the profound concern of teachers (and of professionals working in education in general) to offer authentic and practical solutions for real problems and situations. However, theory is, sometimes, necessary in order to make generalizations, designers, professors, tutors and other members of the staff working on the Master course should not forget the practical projection of knowledge and the development of practical competences of the students.

### Joint Master Degree Description

The Master on “Educational Treatment of Diversity” is a post graduate course directed to educators and professionals working or who will work on education with people having some kind of diverse special needs derived from their own personal necessities, from their individual situation in a particular circumstance, or from a specific deprived context.

The Course is imparted by some Universities which, according to previous institutional agreement, have decided to offer this interuniversity Master with the commitment and intervention of all of them. This way, different participants in various countries will follow the same Course and those who will succeed in the administrative and academic requirements will receive the academic accreditation offered by all the participant Universities.

The purpose of the participant Universities is to follow the recommendation of the European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, who issued the Communiqué on “The European Higher Education Area. Achieving the Goals” after their meeting in Bergen in May 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>. 2005. Such Communiqué states: “We (...) call upon all national authorities and other stakeholders to recognise *joint degrees awarded in two or more countries in the EHEA* (European Higher Education Area)” (not italicised characters in the original text) (Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education on “The European Higher

Education Area. Achieving the Goal”. Bergen, May 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 2005, II, paragraph 8).

The European University Association (EUA), on a report on “*Developing Joint Masters programmes for Europe* (Results of the EUA Joint Masters Project, March 2002 - January 2004) states (on its page 10): “There is a wide agreement among actors that the current situation with the diversity of degrees and solutions is not appropriate. A European joint programme should surely lead to the award of a legally recognised joint degree. Properly recognising *joint degrees* that are awarded through collaborating European higher education institutions should not be an insurmountable challenge” (not in bold characters in the original text).

### ***Aim, Objectives and Competencies***

The fundamental *aim* of the course is to offer Post Graduate students a Joint Master Degree on “Educational Treatment of Diversity”, offered by Universities from several countries. This Degree will reveal that they have been trained as specialized professionals to work on education for people with diverse special needs, and that they have been prepared to research in different fields related to education with such people.

To attain the Course fundamental aim, the involved Universities will try, with the intervention of students, Professors, Tutors and all their personnel, to work for attaining *specific objectives* such as the following ones in the corresponding fields:

- In the *academic* field: to offer the participants the possibility of obtaining a Post-Graduate University Accreditation by the University where they are registered and by the other involved Universities offering this same course;
- In the *professional* field: to prepare educators and other professionals to effectively work on the various aspects related to the educational treatment of diversity. For such purpose, the participants must know the contents offered in the course related to aspects necessary to professionals who will work on the educational treatment of diversity. Throughout the course, some practical activities will be suggested to the participants and followed up during the course;
- In the *research* field: to promote theoretical and practical knowledge of adequate research on the educational treatment of diversity, in order to clarify contents involved in the general concept of educational treatment of diversity, to discover real situations of such educational treatment, to contrast effective ways of acting in this aspect, and to put forward alternatives to improve situations, resources and strategic ways of acting.

According to new tendencies in University education and following European Community regulations, the Master will particularly *focus on “student’s learning”* more than on Professor’s teaching: such focus on students will consider how they learn and what they should learn, not only

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individually, but also in a group. As a consequence, the credit system (ECTS) is based on student's performance, particularly *estimated in terms of competencies*. By using such competencies, students will use and create knowledge to generate solutions in diverse projects or situations.

More specifically, to attain the above mentioned objectives, the course will provide the conditions and give the instruments for the participants to develop the necessary *competencies* that will be:

- *Generic*: useful to any academic field, they refer to *knowledge management*, in general;
- *Basic*: necessary to *any qualified activity*;
- *Specific*: appropriate to *particular professional interventions*.

### ***Joint Academic Accreditation***

Students who successfully pass all the necessary requirements will receive a Joint Master Degree accreditation awarded by all the four participant Universities. The accomplishment of such accreditation involves particular details explained next.

#### ***Inter-institutional Agreement***

The Framework Agreement signed by the participant Universities defines the general terms of inter-institutional commitment to work together in promoting and implementing activities related to the respective role as Universities. The signed Annex refers to the involved Universities' specific commitment to work together to implement the Master course on "Educational Treatment of Diversity" by following the particulars commonly designed by the involved Universities.

#### ***Joint Degree***

Students who successfully finish the Course will be awarded the Academic Accreditation of *Master on "Educational Treatment of Diversity"*. Such Degree will be a Post-Graduate Accreditation and will be granted by all the participant Universities that have signed the Framework Agreement and the corresponding Annex:

- National University of Distance Education (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia -UNED-), in Madrid, Spain;
- Karla University, in Prague, Check;
- The University of Latvia, in Riga, Latvia;
- Ludwigsburg University on Education, in Reutlingen, Germany.

The Universities offering the same course, working together to implement it and to offer the same Joint Master Degree

#### ***Educational Modality***

The Master course is imparted in the modality of distance education. The model of distance modality will follow the scheme offered in the following representation (see Figure 2).

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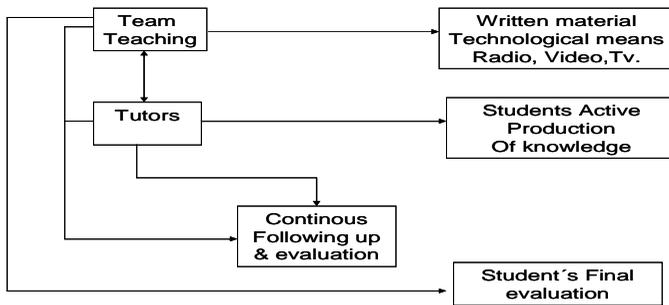


Figure 2: Distance modality implementation

To follow through the course, all registered participants will receive the necessary written didactic material. The minimum necessary material will consist of the Didactic Guide and of the Content Modules, all of them organized in Didactic Units. This material has been elaborated to be used according to the mentioned modality, and all the participants must know and use it to successfully pass the course academic requirements necessary to be put forward to the Master Degree on “Educational Treatment of Diversity”. Other audiovisual, technological and telematic materials will successively be added.

## Appendix A

### *The ideas that emerged during this discussion group*

#### ADVANTAGES OF THE OFFERED COURSE:

- Viability of the course (of interest for educational systems);
- The Master course will be required for Doctoral courses initiation;
- Flexibility of distance education modality;
- Importance of Tutor;
- Attractiveness of a course imparted by four Universities;
- Attractiveness of a Degree awarded by four Universities;
- Attention to a matter necessary for the educational system;
- Preparation with this course to Doctorate cycle;
- Expertise accumulated by the UNED;
- Use of Information and Communication Technology;
- Use of ECTS system of credits.

**PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED:**

- Evaluation at distance;
- Practicum design and implementation (reiterated);
- Practicum too long (20 ECTS);
- Treatment of diversity is not worthy for Secondary Education teachers;
- Financial support of the course;
- Competition with other Universities;
- Decentralised Educational Administration (17 Autonomous Governments in Spain);
- Bureaucratic complications (by University, Educational Administrations);
- Degree professional recognition by Educational Administrations.

**PROPOSALS TO BE CONSIDERED:**

- Preparation of good material to be used at distance (reiterated);
- Collection of students' opinions on the Master course interest;
- Collection of students' opinions on material;
- Setting up a good system of continuous evaluation (face to face and at distance);
- Reinforcement of practical contents;
- Treatment of case studies;
- Offer of the course to Regional Governments;
- Attention to Tutor 's importance;
- Offer of the course as University Degree (not Official National Degree);
- Attention to expertise acquired in University Degree courses;
- Attention to Regulations for this kind of courses.

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## Improving the Intercultural Competence of Engineering Students at the University

*Inge Herfort & Andreas Weiss*

### Abstract

In the course of their thesis projects engineering students at the Vienna University of Technology (TU), Austria, carried out qualitative interview research on intercultural business communication. They conducted and analysed semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs and managers from Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Austria. In this paper it is examined by thought experiment if the series of integrated tasks associated with this kind of research enhances intercultural competence as proposed in a process model by Thomas (Thomas, 2006). For illustrative purposes, the description of the thought experiment is supplemented with quotes from the students' diploma theses as well as from interviews with graduates one or two years after graduation.

### Introduction

Globalisation and European integration have increased the mobility of students, faculty and university graduates, and working in organisations with international staff and cross-border activities has become the rule rather than an exception. Thus, intercultural competence has become a key competence for engineering students and graduates of universities and comparable institutions of higher education.

Like most universities the Vienna University of Technology (Technische Universität Wien, TU) entertains co-operations with universities all over the world. More than a fifth of the students come to study at the TU from abroad, and also the faculty is international. At the same time, many students leave the country to study in an exchange or double degree program, to do research or to get work experience. Nonetheless, no curriculum at the Vienna University of Technology offers courses to prepare students for the interaction and co-operation with members of different ethnic cultures.

Intercultural competence does not, however, come along with the mere interaction between members of different ethnic cultures (e.g. Thomas 2006). Cant, Professor at a North American University, calls on universities to teach business students in the U.S. "*the impact on business of different values, assumptions and beliefs*" associated with different ethnic cultures (Cant, 2004, 181).

Wierlacher defines "*interculture*" as a common space being created where people from different cultures meet, where they interact and communicate successfully (Wierlacher, 2003). Thomas sees intercultural competence as "*...the result of a complex process of learning and development*" (translated from Thomas, 2006, 114), being "*... reflected in the ability to recognize, appreciate and honour the cultural influence on*

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*perception, judgement, feelings and behaviour within oneself and within others and to apply this ability in a productive manner.”* (translated from Thomas, 2006, p. 118)<sup>2</sup>

Thomas describes the development of intercultural competence as a four step process (Thomas, 2006)<sup>3</sup>. Applying this model, it is examined by thought experiment if producing a master’s thesis involving qualitative research on intercultural business relations is one of many viable ways to develop intercultural competence. Intercultural competence is a prerequisite for being able to be effective in intercultural interactions ( Thomas, 2006).

### Thomas Theory of the Development of Intercultural Competence

The development of intercultural competence encompasses four phases (see Figure 1). According to Thomas an individual passing through these four phases develops intercultural competence.

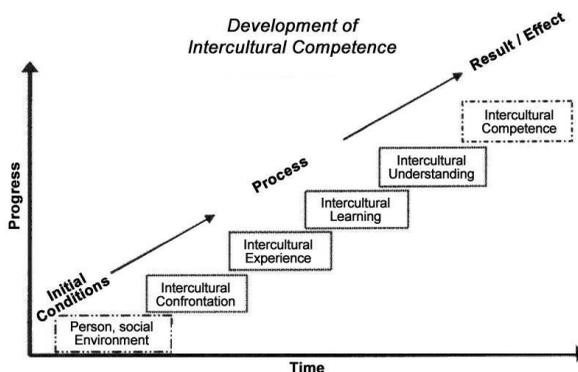


Figure 1: Development of intercultural competence (Thomas, 2006)

#### ***Starting Point: The individual and his/her social environment***

Individuals starting the learning process differ from each other in terms of values, generalized view of the world, motivation, attitudes, self-concept, beliefs on how they are perceived by others, social environment, their role in social networks and organisations, experience, abilities and traits, including

<sup>2</sup> Interkulturelle Handlungskompetenz „zeigt sich in der Fähigkeit, die kulturelle Bedingtheit der Wahrnehmung, des Urteilens, des Empfindens und des Handelns bei sich selbst und bei anderen zu erfassen, zu respektieren, zu würdigen und produktiv zu nutzen“ (Thomas, 2006, p. 118).

<sup>3</sup> The theoretical part of this paper is largely based on Thomas’ article on intercultural competence (2006). It was translated into English by the authors.

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flexibility, persistence, patience, tolerance of ambiguity, and the ability to change between perspectives ( Thomas, 2006).

*Step 1: Intercultural confrontation*

A prerequisite for an intercultural development process to start is a situation requiring an individual to interact with members of a foreign ethnic culture. Not being able to evade difficulties arising in situations of ambiguity or friction while discovering cultural differences and communalities provide the individual with new perspectives on the self, as well as on its personal, social und cultural identity.

Thomas proposes that a student of intercultural competence also needs to have accepted the fact that cultures are different, that s/he needs to have an appreciative attitude towards foreign cultures, and that s/he needs to be able to deal with cultural differences in an open and dynamic way (Thomas, 2006).

*Step 2: Intercultural experience*

Thomas describes the process of doing literature research on differences between foreign cultures as indirect experience. Interacting with and acting in a foreign culture, on the other hand, is defined as direct experience. Direct experience includes discussions, conducting interviews, as well as active observations involving members of a foreign culture.

In order to further the development of intercultural competence, this experience needs to bear upon the student of intercultural competence and to be tangible to him/her on an emotional, cognitive and volitional basis. Critical incidents in intercultural encounters are the most valuable intercultural experience according to Thomas. These are incidents that occur unexpectedly, ideally repeatedly, that also result in confusion, disappointment or irritation. These incidents provide the grounds for the initiation of a reflection process (Thomas, 2006).

*Step 3: Intercultural learning*

For Thomas learning about other cultures is a complex, integrated and cumulative process of several steps: “...*actual intercultural learning takes place when a person becomes aware of differences based on culture, accepts them, gets information and reflects on these differences. Further on, the student of intercultural competence develops insights and know-how for dealing with these differences*” ( Thomas, 2006)<sup>4</sup>.

*Step 4: Intercultural understanding*

Intercultural understanding encompasses the ability to appreciate the role of culture in perception, thinking and behaviour, as well as the ability to read behaviour in terms of the foreign culture of the interaction partner. It results in the search for a wider range of explanations before reacting to a behaviour

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<sup>4</sup>“Die Phase des eigentlichen interkulturellen Lernens ist bestimmt vom Gewahrwerden und Akzeptieren von kulturell bedingten Unterschieden, vom Informieren und Reflektieren über kulturelle Unterschiede und der Entwicklung von Einsichten und Handlungswissen im Umgang mit ihnen” (Thomas, 2006, p. 120).

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that was not expected. At this stage of the development process, a student of intercultural competence is reflecting on his/her knowledge and experience and adapts behaviour to another cultural reference system. Intercultural understanding is also associated with the ability to better anticipate communication and behaviour in intercultural encounters as well as with the disposal of the resources needed for interaction with people from foreign cultures ( Thomas, 2006).

### **Result: Intercultural Competence**

A final prerequisite for effective intercultural business communication is intercultural competence: *“At this stage, abilities to interact competently in intercultural encounters should be readily accessible. They encompass the ability to switch between and transform perspectives, as well as the ability to direct attention away from the self to others, self-efficacy, self-distance, as well as getting along in intercultural encounters. A person with intercultural competence feels confident about how to act, is flexible with respect to behaviour, creative in handling a variety of situations and is also able to behave appropriately in contexts s/he has not encountered before.”* (translated from Thomas, 2006, p. 121)<sup>5</sup>

At the end of the learning process intercultural competence provides the potential for being able to explore and to obtain synergies, as well as to solve conflicts in intercultural encounters in a wide range of situations. This development process of intercultural competence starts over and over again ( Thomas, 2006, p. 118). It provides the potential for effective performance in intercultural encounters.

### **Method**

To find out if students acquired or improved on their intercultural competence in the process of doing an empirical study on intercultural business communication, it is examined by thought experiment if these students followed the four learning steps as proposed by Thomas. An experiment is *“a procedure for answering or raising a question about the relationship between some variables by varying one (or more) of them and tracking any response by the other or by the others”* (Sorenson, 1992, p. 186), a thought experiment, on the other hand, *“is an experiment ... that purports to achieve its aim without the benefit of execution”*, and *“to answer or raise its question rationally.”* (Sorenson, 1992, p. 205).

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<sup>5</sup>„Neben den Handlungspotenzialen, die zu diesem Zeitpunkt den Lern- und Entwicklungsprozessen routinemäßig zur Verfügung stehen sollten, wie Perspektivenwechsel, Perspektiventransformation, Selbstwirksamkeit, Selbstzentrierung, Selbstdistanz und Orientierungsklarheit, gehören zur interkulturellen Handlungskompetenz auch die Fähigkeit zur Herstellung von Handlungssicherheit, Handlungsflexibilität, Handlungskreativität und Handlungstransfer“ (Thomas, 2006, p. 121).

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For the thought experiment analysis, the task and processes associated with doing such a master's thesis are listed below. They are independent variables in the experiment. If these tasks and processes match with the steps described by Thomas (2006) the output of carrying out a master's thesis on intercultural business communication should be intercultural competence.

For illustrative purposes, the thought experiment is supplemented with statements by the authors, i.e., their perceptions, insights, inner thoughts and feelings in association with their research. The interviews with the alumni were recorded, paraphrased, transcribed selectively, and analyzed with respect to categories corresponding to the phases of the four steps in the process of development to intercultural competence (Mayring, 2000).

## Data and Sample

Three sources of data were used in this study:

1. The steps and processes involved in doing qualitative research on a topic of intercultural business communication are the input variables of the thought experiment.

2. Written statements made and conclusions drawn by students in their written texts of the final version of the master's thesis are cited for illustrative purposes.

3. Interview data from focused interviews (Merton & Kendall 1946) with the same four persons one to two years after graduation. Since self-reports on competence are not always a reliable source of data, these statements are used for illustrative purposes only.

The sample comprises four male students in the Graduate Program of Business Informatics at the Vienna University of Technology. They were 23 to 26 years of age, at the time when they were writing their diploma thesis, and 25 to 27 years of age, at the time when they were talking about their research, one or two years after graduation (see Table 1).

*Table 1*

Sample description: Topics of master's theses and characteristics of their authors

Cultures investigated	Hungary-Austria		Slovakia-Austria	Czech Republic-Austria
Author-initials	BA	LA	HC	GD
Born and raised in	Austria, regular visits to Hungary	Austria	Austria	Austria
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male
Topic of Master's Thesis	Trust in Business Co-operations between Austrian and Hungarian SMEs	Management Competence for Business Co-operations between Hungarian und Austrian SMEs	Abilities and Motivation in Cross-Border Co-operations of Austrian and Slovak SMEs	Communication in Business Co-operations between Austrian and Czech Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

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Topics students covered in their research include “Trust in cross-border business co-operations”, “Management competence for cross-border business co-operations”, “Abilities and motivation in cross-border co-operations”, and “Communication in cross-border business co-operations” (see Table 1).

Students interviewed business people from at least four cross-border co-operations in two nations. All four of the countries investigated are part of the Central European Region (CENTROPE).

## Data Analysis

### *Starting Point: The individual and his/her social environment*

There was no trait assessment made of the students who were writing a master’s thesis on intercultural business co-operations. As they reported in an interview, their motives for having chosen their topic include the desire to do research on a topic they had not been confronted with in their curriculum, and the desire to acquire skills they had not been taught before [“*During our studies we missed out in applied courses, such as soft skills.*” (C/IG/5p)], a strong connection to a specific foreign culture in the past [“... *most relatives of mine are Hungarian and I visit Hungary frequently. My uncle owns, or better owned, a company over there ...*” (H/IB/108)] as well as new interests stemming from a seminar on cross-border business co-operations.

### *Step and processes involved in working on the master’s thesis*

Thomas’ model ( Thomas 2006) was applied to the steps in the process of preparing a diploma thesis on a topic of intercultural business communication (see Table 1). That is, it was examined if the requirements for the development of intercultural competence are met when students interact and communicate with people from a foreign culture, learn about a foreign from literature, analyse their data, and reflect on their findings and draw conclusions.

Preparing a master’s thesis on a topic of intercultural business communication by applying qualitative research methods is a recursive process, i.e., it cannot deterministically be said when the process ends, as it not only depends on the availability and co-operation of interview partners, but also on intermediate results. It is a complex and challenging task, requiring intensive support by a thesis advisor or his/her assistant. These are the steps following the decision to write a master’s thesis in the area of intercultural business communication:

- Choosing a foreign culture and a research topic on cross-boarder business of Austrian and non-Austrian business partners or colleagues (This process is supported by the thesis advisor or his assistant: s)
  - Defining a research question and deciding on how to proceed to answer this question (s)
  - Researching the theory and the cultures associated with the research question (s) – phases 1 and 2
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- Choosing what is relevant and writing up the results (s) – phase 2
  - Researching the methods being applied and describing the relevant aspects in writing (s)
  - Defining the sample – on the average four intercultural business relationships with four non-Austrian and four Austrian business partners (s)
  - Designing a questionnaire, e.g., for semi-structured interview (s)
  - Learning how to conduct semi-structured interviews, e.g. how to ask open questions and how to ask follow-up questions (s)
  - Starting the data collection and analysis process (starting it again, as long as the sample is not complete and as long there is not enough data to be able to draw conclusions) - as students progress in they are more likely to go also through phases 3 and 4 during their data collection and analysis process – this is indicated with brackets: (3,4)
    - Researching companies (s) – phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Networking and doing research to find interview partners in Austria and abroad (s) – phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Introducing the university and the research topic to an interview partner(s) - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Asking busy entrepreneurs and managers from abroad and from Austria, in a foreign language if required (s) – phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Asking people again when they refuse to give an interview(s) - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Asking potential interview partner for further contacts, e.g. of their (former) business partners - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Making an appointment with each interview partner and coordinating the schedule with a translator, if necessary - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Choosing and finding an appropriate location for the interview together with the interview partner - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Choosing an appropriate setting for the interview - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Asking for permission to tape record the interview - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Getting to the place, abroad or in Austria, where the interview takes place, and coordinating the schedule and the interview with a translator if necessary (s) - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Making small talk with the interview partner before the interview (s) - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Conducting the interviews in German or in a foreign language, with or without a translator (s) Listening to and observing the interview partner-phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Paraphrasing what was said by the interview partner in the process of the interview or otherwise showing the interview partner that s/he is being understood (s) - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Recognizing and reacting appropriately when the interview partner diverges too much from the questions asked - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Recognizing and clarifying what was said if the interviewee does not understand or misunderstand a question (s) - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Asking appropriate follow-up questions needed to answer the research question and doing so at the right moment in the right way (s) - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Thanking the interview partner for the interview - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Asking the interviewee for contact data of his/her (former) business partner/s and for other interview partners - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
    - Listening to the tape recorded interviews - phases 1, 2 (3,4)
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- Exchanging thoughts on the interview experience and on the findings with others (s) - phases 2, 3 (and 4)
  - Transcribing the interviews and calling the interview partner for any further questions that may arise during transcription - phases 1, 2, 3 (and 4)
  - Reflecting on the content of the interview alone and with others (s) – phases 2, 3 (and 4)
  - Analysing and interpreting the interview data alone or with other students (s) - phases 2, 3 (and 4)
  - Writing up the results of the data analysis (s) - phases 2, 3 (and 4)
  - Conducting more literature research (s) – phase 2
  - Drawing intermediate conclusions – phases 2, 3 (and 4)
  - Starting the data collection process again, if the sample is not complete or the results are not sufficient to answer the research question – as students progress in their intercultural understanding and learning they are more likely to go also through phases 3 and 4 during their interview experience
  - Summarizing all findings (s) – phases 3 and 4
  - Drawing final conclusions from the results (s) – phases 3 and 4
  - Writing up the final results of the study -- phases 3 and 4
  - Presenting the results of the study to fellow students, advisors, interested interview partners and potential employers – phases 1, 2, 3 and 4

#### *Step 1: Intercultural confrontation*

From the list of tasks and processes, it can be seen that empirical research on an intercultural topic, such as “*Trust in Business Co-operations between Austrian and Hungarian SMEs*”, requires students to engage in a complex planning and interaction process with foreign cultures and contexts. Students are required to initiate and to conduct interviews, in the course of which they engage in a social interaction with members from foreign cultures (Santis, 1980). Sometimes, data collection also requires travelling to foreign countries, and speaking a foreign language or using the services of an interpreter. These students are also confronted with a foreign culture when they are listening to, transcribing and analysing the content of the interviews they were conducting.

It is assumed that students who select to research a topic on intercultural business communication have realized and accepted that there are differences between cultures, and that their culture is not the only “right” one. Students with an ethnocentric attitude would have had difficulties getting people from other ethnic cultures to share their personal experience and insights with them. It can be assumed, when choosing a topic of intercultural business communication, students are open to as well as motivated to learn new things about their own and other ethnic cultures. If they continuously evaded any difficulties in intercultural interaction, i.e., in a situation of conflict, they would not be able to carry out and to finalize their thesis research.

#### *Step 2: Intercultural experience*

Students made indirect experience, when they were researching information on a foreign culture and comparing cultural characteristics (e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Thomas, 1991; Trompenaars, 1993). In interviews one student indicated that models on cultural characteristics he learned about when

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doing research played an important role for him being able to understand the concept of culture and to compare nations on their cultural characteristics.

Overall, however, direct experience plays a more important role in the thesis research. After researching enterprises, co-operations and institutions, students search for interview partners doing cross-border business. To do so, they make phone calls, write mails, and talk with people in various enterprises and institutions. That is, students get direct experience with members of foreign cultures when asking potential interview partners for appointments and for contacts to additional interview-partners. They also travel to other countries, as the TU is located in the Central European Region (CENTROPE), located within a one-hour drive of three different nations. There, students conduct interviews, in German, communicate in English, or conduct their interviews with the support of a translator. They engage in a social interaction with several members of foreign cultures during the interview process (Santis, 1980). As they interview at least two members in a business relationship, students get to know two different cultural perspectives of the same business relationship and get the chance to compare perceptions of these business relationships from two or more cultural perspectives, and also benefit from "second-hand experience" by listening to the reports of business people on intercultural business relations.

When asked about their experience students report about a wide range of experiences and enthusiastically tell about their meetings with business people. Most important, some aspects of these encounters were unexpected and new to the students and started a reflection process. One student was surprised to find that his Czech business partner first wanted to eat and drink with him before talking about business. Most of the interactions were considered very interesting and productive, even if not everything went the way it was planned.

We found that the experience with another culture had a long-lasting impact on the students. It is remarkable how lively the alumni reported on their interview experience, their perceptions and findings, even one to two years after having finished their thesis. Students who have had no preference for choosing a specific ethnic culture for their research had become increasingly interested in the foreign culture they were researching as they were progressing in their study. During the interviews of these former students, it appeared that the "experience" of their research had left them changed as human beings as a whole and that the culture the students had researched had become "their culture".

### *Step 3: Intercultural learning*

In their reflection of direct and indirect experience, in the process of collecting and analysing data as well as collecting information on a foreign culture, students integrate the information they researched with their experience. At the same time, they develop new insights and know-how into intercultural interactions, as illustrated by this quote from the master's thesis:

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*"A sensitive way of going about things makes other cultures accessible to you. Many ways of doing things are based on cultural differences in perception and attitude, largely due to history and experience over a lifetime" (C/G/80).*

Some of the students share their thoughts about their intercultural experience from the interviews with their colleagues. They analyze their data in co-operation with their colleagues, others just compare results. They also discuss the implications of their findings for the practice of international business, as a student said in an interview after graduation:

*"We have been talking on several occasions about his (my friend's) experience with Czech and my experience with Hungarian interview partners..... In this way I also learned about other cultures. With L, on the other hand, who also did research on Hungary, it (this discussion) was rather a matter of finding a common ground. However, the Czechs are very different (to Hungarian people). This way I got to learn something different as well." (H/IB/289).*

The student who made this statement is the son of a Hungarian mother and an Austrian father. He was raised in Austria and has had extensive intercultural experience with Hungary before he started to write a thesis on a topic of intercultural business communication between Hungary and Austria. He had made several visits to Hungarian relatives of his mother since his childhood. Two years after having finished his qualifying paper he describes in an interview his intercultural learning process:

*"... before (working on the master's thesis), my interaction with Hungarian people was more subconscious. I already knew how to behave and how it is to interact with them. By doing my masters' thesis I have become aware of many things" (H/IB/219)*

This same student said that when he was writing up the results of the content analysis from his interviews and when he was drawing his conclusions about intercultural business relations, he had something like an "aha-experience" (Bühler 1907).

He had already internalized ways of going about some things in Hungarian culture. Only during his research had he become aware of existent and developed new insights into some of the cultural differences in a process of intercultural learning.

*"... and when I was writing ... Hungarians are like this and it is recommended to behave like that ... I realized, that really is the way it is. This is how I learned about people from Hungary. It really is important to behave that way when interacting with them." (H/IB/227)*

This student has been able to generalise from his deeper insights about his own upbringing and to apply his learning to other cultural contexts. He attributes part of his insights into the intercultural experience he had made before starting to work on his master's thesis.

#### *Step 4: Intercultural understanding*

Doing empirical research on intercultural business communication not only involves steps one to three, i.e., meeting members of foreign cultures, interviewing them, getting aware of new aspects of foreign cultures and analyzing the role of culture in intercultural interaction. At this stage students also have become aware of and have learned to appreciate the role of values,

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norms, thinking and behaviour, as well as the impact of culture on doing business with members from and contexts in foreign cultures.

The following quote from the master's thesis of a graduate demonstrates how a student learned to understand the significance of the language selected for trust in intercultural business relations:

*"Agreements made in a third language are not perceived as binding. Business partners do not feel obliged to meet agreements they made during negotiations in a language foreign to them. If you build a relationship on the basis of trust (first), on the other hand, attitudes change fundamentally. Only then are agreements seen as binding and fulfilling them is a matter of honour"* (C/G/83). In his thesis, another student describes his insights in the role of time for doing business with people from Slovakia:

*"Meeting deadlines for delivery is not understood in Slovakia. If you notice there are problems then you should try to resolve them together."* (S/H/74)

The following statement made in an interview with a graduate exemplifies how a student realized that the same behaviour in a business meeting may mean very different things for Hungarian and Austrian business partners:

*"You should perhaps accept or be ready to find that not everything goes strictly according to an agenda. When you have a meeting, it is not customary to follow an agenda. It doesn't work that way. It is usual to talk about other things first. It is important to them... not to get to the point immediately..."* (H/IB/137).

In the interview, the same student pointed out the significance of paying attention to individual differences, when at the same time, paying attention to cultural differences.

*"It is very rare that I say 'this person is a Hungarian all through, and he behaves that way'. Instead, there are differences in traits between all individuals. As I said, they (people from Hungary) are, however, more open, they talk more loudly and so on, perhaps they are less structured and a little more chaotic, yet very dedicated, prepared to work on something ..."* (H/IB/195).

These quotes illustrate examples of the ability to interpret critical situations adequately, i.e., to view situations incidents from the perspective of the foreign culture they researched. They also illustrate that they know how to act in these situations to avoid or resolve conflict.

### **Result: Intercultural Competence**

The conclusion of the thought experiment is that during the process of their qualitative research on intercultural business communication students develop intercultural competence. They become informed and confident about interacting with doing business in a foreign culture, learn to direct their attention away from their own values, norms and behaviours and are able interpret critical situations in intercultural encounters from the perspective of a foreign culture.

Graduates reported that they perceived having gained new insights into and improved their understanding of the culture they were studying and support their statements by giving examples of acting appropriately in intercultural encounters. To illustrate, a graduate reports having improved his

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qualification for getting his first job by doing a master's thesis on a topic of intercultural business communication:

*"In my job I have many meetings with Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Slovenian partners. I have profited from ... working on my master's thesis ... I have ... learned how to approach (intercultural) issues arising in the process of the planning and management of projects."* (C/IG/4s).

Also, an alumni having been raised by parents from two different ethnic cultures reports, has profited from his master's thesis for doing his first job after graduation:

*"Especially now in my job I am ahead of others, because I work with Hungarians and with people from other cultures,... In addition, the issue of cultural differences is quite present in my thinking and I am more aware of cultural differences (between people from Hungary and Austria). Perhaps it is for that reason that I am better able to recognize differences to other cultures now, that is (differences) to Czech, Slovaks and Croatians we are working with."* (H/IB/227).

He estimated having improved his intercultural competence for communicating with people from Hungary from 40% to 80%, when he was interviewed two years after graduation.

## Conclusions and Outlook

From our thought experiment of applying the four-step development process as described by Thomas to the process of doing an empirical qualitative study on intercultural business communication we conclude that doing qualitative research on intercultural business communication in the course of writing a master's thesis involving qualitative research on topics of intercultural business communication is one of many possible ways to acquire intercultural competence. This research process integrates cognitive with behavioural aspects, as well as culture-specific interaction with reflection on the intercultural experience. These are vital characteristics of effective intercultural training (Gudykunst, Guzley & Hammer, 1996; Stüdle, 1997). The Vienna University of Technology is located in the Central European Region within a one-hour drive of three different nations. This location is associated with many opportunities, and at the same time, with many good reasons for promoting the development of intercultural competence.

Future studies on this topic could assess intercultural competence before and after students do empirical qualitative research on intercultural communication. In addition, they could compare performance in intercultural business encounters before and after the process of intercultural development.

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## Basic Considerations about an Archive Concept for Qualitative Interview-Data

*Andreas Witzel*

### Abstract

With the planned *Archive for Qualitative Interview Data* (AQUID) the construction of a central, nationwide contact point for archiving and dissemination of digitalised transcripts of qualitative interviews in the German language will be strived for on the basis of a feasibility study. The concept of the archive includes the tasks of data acquisition, data preparation, documentation and preservation, the provision of a central and transparent online data catalogue as well as the organization of a user-oriented data service. The so far unattended basic supply of the qualitative social research community with digitalised transcripts of interviews as well as the accompanying documentation will be in the centre of the service tasks. The data service is not only aimed at potential users doing research at universities, but also in the area of academic qualification and in teaching.

### Introduction: the Planned Archive for Qualitative Interview Data

The *Life Course Archive* (ALLF) (<http://www.lebens-laufarchiv.uni-bremen.de>) at the *Graduate School of Social Sciences* (GSSS), University of Bremen, addresses itself to the task of improving the unsatisfactory methodological and data-related conditions through projected national archival development (Opitz & Witzel, 2005; Witzel & Mauer, 2007). Planning to build up the nationwide *Archive for Qualitative Interview Data* (AQUID) ALLF concentrates on the acquisition, preservation and dissemination of qualitative interviews which is the most used form of data for secondary analysis according to the experiences of the service provided by the cooperating *ESDS Qualidata* (<http://www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata>) (Corti & Backhouse, 2005, para. 22).

A scientist seeking qualitative data for a secondary use in Europe or the USA finds data archives like the *US Murray Research Center* (<http://www.radcliffe.edu/murray>), the *Finnish Social Science Data Archive* (FSD, <http://www.fsd.uta.fi/english/index.html>) or the *UK Economic and Social Data Service* (ESDS) (<http://www.data-archive.ac.uk>), which offer both qualitative and quantitative data. While trying a gradual construction of a service centre for qualitative data ALLF therefore is cooperating on the national level with *Central Archive for Empirical Social Research* (ZA) (<http://www.gesis.org/ZA/>) in Cologne, which has longstanding experience in archiving social science data and which has been promoting secondary analysis in research and teaching with a focus on quantitative data. This co-operation also allows archiving projects carried out by implementing mixed method design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods during the

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research process, so that it would be possible to offer not only qualitative interviews but corresponding quantitative datasets as well<sup>6</sup>.

### Why to Build up an Archive for Qualitative Data?

In Germany as in many other countries there is an abundance of experience with re- or secondary analysis of quantitative data, which includes for example cross-cultural or longitudinal analysis of large comparative datasets (e.g. Eurobarometer, European and World Values Surveys, European Social Survey, ALLBUS). A similar picture cannot be drawn for the area of qualitative research in Germany. There is no widespread culture of secondary use of the existing unique and rich data of qualitative research – especially for transcripts of qualitative interviews – nor can you find an institution providing a user-oriented data service for qualitative material on a nationwide scale. These shortcomings are surprising, firstly, in view of the growing relevance of qualitative methods since the 1970s and in view of the benefits of secondary analysis (e.g. Corti & Thompson, 2004) which enables

- descriptions of contemporary and historical attitudes and behaviour of individuals, groups and organizations or even societies, e.g. by cumulating different samples,
- comparative research with existing data sources, follow-up studies for comparison over time,
- reanalysis with new questions, new methods or from a new theoretical point of view of the data,
- designs of new studies or the development of a methodology or research tool by studying the sample methods, data collection and fieldwork strategies and interview guides of earlier research (“path finder”-function),
- verification: Archived data can be scrutinized with scientific rigour to support or challenge a set of findings or to appraise the method,
- academic teaching and learning: Students can learn fundamental aspects of theoretical and methodological strategies about the work of researchers,
- studies for qualification: Solving the problem of having only small samples in such studies. With archived data student who worked on their diploma or fellows who worked on their study for the PhD Thesis can concentrate on the analysis of the data, e.g. with computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS).

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<sup>6</sup> The methodically undogmatic initiative for building up AQUID thus also embodies the effort to overcome the methodological schism, which is particularly visible in the splitting of the method section of the German Society for Sociology (DGS) into a qualitative and quantitative section.

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## Requirements for the Archive

Organisational considerations concerning the development of AQUID are based on the feasibility study on “Archiving and Secondary Use of Qualitative Interview Data”<sup>2</sup>, thankfully supported by the *German Research Foundation (DFG)*.

The importance of establishing the archive becomes at first apparent from the fact that a lot of data material is in danger of becoming lost. Empirical results from the feasibility study about the whereabouts of data material of circa 1100 projects in Germany using qualitative interviews are not too dramatic at first sight: data material of only 13% of all reported projects was no longer available. But taking into consideration that 60% of the inspected projects were just finished in 2003-2004 or were still ongoing and that the period under review comprises only the last 10 years, the amount of irrecoverable data is already rather great.

Facing the situation described above it seemed surprising that the data material of roughly one quarter of the projects is already being kept in an archive. However, inquiries for these archives and expert interviews carried out in the framework of the feasibility study revealed that by saying “given to an archive” or “archived”, many respondents meant nothing more than storing the data in a room in their institution, which does not even fulfil basic standards of a professional archive. That often means that only original audio tapes or just partly transcribed and digitalised interview texts exist, that the material is often not anonymous and kept without physical security, with no public access to data, or without documentation or cataloguing.

Besides the feared loss of important empirical data, the lack of an archive hinders the development of a culture of secondary analysis in the qualitative social research<sup>3</sup>. It is not surprising that the reuse especially of external data (data which was not produced by oneself) happens rather infrequently, even though it is not totally unusual. From the finding that most respondents argued there was no reason or special cause to carry out secondary analysis; one can conclude that there is little experience with the reuse of qualitative data and a misconception of the advantages of secondary analysis.

Despite existing uncertainty, lack of knowledge and scepticism concerning the opportunities and advantages of reusing qualitative data material, 80 % of the interviewed project leaders were in favour of the idea of building up an infrastructure for archiving their data as a source of qualitative data in Germany. Part of the feasibility study was to take stock of qualitative

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<sup>2</sup> Project “Archivierung und Sekundärnutzung qualitativer Daten – eine Machbarkeitsstudie”, 2003-2005. Team: Prof. Karl F. Schumann, Dr. Andreas Witzel, Irena Medjedović, Diane Opitz, Britta Stiefel (ALLF, University of Bremen); Prof. Wolfgang Jagodzinski, Dr. h.c. Ekkehard Mochmann, Reiner Mauer (ZA, University of Cologne). For more details and results see: Opitz & Mauer, 2005; Medjedović, 2007; Witzel & Mauer, 2007

<sup>3</sup> First publication: Corti, Witzel & Bishop, 2005; first workshop “Sekundäranalyse qualitativer Daten” (A.Witzel & I.Medjedović), 2. Berliner Methodentreffen Qualitative Forschung, 14./15. Juli 2006

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material in Germany. With a stock-taking of socio-scientific research projects in Germany more than 1,750 projects applying qualitative interviews could be identified for the period from 1984 to 2003<sup>4</sup>. 60% of the project leaders agreed in principle to pass on the data to others for re- or secondary analysis. Moreover, 65% of the respondents could imagine conducting secondary analysis in the future.

It is mainly the users who expect a good documentation of the research process and a transparent data catalogue (key words: systematisation, cataloguing, easy access, online access). The oral interviews of the feasibility study made clear that documentation should go beyond the project descriptions typically found in publications and especially should comprise context information about the interview situation, but also should contain parts of the analysis of the primary study.

With the shortcomings concerning completeness of transcription, digitalisation, anonymity and data documentation, shortage of space and the lack of financial resources for data preparation and cataloguing of data, potential data depositors justify the necessity of a centralised archive, which due to pooled resources could guarantee standards of quality postulated by themselves.

Securing anonymity and legitimacy of data dissemination concerning the issues of confidentiality and informed consent was mentioned most frequently by the interviewed project leaders as a precondition for giving their data to third parties. This aspect is on the other hand also the most mentioned reason for those who refused dissemination of their data.

Since data protection laws just regulate individual-related information<sup>5</sup>, scientific data can be disseminated to other research projects, if either the person agrees (as part of "informed consent" agreements) or the data is anonymised in such a way that individual data about personal or objective circumstances could not be assigned to a determined or determinable person, or only could be assigned with disproportional effort regarding time, costs and labour<sup>6</sup>. Thus it is possible (e.g. for the ZA in Cologne) to disseminate quantitative sets provided they have been "factually anonymised" (Müller et al., 1991).

Pursuing factual anonymity, it frequently suffices to delete details like name, place, and year or – as suggested in the anonymisation concept by ALLF ( Kluge & Opitz, 1999) – to replace them by socio-scientifically relevant information.

However, because ambitious analysis of these interviews is hardly possible without the knowledge of biographical details, a conflict results between the requirements for the protection of confidentiality and the

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<sup>4</sup> Stock-taking was supported by the *Social Science Information Centre* (IZ, <http://gesis.org/IZ/>), which is - like the Central Archive (ZA) in Cologne - part of the *German Social Science Infrastructure Services* (GESIS). Source of information was the FORIS database (a social science research information system which contains descriptions of planned, on-going and completed research projects from Germany, Austria and Switzerland).

<sup>5</sup> §1 para. 1 and 2 Bundesdatenschutzgesetz (BDSG)

<sup>6</sup> § 3 para. 7 BDSG

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prerequisites for valid empirical research. The urgency for legal solutions - we currently are trying to find an expert for a legal report - arises not only from planning an archive for qualitative interview data, but as well from recommendations of the DFG concerning rules for best practise in science. DFG (1998) reminds that data should be given to third parties if these can prove a well-founded professional interest in reanalysing the data in question. Therefore, data should be kept for ten years after completion of analysis at the institutes where the data was produced – or at an independent place (which we would interpret as an archive).

### **Conclusion and Discussion: Appeal to the Social Scientific Community**

To succeed with the realization of the AQUID and to meet the need for clarification of facts about the chances of reusing qualitative data we need the support of the scientific community:

- to protect older or new qualitative studies with a general societal and scientifically important thematic and methodological relevance from a threatening loss. ALLF is planning a rescue operation of data from "lighthouse projects" using qualitative interviews!
- to inform other researchers about the archive formation and the possibility of transmitting qualitative interview data for secondary use!
- to be aware, that questions of anonymization, long-term preservation and documentation not only are core activities of ALLF or AQUID but also helps to make primary research transparent and more effective – in which such a data preparation makes the iterative analysis process, the reuse for new research questions and the training of new employees easier or even possible!
- to take into consideration that new empirical studies should strive for informed consent for giving the respondent's data to ALLF or AQUID!
- to inform ALLF or AQUID about ongoing or finished secondary use of data!

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## Part Two: Qualitative Approach in the Restructuring Processes: Diversity, Inter- and Multicultural Issues

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### Parents' Perspectives on Fostering Self-Determination Skills in Their Children with Disabilities

*Annette Ullrich, Wendy Wood, & Leslie Cook*

#### Abstract

The literature in the field of special education shows a growing emphasis on promoting SD (Self-determination) skills in students with disabilities and family participation (Salembier & Furney, 1994). The objective of this research is to examine the roles parents play in helping their children acquire SD skills and to provide insight into what parents do to promote SD skills in their children with disabilities. The research methodology is qualitative, using a case study design ethnographic interview techniques (Yin, 1984; Stake, 1995). To facilitate the process of coding and analysing the data AQUAD 6 software was used. Findings represent a discussion of four themes, (a) why SD skills are important, (b) how SD skills can be fostered, (c) choices, decisions, and communication, and (d) conflict between the need for support and the need for independence.

#### Introduction

Over the past 30 years, SD has become the guiding principle in providing support to individuals with disabilities. Research has shown that students with disabilities who left school with good SD skills had better post school outcomes than their peers who were not as self-determined. One year after graduation, students who scored higher on SD, were more than twice as likely to have a job. Three years after graduation, a higher percentage of high self-determination students lived somewhere other than with their family (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997).

Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, and Wehmeyer (1998) define SD as “a combination of skills, knowledge and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior. An understanding of one’s strengths and limitations together with a belief in oneself as capable and effective are essential to SD. When acting on the basis of these skills and attitudes, individuals have a greater ability to take control of their lives and more often assume the role of successful adults in our society” (p. 2). According to Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1998), component elements of self-determined behavior include choice-making skills, problem-solving skills, decision-making skills, goal setting and attainment skills, self-regulation skills (self-observation, evaluation, and reinforcement), self-advocacy (knowledge

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of basic rights and responsibilities, effective use of self-advocacy skills at an individual and/or system level), self-awareness or self-knowledge, and self-efficacy.

Parents play a pivotal part acting as role models for their children and in collaborating with teachers to support students' efforts to obtain skills and knowledge in SD because parents of students with disabilities are the "first and longest lasting teachers" (Wehmeyer, 2004, p. 4). Field and Hoffman (1999) suggest that SD skills are strongly influenced by the type of role models available to the individual. Those roles include (a) the ways parents help students to develop knowledge, skills, and beliefs for SD; and (b) the ways in which interactions between parents and their children provide opportunities and reinforcement for acting in self-determined ways. Literature exists that includes recommendations for parents but not many empirical studies exist on effective practices of parents promoting SD skills in their children with disabilities.

Family involvement is crucial because it contributes to an understanding of a student's past, which is useful information in identifying the student's needs, preferences, and future goals. Eisenman and Chamberlain (2001) found that peers and family members were the most important influence on the SD skills of students with disabilities. Zhang, Katsiyannis, and Zhang (2002) conducted research on the frequency and nature of parent involvement in fostering SD activities in their children with mild disabilities who were high school students. They found that less than 50% of the parents engaged in the recommended practices and activities for fostering SD skills on a regular basis. Twelve percent of the parents never assisted their children in requesting academic and social support from teachers. Twelve to 28 percent of the parents rarely engaged in any of the listed behaviors designed to foster their child's SD. More than half of the teachers did engage in the recommended practices.

Geenen, Powers, and Lopez-Vasquez (2001) describe activities that parents can do to help their children with disabilities to prepare for life after high school. Those activities can broadly be divided into collaborating with the community, learning at home, and communicating. There are also resources that have been designed to provide information and advice to families on how to encourage SD in their children. On-line resources provide information on the role of families and their needs in supporting SD in their children (Wehmeyer, 2004). A collection of on-line resources is provided on the Self-Determination Synthesis Project (SDSP) web site ([http://www.uncc.edu/sdsp/parent\\_family.asp](http://www.uncc.edu/sdsp/parent_family.asp)) developed by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Existing literature on parents and SD refers to the importance of SD skills for post-school outcomes and to effective practices and strategies in the school environment (Browder et al., 2001). Given the importance placed on SD, the question about the role of parents in this process has been under-researched. There is a need for research on parent-child interaction over time and research that defines the critical features of effective interaction that promotes the development of SD skills in children with disabilities. Therefore,

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the purpose of this study is to explore parents' views on fostering SD skills in their children with disabilities.

The current qualitative study is based on the findings of previous research of the SDSP (Karvonen et al., 2004), that was funded by the Office of Special Education Projects (OSEP) in the US Department of Education. A qualitative research methodology was employed to gain more insights into parents' perspectives and experiences. Specifically, the case studies presented in this paper describe selected parents who were interviewed using semi-structured questionnaires. This project began in October 1998 at six sites and ended in September 2001. A complete description of the SDSP is featured on the SDSP Web site ([www.uncc.edu/sdsp](http://www.uncc.edu/sdsp)). The purpose of the SDSP was to examine best practices related to SD and self-advocacy interventions and outcomes in order to develop and increase the use of knowledge about promoting SD skills in students with disabilities among professionals as well as among parents (Wood et al., 2004). The sites were selected from nominations by almost 200 experts (researchers, self-advocates, and practitioners) in the field of SD. Six school districts across the country were selected because their nomination material provided documented evidence of effective practices to promote SD and anecdotal descriptions of positive student outcomes. The findings of the SDSP show that parents often assumed the roles of coach, role model, or advocate for their children, thus paralleling the school-based SD focus. The findings also include barriers which can often impede positive SD outcomes for students with disabilities, e. g., inadequate administrative support or the resistance of parents or professionals to change their roles over time according to the changing needs of students with disabilities. Not only students, but also professionals and parents have sometimes been described as "clinging to their old roles", which Wood and Test (2001) describe as "a state of environmental non-responsiveness" (p. 13).

## Method

Self-awareness is one of several critical components of SD. However, parents are often hesitant to approach the subject of their child's disability when talking with their children, because they do not want to cause discomfort. But evidence is accruing which suggests students are better off having knowledge and understanding of their disability. The payoffs for the student outweigh a short period of discomfort when coming to terms with the realities of a disability (Roffman, Herzog, & Wershba-Gershon, 1994). For parents seeking to approach this with their children, there is also a need to know about other parents' experiences. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the roles parents play in helping their children acquire SD skills and to provide insight into what parents say to and do with their children to promote their SD skills.

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### Participants

Six parents were interviewed. Three were from the SDSP site in Rochester, New York and three from Colorado Springs, Colorado in the United States. At these sites, students with disabilities and their families have benefited from a more extensive and established network of support. Because of the high likelihood that these parents possess unique views, valuable contributions to understanding the research questions were expected. The interviewed parents were all mothers of a son or a daughter with a disability. One interview was conducted with both mother and father. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the participants.

*Table 1*  
Characteristics of Participants

Interview participant	Son/ Daughter	Age	Gender	Type of disability	Type of data collected
Carol	Ray, two older step brothers, two older half-sisters	17	male	Moderate mental retardation	Interview
Joanne	Lisa, younger sister	24	female	Severe disability	Interview
Gina & Frank	Eric, younger sister	13	male	Learning disability (dyslexia)	Interview
Cheryl	Chris, younger brother and older sister	18	male	Traumatic brain injury (TBI)	Phone interview
Sammy	Helen, older sister	18	female	Language disability (aphasia)	Phone interview
Noemie	Neill, older sister	18	male	Physical and developmental disabilities	Phone interview

The second author worked with a key contact person at each site to identify parents who have been successful encouraging their child to become more self-determined. The first and second authors developed the interview questions designed to get parents to talk about the various ways they encouraged and supported SD in their children. The first author conducted the interviews with each of the parents with the interviews lasting between one and three hours in duration. All participants had their son or daughter with a disability living in their households. A semi-structured set of questions based on a review of the SD literature and framed around ways of supporting SD in their daughter or son guided the interviews. The semi-structured nature of the questions allowed sufficient room to reveal and discuss emergent and potentially relevant experiences, concepts, and ideas related to those parents' unique experiences of raising a child with a disability and promoting SD skills.

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### ***Research Design***

The qualitative design for this study is a case study design (Stake, 2000) with semi-structured narrative interviews. Participants were selected using purposeful sampling based on their involvement in the above mentioned project (Patton, 1990). We decided to use a case study design because it “holds the possibility of a way of knowing more valid to the dialectical structure and contingent flow of lived experience than reductionistic forms of knowing that by definition distort the existential conditions of life” (Kleinmann, 1995, p. 99). Parents who have a child with a disability constitute in some ways a particularized “cultural” group. The cultural difference between them and parents of typical kids consists of a stronger asymmetry of power and a stronger inequality of capacity between them and their child with a disability.

Spradley (1980) defines culture as “the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate behaviour” (p. 6-7). The case in our study is an array of activities parents undertake to support their children with disabilities in acquiring SD skills.

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

Three of the interviews were conducted in person and three over the phone. Interviews were audio-taped, transcribed and compiled for detailed analysis. Follow-up data collection, for the purpose of clarifying data collected during the interview, took place via telephone or e-mail.

### ***Data Analysis***

In the first stage of analysis, we developed a general sense of the central phenomenon and developed a preliminary coding system. Minimal interpretation occurred in this phase. During the second stage of analysis, we collapsed codes and developed common themes. The themes led to discussion among the authors and brought us back to the literature on SD. By comparing our themes to the literature on SD, we were able to focus on those qualities of SD with the most data support.

### ***Data Coding***

Bogdan and Biklen’s (1998) emergent theme analysis was used to code the data. Code definitions were developed from initial research questions and were expanded and modified based on the data. In order to identify themes, similar codes were aggregated together. A data management computer program (Huber, 1992) was used to sort the data by themes and to identify key quotes to be included in our report. After establishing preliminary themes, we looked for evidence that was inconsistent with them. During this negative or discrepant case analysis (Brantlinger, Klingner, & Richardson, 2005), we refined the themes again. This process of coding and theme development was continued until our research questions were saturated. Archival data were basically used to look for recurrent patterns of events or statements.

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### ***Interpretation***

After analyzing each interview separately, a cross-case analysis ( Miles & Huberman, 1994) was conducted in order to identify common and different themes among all of the cases.

### ***Validity***

In order to establish validity for our qualitative inquiry, we addressed the three constructs of credibility, dependability, and transferability ( Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checks were used to ensure credibility, meaning participants were asked to review transcripts from their interviews. Consensus on data coding was reached and discrepancies and variances of understanding were clarified within the research team. The process of triangulating evidence from different individuals, types of data, and methods of data collection helped to enhance the accuracy of the study. Although transferability is not a crucial issue for qualitative studies ( Maxwell, 1996), we sought to enhance transferability by including pre-existing data and by including participants from two different geographic locations to expand the diversity of our sample.

### ***Findings***

In this section, findings of themes that emerged from the data analysis in terms of how parents have approached SD skills in their children with disabilities are reported. Findings represent a discussion of four themes, (a) why SD skills are important, (b) how SD skills can be fostered, (c) choices, decisions, and communication, and (d) conflict between the need for support and the need for independence.

### ***Why SD Skills Are Important***

Three different aspects emerged in the interview data that were key to understanding parents' concern for the development of SD skills in their children. First, parents' recognition of their children as individuals who have their own lives. Second, the insight into the value of SD skills for the future lives of their children. Third, the awareness that parental support will not be available for their children for the rest of their lives.

Joanne, mother of Lisa who has severe disabilities, describes how she used to almost "feel like an extension" of her daughter and that there was a change when she realized that it wasn't her life. She describes, "it was like something just turns on and you say, it's about time I did this, kind of start letting go. .. I think it emerged just with her opportunities to communicate and our awareness that there was someone trapped inside a body .. that we saw the emerging Lisa. And then there is no turning back."

Cheryl, whose son Chris has a traumatic brain injury due to a car accident, explains that "for a long time things were just planned out for him" and she just told him what to do. But several years after the accident, "he

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really started protesting, .. he seemed to resent it to some degree, .. as he got older he decided he wanted to make his own plans.” So she started to give him choices, thinking that this would “make him have more self-esteem” and that he would learn more from decisions that wouldn’t “work out well” as compared “to just being told what to do” all the time.

When thinking about why SD skills would be important for her son Neill, who has a severe disability, Noemie replies, “it has value not just to him but to the community.” She further explains that SD has value to his ability to participate freely and not having to earn his way into society and community, because SD says to everybody, here I am, and I have a right to be here. He has become a lot less passive. He will be very persistent now in what he wants. He is more of a typical teenager, doing more typical things of being obnoxious sometimes, which is great, I love it (laughs).

Eric’s mother Gina states that “in the next world, in the college world or the work world,” their parental support will not be possible to the same extent. But she says, “I hear over and over again about students who don’t have that kind of support, how they get in trouble.”

### ***How SD Skills Can Be Fostered***

Parents reported a number of critical experiences related to the question of how to foster SD skills in their children. Most often they mentioned the importance of patience and observation of their children and their environment. Helping their children to understand their disability and to find ways to compensate for it was also an important point. Parents also put an emphasis on preparing and influencing environments to be more accepting and supportive of their children with disabilities.

Carol mentions how important it is to follow through and to “hang in there” as a parent, especially if an idea or a project is concerned that holds a lot of meaning for her son Ray, who is 17 years old. With regard to promoting specific components of SD like self-advocacy, choice-making, decision-making, or problem-solving, Carol reports that “it’s a lot of being creative and thinking, what kind of jobs staff people do that they don’t have to?” In helping her son to find a job, she witnessed how he gradually acquired more and more social and critical thinking skills.

Helping their children with disabilities to develop a realistic understanding of their disability is crucial in order to set realistic expectations and in order to implement appropriate compensations in their learning endeavours. Carol elaborates on how she helped her son Ray to understand his disability, “a seizure disorder, what is that to him? We talk about that, like how would you tell somebody about that or what your needs are. People don’t understand. If he is in a gym class, he can’t go outside in June and run around the track if it’s 90 (degrees Fahrenheit) because heat causes seizures”.

Sammy reports that valuing her daughter for who she is and focusing on her gifts and strengths is important because “the kid will take cues from the parents. If the parents feel ashamed of their child for having a disability, and

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they are trying to hide it or trying to fix it, then the kids are gonna get the idea that there is something wrong with them.”

Frank, father of Eric who has a learning disability, also describes that there is “a lot of non-verbal support.” He explains, “sometimes with some of his emotional issues just being there and listening and feeding back what we are hearing and asking him if we are hearing him right. That is an affirmation of who he is, where he is right now at this point in time. He also says about both of his two children, you gotta help your kids to believe in themselves, because they need to find out that even though they may have peculiar or unique learning needs, they are really valuable people and they’ve got a lot to offer to the world.”

Cheryl also mentions the internet as an important source of information for parents, where they can find information about the particular type of disability, as well as information about parents’ groups, advocacy, legal rights, and other related themes.

### *Choices, Decisions, and Communication*

Providing their children with opportunities for choices and decisions allows them to receive feedback on their choice-making skills, which in turn allows them to experience the consequences of their choices. In supporting her son Ray, who is non-verbal, Carol reports that she always tried to encourage him to make choices, “no matter how small, whether it’s orange juice or cranberry juice, whether it’s this shirt or that shirt in the morning.” She adds, “it’s safe for him to make choices while he is still living with me at home and I would feel more secure about him making bad choices now while he is with me than making bad choices when he is away from me in the adult world.” She admits that it is not always easy to have her son make his own decisions and describes, “sometimes I just have to take a deep breath and say, I really need to let Ray make that choice, because sometimes you feel you know best as the parent, you feel like, uh -, I really know what you should do (laughs)!”

Cheryl thinks that with her becoming aware of the importance of giving her son choices, he gradually started accepting more responsibility for himself in just little things like, for example, getting up in the morning or being conscious about the maintenance of his truck. And when he started getting more freedom, he really started becoming more interested in school, too.

Carol describes that supporting her son in making decisions involves a lot of sitting down, asking, explaining, and asking again. If something comes up, brainstorming by “signing back and forth”, using boardmaker picture symbols, “breaking it down into simpler terms,” and putting ideas onto paper are very important means if a decision needs to be worked out.

Communication has been described as an essential tool for self-advocacy. Joanne whose daughter Lisa has significant speech impairments, explains, “when you hamper someone from communicating you are taking away the essence of who they are. She explains that communication is an important aspect because she cannot “read her mind” and because “it’s her right for me not to tell her what to do.” She considers constantly learning and trying to figure out new ways of communication to be equally important as allowing

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her daughter the time to be able to say what she has to say in whatever way, “being really open to listening and being patient, standing back, not always – we can’t wait, we need to move forward.”

Cheryl explains how she helped her son Chris to “tell people when he couldn’t do stuff and to back out of stuff that made him uncomfortable.” She explains how she supported him to understand, that he didn’t have to participate in games that he would rather not get involved in because he might get embarrassed and helped him to find words that he could use. She also reports, “in school something always came up where I had to go and talk to the teacher and get everything straightened out. He didn’t earlier on understand how to really advocate for himself effectively, and rather than to say that he couldn’t do something he would often agree with the teacher’s assessment that he just didn’t do it because he didn’t want to. So he allowed them to tell him that and have that be his reality. You know, for the teacher to say, well, you didn’t do that because you are slacking off. And he would go, ‘yeah, that’s right’. And that wouldn’t really be the truth, he just really wouldn’t know how to do it or understand how to do it and so he just would ignore it.”

### ***Conflict between the Need for Support and for Independence***

Carol describes an experience that illustrates the conflict between her son’s need for support and his desire for independence. She says, “there is that struggle for independence, he just wants to be separate from Mom and Dad, he wants to be more independent. He has a cousin the same age who got his driver’s license. That’s not something we’re even thinking about for Ray. How can we parallel that? How can we give him similar opportunities?”

Frank describes how they “had to back off with his schooling” when their son was telling them, “you guys think I can’t do it.” Part of supporting their son’s independence was “simply saying, ok, if you want to do more yourself, you do it.”

Gina also describes “being a strong advocate” for their son as “a very delicate balance”: while trying to “foster his self-esteem,” he doesn’t know that things might not happen for him if his parents were “just the type of parents that don’t do this.”

### **Conclusion**

Parents play an important role in the acquisition of SD skills of children with disabilities. Data from the interviews in this study support the first theme, which revolves around reasons for fostering SD skills in children with disabilities. Knowing why SD skills are important drives the way parents approach this task. Their knowledge about the importance of SD skills for their children is rooted in their own experiences as well as in their involvement in SD programs with a special focus on SD as a “means of experiencing quality of life consistent with one’s own values, preferences, strengths, and needs” (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001, p. 8). Turnbull, Ann &

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The second theme describes how parents foster SD skills in their children. They familiarized themselves with the concept and goals of SD and recognized the importance of self-advocacy skills for their children. Similar to teachers who can only teach SD skills if they are self-determined themselves (Browder et al., 2001, p. 241), parents also need to educate themselves. By strengthening their own competence, their own positive self-esteem as well as by creating and fostering environments that are supportive of their children, parents can become better role models to their children. Often it is not teaching or fostering a specific skill related to a component of SD, but communicating their belief in their children, which is “a confirmation of who they are” as Eric’s father said. By learning as much about the disability as well as about their options, their children’s rights can be protected while at the same time they can gain more independence.

Third, parents describe the importance of choices, decisions, and communication in fostering SD skills in their children. In order to develop a mature sense of self-definition, adolescents need opportunities to make their own choices independently (Moloney, Whitney-Thomas, & Dreilinger, 2000). At the same time, they need sufficient support. Looking for opportunities for “supported independence” like helping them to advocate for themselves, parents help their children to build confidence in their capacities and skills. Browder et al. (2001, p. 240) describe the provision of opportunities to make their own choices and decisions as a “form of environmental support.” Communication between parents and children as well as between families and schools was also an important topic.

Fourth, parents respect their children’s increased need for independence while providing the care that they need. Parents reported the experience of supporting their children as much as possible but at the same time to the least intrusive degree possible. This correlates with findings from a study by Floyd, Costigan, and Phillippe (1997) who describe how parents need to develop the capacity to adapt their parenting style during adolescence to the changing needs of their children. Davis and Wehmeyer (undated) describe this as walking “the tightrope between protection and independence.”

## **Discussion**

During discussion participants at the Workshop Qualitative Psychology in Riga (Latvia) raised the question about the influence of cultural values on parental views of the concept of SD as well as on their ability to support their children. More research is needed that examines parents’ perspectives on fostering SD skills in their children with disabilities beyond a single cultural group. More research is also needed on the question of whether or not the degree or level of disability makes a difference for parents in how the concept of SD is interpreted. Further research is also needed on effective intervention programs for parents of students with disabilities.

Parental involvement is highly determined by the type of co-operation with teachers and other professionals. Therefore, teachers need to focus on establishing positive relationships with parents of children with disabilities.

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Parental involvement in decisions should be promoted and meaningful partnerships should be created. Participants at the Workshop confirmed a strong need for support and encouragement among parents of children with disabilities in order to appropriately adapt to their children's needs and to help them to become more active as self-advocates. There is a need to provide teachers with recommendations for creating partnerships with families. For example, it is necessary to not only share information on students' progress or behaviour at school, but also to initiate parent support groups and activities designed to enhance cultural exchange. Therefore, further research is needed on relationships between families of students with disabilities and schools or other service settings for individuals with disabilities.

Parents play an important role in promoting SD with their children with disabilities. Fostering SD skills in their children with disabilities is, in essence, about affirming and understanding them and helping them to grow towards greater self-acceptance. This requires listening to and communicating with each other, being open to the surrounding environments as well as sometimes entering into conflicts. Our study aimed at a deeper understanding of this connection.

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## **Evaluation of Didactic Means and Their Formational Skills for Developing Interculturality**

*Antonio Medina, Concepción Domínguez, & Samuel Gento*

### **Abstract**

The research tends to find a design for a model for evaluation in the formation quality of the didactic means. In fact, this design reinforces the combination between interculturality and personal experiences in a frame of collaboration, tolerance and solidarity because it connects different cultures in classes. This evaluative model is composed by different tests, criterion and keys to reinforce the educational process. The methodological contribution is stimulating the quality, the means design and the TIC incorporation: video, internet, weblog, and mobile telecommunication.

### **Introduction**

During years, our investigation has focused on the idea that didactic means improve the intercultural concept and practice in classrooms thanks to their role and impact. Our present research tends to estimate the adequacy of means that are used for developing interculturality in primary school. Particularly, we have taken an intercultural and collaborative atmosphere in order to study the texts and the didactic means from an integral education in the Spanish frame, especially in rural context.

Our investigation starts with an evaluation model of the didactic means. In fact, this investigation focuses on the means' global structure, their coherence with the formation aims, their adaptation with the environment and their complementariness with a methodological system. Besides, this study is complemented by students' experiences and their families' implication.

Within our study, first, we have doubled our groups of discussion. Second, we have interviewed relevant informants, and, thirdly, we have analysed the teachers' tasks and estimations of analysis from students, teachers and families' means.

### **Basis for the Construction for an Evaluation Model of Didactic Means and Their Intercultural Option**

This means is used for improving communication and supporting the process of teaching and learning. Because of this, this means helps to increase the students' motivation, their implication for the design of the model of teaching and closeness from the educational community to interculturality.

The formational quality of the means is evaluated in order to determinate the object of our means and to estimate its meaning. Also this evaluation is useful for the study of the correlation with the rest of the elements that create

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the model of teaching and learning and its intrinsic value for consolidating an intercultural framework.

The construction of this formation quality of the means takes place in an intercultural frame surrounded with a spatial, time, socio-relational context that is always changing. Particularly, this means is valued by its formation finality that includes fulfilled aims and the adaptation of its structure into an intercultural teaching and learning frame.

Therefore, our intercultural project is complex because we pay attention to its adaptation to aims, values, social meaning and human projection. However, there is no sensibility in the design of means that connect cultures because teachers, means' creators and extended cultures impose their styles in the generation of materials. In one of our early works (Medina & Sepúlveda, 2000) we defend the necessity of a narrow collaboration between teachers and means' designers in order to pay attention to all the cultures. We have an example of this in our experience with Cameroon students and their learning of Spanish. In a Secondary school, Spanish and Cameroon teachers succeed in developing an intercultural model among students. In fact, this teachers' team has increased considerably presently.

Another practical example of this intercultural implication takes place in a primary school that was situated in a rural Castellian- Manchén area. Firstly, our process of interculturality had a problem in the way of implication to the families. Secondly, another problem was the correct use of the families' experiences, values and vital problems in an intercultural process. Because of these two problems, our consideration for the creation of a design of means would be:

- A selection of texts that represent the Spanish culture from South and Central America.
- An evolution of texts from centre and south-east Europe, especially from Poland, Romania and Bulgaria.
- Re-design of North Africa and Sub-Saharan texts that were related with the Spanish culture of early ages.

The model of evaluation for the quality of the designed and intercultural means must characterise each culture and ethnic background in Primary schools. An example of this can be seen in gypsy groups and their way of understanding life, family and social relationships that are re-elaborated with other cultures that are in our classrooms.

The didactic knowledge gives us a semantic, synthetic and pragmatic pertinence for creating an intercultural design of means, especially in the area of Language and Social Studies. In fact, these two areas integrate interdisciplinary processes that complement other areas such as Music and Mathematics. Therefore, these areas create codes using their body language that can read intercultural and integrated designs of didactic means (see Figure 1).

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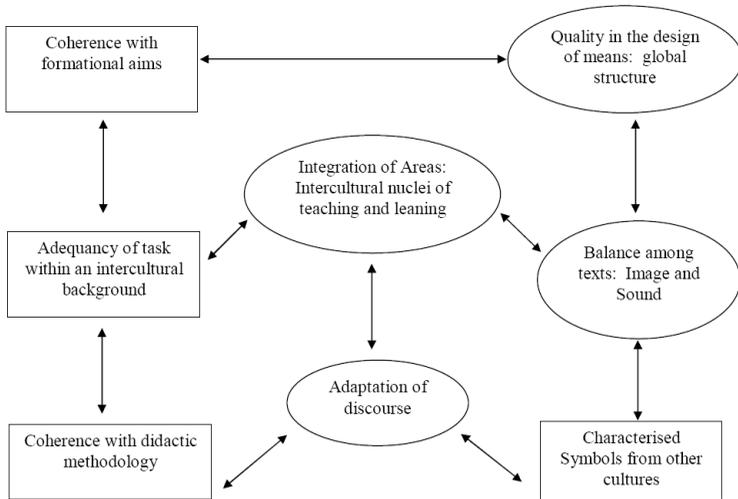


Figure 1: Representation for / Estimation of the Evaluation of Intercultural Means

Our model of estimation for the value of the mean's design must have the following aspects for noticing the rigor and pertinence of the means in intercultural education:

- Clarifying Discourse.
- Cultural Integrated Examples.
- Global structure.
- Balance among the study of intercultural problems.
- Complementariness with experiences and study cases.

In fact, these aspects are reinforced with these criteria:

- Intercultural Relevance.
- Intercultural Pertinence.
- Innovation.
- Exhaustiveness.
- Originality.
- Variability.
- Redundancy.
- Integration.

These criteria could be used to create different options in the design for the frame of verbal and images codes. Besides, this creation could be enriched with Internet tools and software computer systems that give plurality.

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***Main Problem of Our Research***

Our research tends to find a design for a model for evaluation in the formation quality of the didactic means. In fact, this design reinforces the combination between interculturality and personal experiences in a frame of collaboration, tolerance and solidarity because it connects different cultures in classes.

***Process for the Solution to Our Problem***

The construction of our model is based on the collection and analysis of different evaluation models that involve the formational characterisation and the projection of means in the processes of teaching and learning.

***Evaluation of Intercultural Texts: Didactic and Investigative Valorisation***

Portera (2005) proposes a conceptual and semantic model for estimating the formational quality of texts. Also this model identifies the prejudices and present stereotypes in Primary education. In fact, this model deepens into people's images that they have from other cultures, from types of conceptions, from ethnographic material and Delor's work (1996).

Portera (2005) applied methodology for analysis of the content. Therefore, this methodology obtains a structural vision and a study of the most representative elements.

Our data was:

- Analysis of the most representative texts from primary school.
- Design of a guide for analysing 'ad hoc' texts.
- Conclusion of valorisation in true intercultural contributions and their frame.

Then, there was a transversal study.

**Substantive Context of Our Investigation: the Role of Our Multi-Cultural School in Mora**

Mora is situated in Toledo, an hour from Madrid. In fact, Mora is a rural city that is growing in population and technology. Mora's economy is based on the production of olive oil and wine. The agriculture is helped by a tender Mediterranean- Continental weather.

In the school there are different ethnic groups. Actually, the majority of students are gypsies. This huge number is followed by Central European, African and Ibero-American students. All these groups have created new values, ways of seen life and singular styles for answering the complex problems of our culture in community.

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There are groups of teachers who form the team of our school. Actually, in this team there are thirty teachers, mostly female, in a community of about 1000 citizens.

Our school is situated in the surroundings of the countryside. Particularly, this school has lots of classrooms in two buildings. The assistants of these buildings are students from different cultures like Farfant School. In fact, in these two buildings there is a cosy atmosphere with wide and light classrooms, and there are instalments for sports and plays. The classrooms, corridors and general stages are decorated with paintings, pamphlets and well-done panels that are full of written ideas and conceptions of the environment and their intercultural projection.

The intercultural life is attended by the direction and the teachers that are conscious about the differences and their implication in innovative projects focused on the flexibility in the groups. Also in these projects there is collaboration between the school and the families. Besides, there is leadership in the directive team based on participation and implication in the majority of parents, students and teachers.

The school values the teachers' implication, their search for new values and their investigative role of teaching and learning.

In our study, we found several prejudices that define cultures. An example of this can be seen in African culture that is considered poor and underdeveloped in comparison with the European one that are seen as innovative, secure and developed. In fact, there are ethnic groups that are called primitive, and they have a negative vision due to their dances and rituals.

As Portera (2005, p. 189-190) says: "The principle of intercultural pedagogy represents a truly Copernican revolution. Concepts like identity and culture are not interpreted any more as static, but as dynamic. Otherness or strangeness, are not seen just as a danger or risk in terms of conspicuous behaviour or illness, but also as a possibility for enrichment and for personal and social growth".

"In other words, the intercultural principle can incorporate all the positive aspects of transcultural and intercultural pedagogy, but at the same time include all the above named dangers, to bring about interaction".

The analysis of the formational content in the texts and their intercultural value has generated several studies that some of them have been analysed by us, Portera's works (2005) mean a representative contribution to the study of meanings, values, ideas. Also he possesses historical, geographical, literary and religious facts. In depth, there is a search for sense and innovation for ideas and problems that go with the intercultural reality. In fact, there is a demand by our complex society and a necessary advance in the lifestyle more open and closer to emergent necessities from a XXI century society in Europe (Medina & Domínguez, 2006; Touraine, 2005).

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## **Design of the Research / Empirical Work**

### *The Aims of the Study*

- Design of a model for estimating the formational quality of the means and their incidence in the improvement of the intercultural education that contrasted with the teachers and families' opinions.
- Application of the model, using a scaled survey, in the groups of discussion, interview for analysing the quality of the texts used by the school.
- Estimation the pertinence of the model for evidencing the formational quality of the didactic materials that are used in the school.
- Construction of instruments of adequate evaluation of a formational model.
- Complementariness of diverse methods and the analysis of data using surveys, groups of discussion and analysis of formational content of the means.
- Contribution in the line of improvement and innovation of adequate means to the development of intercultural education.

### *Methodological Perspective for the Realisation of our Evaluation*

The evaluation of means and the construction of an estimating model in the materials' quality, in order to improve the intercultural education, requires an 'ad hoc' methodology that integrates a survey methodology and an analysis of the teachers' opinions using a scaled valorisation which are widened by groups of discussion, a study of content, values and a pertinence of means in order to answer innovative sense of each item.

In the construction of texts in diverse areas, there is significance and elaboration of themselves. Actually, these two aspects are integrated narrowly with knowledge and different solutions for the problem.

The disciple is fundamented by interaction. The necessary intercultural communication is language. Therefore, each culture has a nuclear contribution, from its own language, generated along its history.

Bryzhera's (2005) ideas that are supported by Bakhtin and Vygostky's works affirm that the learning of a language has a shocking meaning in the developing of a sociocultural identity.

The language has a complete meaning, given in a social context, with singular relations and conditions. Actually, this language finds its sense and its way of answering the deep changes of our society.

How can you be bilingual or trilingual in this wide and changing environment? How can you work a common language that could respect and take care about the present different multi-cultures in the classroom?

Our study wonders about the construction of these respectful texts in an intercultural context. Also we ask about the necessity of the balance between

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knowledge and the way of comprehending it. In fact, this balance is obtained by openness and collaboration among different cultures in class.

In another of our works (Medina, Domínguez and Gento, 2006), we defend that the design of means could help in the improvement in the teachers' formation. Particularly, this design consists of 'ad hoc' web pages that complement classical texts, and also there are computer class-boards that digitise our classics.

Weber (2005) says: "This interactive view (Gallego, 2006) seems more capable of conceptualising intercultural learning and development as an activity ... where personal and social factors mediate Intercultural competence implies: "mindful identity negotiation" and "coping with strategy".

The exhaustive construction of means in a semantic and symbolic meaning is complemented by hermeneutic and comprehensive orientation.

The process in the design of estimating instruments for the quality of means is:

- Analysis of the Models in the Design of Means.
- Methodological Complementariness:  
Study of multiple cases, groups of discussion, clear interviews, analysis of the documents and texts, the quality of a formational content, also the valorisation on converge information and symbolic interaction.

Our followed process consists of:

- Evidences of previous studies in the analysis of means (Marquez, Cabero, etc.).
- Construction of a key scale-survey that is representative in the contributions of our field (Bazin, 1999).
- Appointment of an intercultural value of the used means from class teachers. Directive Team: teachers, families, and students.

All of this study is focused on the quality of the design of means using basic texts such as Languages, Social Sciences, Mathematics, Art.

### ***Complementariness of Opinions about the Nuclei Aspects in the Design, Sense, Potentiality and Adaptation of Means***

Synthetic study of the main contributions of an emergent data is in contrast with basic models and the estimation in the formational means potentiality and in the development in the process of the re-design and intercultural creation of new materials. All of this is supported by an integrated and creative schema that overcomes partial elements that are not focussed on the use of formational means in an intercultural context.

In the research line it is interesting to present Weber's model to work in the classroom intercultural innovation process (see Figure 2).

The educational practise at school, especially in Primary School is related to the capacity of teachers, in general communities that design the nuclear texts, the new, singular and intercultural education. For instance, all the students, families and teachers write and develop didactic themes adapting

them as values, emergent concepts and particular interests. Therefore, all people live and interact in each classroom at school.

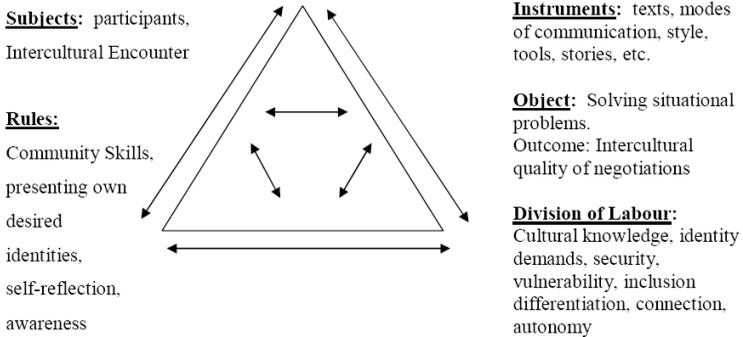


Figure 2: Weber's model in the classroom intercultural innovation process

The design of books and didactic units prepares for formational and educational learning, especially in decisions for the construction of intercultural communication:

- Special features, new texts, new working styles at the classroom, design of activities that develop a historical and collaborative aspect between teachers and students using computers and blackboards.
- Adaptation of all the materials into the students' values, knowledge and personal and social necessities in a new intercultural society.
- Aims: respect for the students and team students that live in a general community.
- Deep concepts about the development in socio-intercultural attitudes.

### ***A Methodological Process Is Suitable with Our Problem in Our Study: Methods for Emergent Intercultural Situations***

The most representative method for valuing the quality of the means is the use of a survey. In fact, this survey has been made by experts, teachers and selected students. Also this survey has been complemented by an analysis of the content. Actually, this analysis has focused on the study of the most representative components and the coherence of their development. In depth, this analysis looks for a meaning and perception of every person that uses our survey.

Taken a hermeneutic vision based on an intercultural complexity, there is a selection of the most representative symbolic items of each culture, their polychrome, values and ways for answering the human beings' problems for living. However, this vision goes beyond the people's social and cultural necessities.

We wonder if we could estimate the adequacy of our selected elements for valorisation of the formational quality of the means. If this adequacy is wrong, we can reconsider a new emergent design. Different methodology can be used due to each different culture that interacts with our evaluation of the means. This contrast requires a representation of the model components and the classroom agents' perception of these components.

The evaluation in the quality of the means is supported by strong arguments that value if the means transmits respect, encounter and openness among cultures. These means are components of a didactic model and their inter-dependence. In fact, the means develops students' competencies, the improvement of teaching and the development of the school as an intercultural ecosystem.

The method used for evaluating the pertinence of the texts that are used in Primary school, in the areas such as Language, Social Sciences, Mathematics and Arts, is integrated. Besides, this method is an interdisciplinary encounter that improves interculturality due to its pertinence.

Our methods are based on our surveys, groups of discussion and the analysis of the texts for developing interculturality using:

- Analysis of content in the used terms.
- Orientation of tasks for promotion of cultural encounter and integration.
- Identification of activities, problems, projects focusing on interculturality.

Our method is coherent with formational finality and a true projection of the means for developing interculturality.

Our method for constructing a model of the means is creative, and it has a great cultural and axis background. In fact, this method will rediscover new values, aims generating ways of action and intercultural performance. Therefore, we wonder about these new values if they would have:

- Themes, aims and intercultural values.
  - Focus of contents.
  - Methods, activities and performances.
  - Singular means: Classical, informative and combined.
- The text analysis and the textual interculturality are reflected into:
- Problems. Frameworks, experiences, encounters and permanent formational processes are completely intercultural.
  - Application of a new way of valorisation in the intercultural quality and its projection in language texts and in Social Sciences as the first step.
- Then, this projection would enter into the areas of Mathematics and Arts.

There is estimation in the design of texts for the four cited areas. How can you value the formational pertinence of such texts? Their intercultural potentiality, their integration with other knowledge and their origin from a geo-historical content?

Because of these three aspects, the comprehension of the intercultural reality is based on a geo-historical and semantic method. In fact, this reality consists of different cultures that come from micro- and meso- communities, which have a formational orientation.

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Methods for evaluating the educational potency of the discourse: Integrated method for an analysis of intercultural content in texts: identification and framework in textbooks that have the following items:

- Explicit Values.
- Cultural Symbols.
- Concepts: Cultural nuclei terms.
- Narrative Semantics.
- Characteristic Tales.
- Singular and balanced Poems among Cultures.
- Cultural Syntax.
- Common geo-historical Nuclei among Cultures.
- Emergence of Equality among human beings.
- Contribution and Recognition of cultural Languages in the classroom.
- Permanent Search of Socio-Communicative Process in the classroom.
- Projection of Knowledge in the areas, etc.

These analysis dimensions are units of the study that are widened by characteristic knowledge that come from a geo-historical framework. Actually, these dimensions give us cultural data for geographical and historical backgrounds:

- Space.
- Chronology.
- Environment.
- Contrasts.
- Tendencies.
- Solutions.
- Historical myths.
- Circles, etc. with a shared intercultural framework that have a complexity and openness

Because of these facts, our methodology is based on a study of texts using an analysis of the content.

Our conclusions come from an essay that was given to a series of teachers from Primary School. Within this paper, there are four areas (Language, Mathematics, Social Sciences and Arts) that were evaluated by these teachers who teach in an intercultural background due to their students from different cultures (see Appendixes A & B). Particularly, this group of teachers are ten from Mora (Toledo), eight from Madrid (Guinea teachers) and one from the outskirts of Madrid.

### **Conclusions about Groups of Discussion and Key Informants**

In our survey, there were two groups of discussion which were interviewed by key informants. In fact, these groups belong to rural areas and Madrid surroundings.

The interview includes the following questions:

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1. Textbooks must be recommended due to its interculturality in Primary school. Actually, publishing houses do not follow this principle, but respect.
  2. Which texts are more suitable for interculturality? Usually the ones that come from the environmental knowledge (*Social Sciences/ Knowledge of Environment*).
  3. Intercultural areas' collocation is mainly formed by Knowledge of Environment, Arts, Language and Mathematics.
  4. What kind of written style is appropriate for an intercultural advance? Esthetical and Attractive. Use of Spanish in combination with other languages. However, this use must follow the pedagogical principles, verbal maps, and illustrations, short and clear sentences.
  5. Is the present content sufficient for intercultural education? It is not well adapted. In fact, this content must be modified and adapted to intercultural parameters in a transversal way (transversal themes or coordination).
  6. Estimation of Adequacy:
    - Values: majority of people in lower levels.
    - Problems: lower levels.
    - Lifestyles: lower levels.
    - Focus: lower levels.
  7. How is the selection of texts made in classrooms? Following the traditional criteria. In spite of trying to work on tutorials, there is no clear definition in the selection of the texts.
  8. What kind of materials does the centre use for complement the selected texts? And which areas? Individual requests, maps, leaflets, dictionaries edited by the Association and other materials. Actually, these materials are very specific, and they are complemented by walls and narration which are used in annual open dissertations for cultural integration.
  9. What is the presentation between complementary texts' means and the following aspects like?
    - Ad hoc design and teachers' initiative and creativity. Also the teachers' motivation is very important. However, this aspect is not well explicit.
    - Values, problems, lifestyles, focus, expectations and intercultural curiosities.
  10. How does Internet use its means in order to create interculturality? Mostly, Internet use computer programmes, tales, stories, etc. However, the minority of the interviewed consider that Internet is scarcely used for intercultural education.
  11. What can we do in order to improve the text adaptation and the didactic means used in intercultural education?
    - Effective Implication from the educational administration in these projects, lines and elaboration of didactic and complementary means.
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- Use books from different publishing houses for helping, not as the only means. Ask for an improvement of intercultural frames to publishing houses.

### **Global Commentary**

Teachers affirm that intercultural model must be valued higher by the educational administration and publishing houses. Also teachers must design complementary means that would combine with their motivation in order to be adequate with the text and illustrations.

Taken environmental knowledge, teachers must advance in the selection of means. In fact, this selection must be exhaustive and collaborative with other colleagues and students' families.

With exhaustiveness, professors must work the intercultural values, communities' problems, teachers' lifestyles, cultural collaboration paying notice to substantive elements and teachers' implication.

Teachers must think again about focusing the texts in nuclear aspects: intercultural values, formational problems, respected and complemented lifestyles, didactic means that create an intercultural frame.

Teachers must create new didactic means for a new educational intercultural perspective. Also these teachers must develop new basis for the necessities of students, families and the emergent content. Spanish culture should be a combination between mutual respect and valorisation. Actually, this culture is a synthesis of action, and it is reflected in a way of work that selects texts from different areas. Also this work designs globalised texts that are developed in an integrated way implying schools and communities in order to be more innovative in texts and digital means for the integration of the didactic models.

### **Final Conclusions**

At the present time, in Primary school attention is scarcely paid to interculturality as we can see in their discourse, problems, conceptions and positive contributions.

Because of this, we observe that teachers should include their own experiences and their students' experiences in order to develop interculturality. Also textbooks and Internet tools are very useful for our task. Actually, texts from social sciences and arts are closer to Intercultural sensibility.

Therefore, the language used should be clear, with short sentences and it must be adapted to students' capacity in order to reach a universal language known by everybody that would respect every cultural singularity.

This methodology is based on self-knowledge and interaction with other cultures. Besides, the use of new technologies will be a great advance.

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Because of this, teachers' tasks would be:

- Adequacy to cultural students' background that would try to integrate both cultures using common themes.
- Widen axiological frame in order to fulfil the new necessities for rural areas.
- Recognition of the richness of a culture for trying to get the students' involvement.
- Widen the use of texts such as educational information, maps, classroom newspaper, and study of biographies, narration, painting walls, theatre plays and student profiles.
- Deepen into the selection of texts and activities that would develop cultural integration.
- Teachers should increase their level of collaboration in the selection of texts and their own discourse.
- Develop computer tools because the use of Internet is very low in rural areas.
- Co-ordination between educational aims and educational quality adapting the texts to Primary School. Therefore, educational administration, publishing houses and teachers must work in coherent intercultural atmosphere.

## Appendix A

### Practical Analysis of Our Survey

*Evaluation on the intercultural aspect of the educational texts from Primary School (Language & Mathematics)*

LANGUAGE	MATHEMATICS
<b>1. Text Presentation</b>	<b>1. Text Presentation</b>
	Teachers defend a well done presentation of texts.
<b>1.1 Content</b>	<b>1.1 Content</b>
Higher values (4,5,6) overcome greatly to lower ones.	We can observe that teachers say that there is a lack of relation between content and interculturality in the area of mathematics.
<b>1.2 Composition</b>	<b>1.2 Composition</b>
Items (1.2.1. and 1.2.2.) improve slightly the Content. Lower values are 6-5 and higher ones are 15-13. The selection of terms is considered low by 13 teachers and seven teachers think that this selection is correct. Item number 1.2.4. is positively considered (10 teachers). However, all these items can be improved.	In contradiction with Content category, teachers say that maths is very clear and universal within their ideas. However, there are lower marks in relation with the size that is connected with content.

LANGUAGE	MATHEMATICS
<b>2. Analysis of texts: Language- Social Sc.-Maths- Arts</b>	<b>2. Analysis of texts: Language- Social Sc.- Maths- Arts</b>
This item is very important for our teachers that considered a low analysis of texts in classrooms. Particularly, there is a lack of verbal terms that makes negative the teaching vision (16 teacher).	As we can see, there are lower marks between maths and verbal forms. In fact, there is just a higher contrast which is that mathematics is an interdisciplinary art.
<b>3. Intercultural Contents present the following aspects</b>	<b>3. Intercultural Contents present the following aspects</b>
Values obtained higher marks (16 teachers) while in other categories there is an equality among teachers' opinions. However, there is evidence in their ideas that there must be much effort in teaching intercultural contents (duplicity in lower levels). Another important aspect is that teachers (13 professors) notice that students do not pay attention to other different cultures. Also teachers (8 and 9) say that they must improve their integrated, interdisciplinary and intercultural vision.	Again, we observe that maths does not relate the students' personal problems and their different cultures. Therefore, a student is taught by universal mathematical methods, not using personal tricks or advice.
<b>3.5 Which aspects should contents integrate in educational intercultural processes?</b>	<b>3.5 Which aspects should contents integrate in educational intercultural processes?</b>
Having the same rights for expression. Paying attention to common desires and integration of something from each culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learning basic operations (two teachers).</li> <li>▪ Expression of their own experiences and ways of living in relation with interculturality.</li> <li>▪ Common values</li> <li>▪ Phonetics and written texts.</li> </ul>
<b>3.6 How do you use and value the knowledge in texts?</b>	<b>3.6 How do you use and value the knowledge in texts?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interpretation of different languages.</li> <li>▪ Presentation of verbal and visual items.</li> <li>▪ Personal works.</li> <li>▪ Materials for alphabetisation and Spanish learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good knowledge of mathematical signs.</li> <li>▪ Relation between maths and interrelated materials.</li> </ul>
<b>3.7 Which materials are used in your centre? Explain/ describe them.</b>	<b>3.7 Which materials are used in your centre? Explain/ describe them.</b>

LANGUAGE	MATHEMATICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Classroom newspaper.</li> <li>▪ Documents of educational information.</li> <li>▪ Student profile.</li> <li>▪ Host Planning (2 teachers).</li> <li>▪ Study of biographies and interesting people.</li> <li>▪ Painting walls.</li> <li>▪ Theatre plays.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adaptation and implication.</li> <li>▪ Language and Mathematical Papers.</li> </ul>
<b>3.8 How do you present your contents in an intercultural way?</b>	<b>3.8 How do you present your contents in an intercultural way?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Verbal contents.</li> <li>▪ Paying attention to culture's potentiality.</li> <li>▪ Students' participation.</li> <li>▪ Punctual and intermittent participation (2 teachers).</li> </ul>	Universal language for business world.
<b>4. Means/ Text Contents of Language, Maths, Social Sc. and Arts pay attention to the following aspects</b>	
As we can see (11-15 lower marks), there is a lack of coherence between aims and means. Actually, aims are not very explicit.	
<b>5. The Means Used</b>	
Taking teachers' higher remarks, self-teaching is the key for an intercultural classroom.	
<b>6. Tasks that present the means</b>	
As teachers mention, their tasks should improve into an intercultural background.	
<b>7. Expression of the real students' worries</b>	
As we can confirm with lower marks (15), there is a lack of interest about the students' personal experiences and cultures at the classrooms. However, there has been an increase in socialised tasks.	
<b>7.6 In your opinion, say the most adequate activities for developing the students' intercultural capacities</b>	<b>7.6 In your opinion, say the most adequate activities for developing the students' intercultural capacities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transversal collaborative activities.</li> <li>▪ Equal activities and same role.</li> <li>▪ Much interrelation.</li> </ul>	Much Interrelation.
<b>7.7 Mention your activities at school that develop an intercultural atmosphere</b>	<b>7.7 Mention your activities at school that develop an intercultural atmosphere</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Words play with different cultures and their translation.</li> <li>▪ Reflection group's activities about life, cultures and their similarity.</li> </ul>	There are none.

LANGUAGE	MATHEMATICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reading texts.</li> <li>▪ Greetings from different languages.</li> <li>▪ Activities for different students from different cultures.</li> <li>▪ Sharing activities and habits.</li> </ul>	
<b>8. Means Impact at the Students' education</b>	
Most of the teachers (15) say that there is a deficient correlation between classroom texts and the students' intercultural experiences.	
<b>9. On-line Means</b>	
The majority of teachers say that on-line means should be improved. Besides, 15 of them defend that the use of internet (didactic units, information...) helps the members to interact in order to create interculturality.	
<b>10. Integration between plural information and adjustment</b>	
The web quality must be improved, especially in didactic programmes and Navigation maps, but there is not a big dichotomy among teachers as other categories.	
<b>11. Normative Mean's Rigurocity</b>	
Teachers (14) notice that there is an interest from students to this category. Also there is an easy accessibility with this means.	
The intercultural discourse must be improved, and there should be adaptation of terms and their attention to singular differences from other cultures.	
<b>12. The Form of the Means</b>	
This form requires a higher attention, especially in the design of web pages. Also teachers (14) defend the students' own experiences and openness to all kinds of information about them (13-15).	
<b>13. On-line Didactic Intercultural Design</b>	
Most of teachers (8) suggest that the design must be complemented by discourse, values and new ways of seeing different cultures.	
<b>14. On-line Potentiality for</b>	
Teachers remark that collaboration must exist in interculturality, and the didactic intercultural means must be in their website In fact, potentiality and design must have an intercultural vision in web pages.	

## Appendix B

### Practical Analysis of Our Survey

#### *Evaluation on the intercultural aspect of the educational texts from Primary School (Social Sciences & Arts)*

SOCIAL SCIENCES	ARTS
<b>1. Text Presentation</b>	<b>1. Text Presentation</b>
As in Language and Mathematics, teachers (9) affirm that a presentation is very important for the area of Social Sciences.	As the rest of areas, Arts consider presentation being very important for teaching.
<b>1.1 Content</b>	<b>1.1 Content</b>
The majority of teachers (11) suggest that content is highly important for these sciences. Students pay attention when there is information in the speech.	We observe that there is no good adequacy between content and interculturality in Arts. Also there is no actualisation at all.
<b>1.2 Composition</b>	<b>1.2 Composition</b>
This category is related with 1.1.1. because students pay attention to a coherent and clear content. Therefore, these two categories must be united. Also we notice interest of teachers (8) of the selection of key words that relate with interculturality.	There are higher marks in the written text, but the coherence between images and this text obtains lower results.
<b>2. Analysis of texts: Language- Social Sc.- Maths- Arts</b>	<b>2. Analysis of texts: Language- Social Sc.- Maths- Arts</b>
In this category, we see that verbal adequacy is very important for teaching of this science. In fact, teachers (9) are very concerned about the use of a specific language and the students' necessity is a wider vocabulary for expressing their ideas.	Again we observe bad adaptation of the use of vocabulary in the class when there are students from different cultures.
<b>3. Intercultural Contents present the following aspects</b>	<b>3. Intercultural Contents present the following aspects</b>
In this category, teachers (10) are worried about the interrelation between interculturality and the students' problems because this is the priority at their classrooms, and it is related with values and other categories.	Teachers from Arts suggest that teaching must reinforce values, expectations and that is because of lower marks that we have noticed.
<b>3.5 Which aspects should contents integrate in educational intercultural processes?</b>	<b>3.5 Which aspects should contents integrate in educational intercultural processes?</b>

SOCIAL SCIENCES	ARTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Co-ordinator between different cultures.</li> <li>▪ Good cohabitation.</li> <li>▪ Respect for race, religion and colour (3 teachers).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Acceptance of other elements from different cultures.</li> <li>▪ Sharing of knowledge.</li> <li>▪ Search for artistic aims.</li> </ul>
<b>3.6 How do you use and value the knowledge in texts?</b>	<b>3.6 How do you use and value the knowledge in texts?</b>
Selection and adoption of terms from different cultures.	Artistic interpretation of different cultures that could be common among them.
<b>3.7 Which are the materials used in your centre? Explain/ describe them</b>	<b>3.7 Which are the materials used in your centre? Explain/ describe them</b>
There is none.	None
<b>3.8 How do you present your contents in an intercultural way?</b>	<b>3.8 How do you present your contents in an intercultural way?</b>
Daily use in business and habits.	Programmes, festivals.
<b>3.9 Means promotes Interculturality because they improve</b>	<b>3.9 Means promotes Interculturality because they improve</b>
Teachers manifest a necessity for improving these means in an intercultural background.	Teachers show lower marks so there must be an increase in this field.
<b>4. Means/ Text Contents of Language, Maths, Social Sc. and Arts pay attention to the following aspects</b>	<b>4. Means/ Text Contents of Language, Maths, Social Sc. and Arts pay attention to the following aspects</b>
The majority of teachers want adaptation of aims into an intercultural classroom. However, there is a lack of coherence, and they must improve the design and planning of their aims.	As the last category, teachers must improve the design and planning of their aims and means.
<b>5. The Means Used</b>	<b>5. The Means Used</b>
Most of teachers (10) use a vocabulary and self-teaching in order to create interculturality because these items are complemented by the means. Nevertheless, students do not have a great impact by these means nowadays.	There is a necessity of improving these educational means.
<b>6. Tasks that present the means</b>	<b>6. Tasks that present the means</b>
The tasks must be improved due to the lower marks obtained. Thanks to this essay, teachers realise that their classrooms must be involved with their students' problems.	There is neither implication nor interest about students' problems.
	<b>7. Expression of the real students' worries</b>
	Again, there is a need for developing this concern about the students.
<b>7.6 In your opinion, say the most adequate activities for developing the students' intercultural capacities</b>	

SOCIAL SCIENCES	ARTS
No activities.	
<b>7.7 Mention your activities at school that develop an intercultural atmosphere</b>	<b>7.7 Mention your activities at school that develop an intercultural atmosphere</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Importance of student's origins.</li> <li>▪ Knowledge about other countries.</li> <li>▪ Sharing customs</li> </ul>	No interesting quotations.
<b>8. Means Impact at the Students' education</b>	<b>8. Means Impact at the Students' education</b>
Teachers point out self-learning and collaboration as the most important categories for developing interculturality. The rest of items are undervalued.	As in the rest of areas, teachers defend (8) collaborative teaching. However, these teachers do not think that self-learning is well developed in classrooms.
<b>9. On-line Means</b>	<b>9. On-line Means</b>
As it happens in Language and Maths, teachers from Social Sciences demand improvement in on-line means that have an intercultural background.	As in Social Science, teachers ask for the development of the means at websites.
<b>10. Integration between plural information and adjustment</b>	<b>10. Integration between plural information and adjustment</b>
Teachers (9-10) say that there is no use and quality in this category. Therefore, we ask for an improvement of this theme.	As in Social sciences, quality and use have lower marks so teachers beg for improvement in this category.
<b>11. Normative Mean's Rigorosity</b>	<b>11. Normative Mean's Rigorosity</b>
In contrast with the last category, Social sciences have a higher level in this item. Students have a great accessibility to information that has different sources.	Teachers from Arts think that this item is not very developed due to its abstractness and symbolism. In opposition, teachers from social Sciences obtained higher results.
<b>12. The Form of the Means</b>	<b>12. The Form of the Means</b>
As it happened with the last item, this category has greater level of acceptance. However, there is just one contradiction with the integration of messages in the classrooms that must be improved.	All areas demand an improvement of this criterion as we can see it in the lower marks.
<b>13. On-line Didactic Intercultural Design</b>	<b>13. On-line Didactic Intercultural Design</b>
As in other questionnaire, this design has obtained lower results so it must be developed greatly.	Again, teachers obtain lower results in developing interculturality.
<b>14. On-line Potentiality for</b>	<b>14. On-line Potentiality for</b>
As the last category, teachers suggest that internet must have an intercultural background in the future.	Finally, teachers say that teaching should connect interculturality with internet as other teachers from other areas have said before.

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## **A Qualitative Approach to Research of Integration as Value Orientation of Youth in Rezekne, Latvia, in a Multicultural Media Environment as a Learning Place**

*Tamara Pigozne & Irina Maslo*

### **Abstract**

The purpose of the research is to determine the opportunities of the school (mezo level) in fostering the participation of the youth in the research, providing the youth have already been involved in multi-cultural media environment investigation. The research questions are as follows: whether there exist differences in integration as value orientation between Latvian and Russian youth and whether there is a coherence between participation experiences of the youth in integration as learning processes on the micro (class), mezo (school) and macro (region Latgale) level and integration as value orientation and, finally, how the value orientations change, which social pedagogical tools can support the understanding of integration as an opportunity in the participating research of a regional multicultural media in a secondary school. The conducted qualitative research analyzed integration as value orientation using a questionnaire and interview statements of participation, co-operation and joint decision as structure components of the participation at processes of integration on micro, mezo and macro level. For the analysis thereby the multicultural media environment is used as a learning place of the youth.

### **Introduction**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is a century of multicultural communities where diversity is respected and differences become a value. When dynamics and changeability characterise the community, a personality, particularly the youth faces a complicated task – based on human and eternal values to maintain a balance and not to get confused in the changing world where globalization tendencies increase. Integration in this context becomes one of the most important processes in the world. Hamburger (1994) has pointed out “life between two cultures can be considered as participation in two riches where the narrowness of the one has been overcome” (p.104) and Poulsens-Hansens (2001) considers that “it has to be looked at as the source of enrichment, not confrontation” (p. 18). Delors (2000) stresses that alongside with the task “learn to live together, developing understanding about others, and their history, traditions and their values, encouraging common implementation of the projects and the solution of inescapable conflicts in cultured and peaceful way” (p.13), emphasizing socio-cultural competence as the means of self-development, collaboration and living together in multi-cultural community, striving for vision – inclusive school with varied spectrum of students, as well as with the task to learn to be, know and do are becoming especially important.

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A unique situation has formed on the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. Eriksons (1998) emphasises that for people, particularly “youth that is always ready to implement both the varied principles and principled variety” (p.187) when “course of life intersects with the rhythm of history” (p. 204), there is an opportunity for a new socio-cultural experience. Overtness, activity, participation, search of identity, objectives and motives of action are actualised in the characteristic of the youth. At the same time integration process in modern community sets high demands for students: they have to be ready to change, be flexible and mobile.

This paper presents the research about work integration as the process of culture – dialogue communication because a person engages into the communication process at all levels (personality, group) without intermission, and integration cannot take place in isolation from society communication process – without mass media, communication with other people.

The youths’ socio-cultural context is analysed as the youths’ life space in the research work: youths’ social macro-environment that comprises community as a social system, mezo-environment – school as a social system, social micro-environment that is formed by a family and a school team (class, group). Culture, in its turn, transforms into the spiritual, material and social life value orientations of community, school, family and school team. They are determined by the individual system of the person’s attitudes to the changeable community, school, mutual relationships and oneself in these multi-dimensional integration processes.

## Research Context

Social environment and cultural environment are the most important components that make socio-cultural context. The most important basic social components of socio-cultural experience are a family, school, spare time, peers, and mass media.

The media as an essential component of the youths’ world belongs to the most important features of youths’ culture. The media offers the formation of one’s own productive point of view, and a lot of opportunities of the social environment (Böhnisch, 1992), broadening the ability of youths’ social activities (Füllbier & Münchmeier, 2001) and the opportunities of experience formation. The main research questions comprise finding out the conception of youths’ integration as a value, clarifying the similarities and differences in the youths’ integration as a value conception through youths’ participation in the integration process, determining school (mezo level) opportunities for the enforcement of youths’ participation involving youths into the research of multicultural media environment. Integration is concerned with relationships among people and people’s groups, and these relationships are partly determined by history, that is why historical and regional context is important in the research work (research is done in 2 out of 4 regions of Latvia (in Latgale and Vidzeme where the national structure, social and economical situation differ)). Historical situation in Latgale, which was determined by

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geopolitical position (the border with the Eastern Slavs), which was an objective reason for Slavs' immigration; becoming an intensive contact area with Russians, Byelorussians, Poles, Lithuanians, Jews; administrative and economic isolation from Kurzeme and Vidzeme; lasting influence of Poland and different emotional – psychological statements as its results; dominant role of Catholicism that has formed in such a way that there has always been a large proportion of different ethnic groups and it has had an essential role in the formation of the ethnic structure of Latvia. Latgale with its traditions of multiculturalism and socio-psychological peculiarities has influenced the ethnic life of all Latvia's nationalities. Latgale is characterised by the variety of ethnic groups' origin, interests, identification peculiarities and status also nowadays.

The latest research works show that there are considerable differences among different Latgale regions and the more developed regions that instead of equalization they will only intensify in the foreseeable future. For example, national structure essentially differs in Latgale and Vidzeme, as well as in the cities of Latvia – Daugavpils and Rezekne (see Table 1).

*Table 1*

The Differences of National Structure in Vidzeme, Latgale, Daugavpils and Rezekne

Nationality/Region	Latgale	Vidzeme	Daugavpils	Rezekne
Other nationalities	6,30	5,50	28,50	6,90
Russians	40,10	11	54,50	43,70
Latvians	43,60	83,50	17	49,40

The level of economic development differs, too (in Latgale region there is the highest unemployment rate and the lowest salary in the country, the proportion of computers with the Internet connection is the lowest one in Latvia). Of course, it influences availability of education and the quality of education because the opportunities of Latgale youths and the youths of other regions are different. The results of the research “The opinions of poor people: social evaluation of poverty in Latvia” conducted at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology reveal that poverty is a multifaceted phenomena that reaches much further than inability to pay for goods and services. It influences people's ability to participate effectively in political, social and cultural life. Many poor families experience such isolation physically because they have to move to the outskirts. It influences people intellectually and financially because their children have fewer opportunities to choose school, qualitative education and wherewith hopes for better work.

It affects the life socially and culturally because people cannot participate in social and cultural life as they cannot afford it. The authors (Trapenciere, Rungule, Pranka, Lāce, Dudwick, 2000) of the research consider: “If people are isolated more financially and socially, they do not get information and support, which would provide opportunities to overcome problems and return to the community. Families that have found themselves in sustained

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poverty are in danger to be excluded from the community if all the issues concerned with poverty are not solved in complex” (p. 130).

### **The Research Problem and Research Framework**

Traditional functional approach to integration is in the basis of Latvia's community integration conception and programme: communicative, social, political whose target is people of other nationalities but integration has a bilateral character.

Discussions about the formation of community integration policy for the new period were started in Latvia in the year 2004. The necessity for scientific justification for integrated approach to integration that was based on integration theory in comparative research in European countries was revealed in the discussions.

It has been established that the necessity to develop such an approach is distinguished exactly in the countries where integration process is going on successfully. Finland and Spain formed a new integrated approach to integration, emphasising the creation of self-determined participation opportunities for every individual, group (class), organisation, regional community in all life spheres, provision of equal rights and duties in everyday life, education, at work, in social and political life for everybody, particularly for children and youths. There is a point of view that global international socio-cultural orientation of children and youth will encourage a self-determined participation of the personality and the observance of social conventions in the integration processes in all spheres of life, understanding them as new perspectives, not limitations. The notion of culture changes in the new approach is not reduced only to national cultures and languages. The culture of every person's learning, the culture of collaboration and agreeing in diverse community, communication culture by the means of several languages and mass media is understood as culture. Every person's rights to his/her learning, collaboration as well as communication culture and understanding of civic duties to provide the implementation opportunities of this right for themselves and others, their children and youth is a uniting social value of a young individual and community that makes the formation basis of integrated democratic community in all spheres of individual life activities: education, everyday life, social and political life at local, regional and global level. Integration as a multi-dimensional process does not guarantee the disappearance of stereotypes but helps to reduce social preconceptions and provides more differentiated view to the limitations and necessities of integration. The theory of integrated processes would provide scientific basis for practice of integration processes' enforcement in Latvia (Maslo & Held, 2006).

It is important to study the conception of youths' integration as a value, through youths' participation in the integration process, to find out the similarities and differences in the youths' integration as a value, involving youth into the research of multicultural media environment, to determine the

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opportunities of school (mezo level) for the enforcement of youths' participation in this context.

### **Theoretical Basis of the Research**

The methodological basis of the research lies in the result of theoretical analysis. The research work is based on the conception of integration as a development task (Held, 2001), ability to act (Riegel, 2004), the process of the personality development or "socialisation" (Kreckel, 1994), the communication process of culture dialogue because culture is not reduced only to the national cultures and languages, it includes the learning culture of every person, the culture of collaboration and agreeing in the diverse community, communication culture by the mediation of several languages and mass media. The necessity to determine integration as an action of public and social resources is stressed, emphasizing the skills of active participation. In this aspect integration means broadening (opportunistic value) and enrichment of opportunities.

The conception of the theory of integrative processes (Klein, 1997), as well as systematically constructive approach on the conception of subjective phenomenon in relation to experience and values form the theoretical novelty of the work.

Based on the theory of integrative process, integrative process develops in four dimensions:

1. inter-psychological processes that are a basic condition, for the recognition of diverse one and it mainly depends on people's mutual relationships in everyday life, institutional regulations in the particular public environment;
2. mutual interaction processes that are concerned with participation opportunities to do something together with others; not regarding the necessities of integration as something special but considering that all of us are different, it is acceptable to be different that's why we differ and that's why we need a mutual activity that is a basis of integration processes;
3. institutional processes that form administrative basis of integration, it is mainly the demand of up-bringing for the institutions;
4. community processes provide normative basis to secure that teachers create such a teaching and learning environment where there are no contradictions between unequal opportunities and similar needs and rights.

All four dimensions are mutually related and necessary for the implementation of integration. Although the notion of integration in Latvia is more discussed as a social process at macro level, the research works in the world reveal that it is a multidimensional process. Value orientations are essential in analysing this process at individual perspective.

The research is based on the conclusion that according to these viewpoints, the formation of the value orientation can be explored through the disclose of their participation in the integration processes where the participation

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components in the multi-dimensional integration processes at individual, micro, mezo and macro levels are co-determination, contribution, and co-distribution (Otto & Thiersch, 2001; Maslo, 2004)

and sociocultural approach to the cultural diversity in multi-cultural community (Wygotsky, 1978, Habermas, 1994).

The conception about national – ethno – cultural belonging (Mecheril, 2003), the conception of the unity of cognitive, affective and action components in youths' value orientation and the conception of social experience as opportunities' broadening in person's life (Riegel, 2004) are essential in the research context.

One of the opportunities to encourage the formation of youths' integration is to participate actively in the integration process. In the view of modern pedagogy it is regarded as broadening of participation opportunities. Otto and Thiersch (Otto, Thiersch, 2001) define participation as active citizens' participation in political discussions and decision making more seldom than participation in political results that includes participation in freedom, public power, richness, wealth and safety.

Such pedagogical means as mass media (Fullbier & Munchmeier, 2001), recognition (Bohnisch, 1992; Riegel, 2004), fairness (Mecheril, 2003), trust, sincerity and the respect of youths' diversity enforce participation in multi-dimensional integration processes.

Integration as a value is formed in a participation process that involves co-determination, contribution and co-distribution at personality, micro (family, class), mezo (school) and macro (region, country) levels. (see Figure 1).

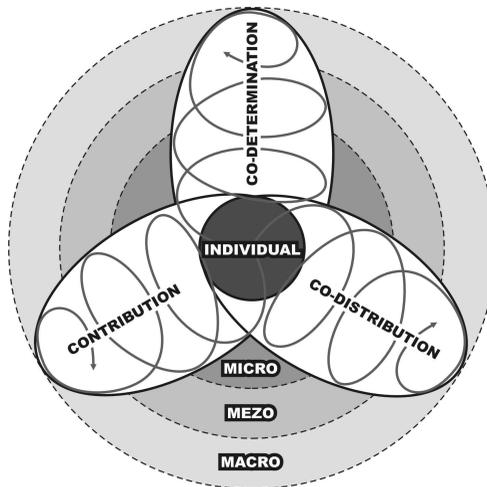


Figure 1: Structure of participation (The author: T. Pigozne)

## Research Methods

Qualitative methods are mainly used in the research, but to provide the validity and reliability of the research results, quantitative methods (SPSS software) were used simultaneously to calculate the descriptive statistic indicators – average arithmetical, standard deviation, minimal and maximal value. The methods used in the research work are as follows: data obtaining methods (questionnaire, narrative interviews), data processing methods (coding with AQUAD 6, content analysis), data analysis methods (frequency determination with AQUAD 6 and SPSS, testing of hypothesis with AQUAD 6 and SPSS, formation of value chart with AQUAD 6).

## The Process and the Results of the Research

The research was conducted in 3 stages. The first stage of the qualitative research (2002-2003) – determining of youths' integration conception of participation opportunities in Vidzeme and Latgale regions. A questionnaire to determine integration as a value was used. 53 youth from Vidzeme and 174 from Rezekne region filled in the questionnaire. 70 youth from Liepāja were polled in the framework of the project "Youth in the community integration process". Afterwards the notions of integration conception of youth who live in different regions of Latvia were compared. The data was collected with the help of the survey and questionnaire methods. The data acquired were qualitatively analysed, using coding with AQUAD 6, grouping of what is said, frequency determining and pedagogical interpretation according to theoretical approaches. The codes, which are based on the system of 4 dimensions and 3 participation indicators, were worked out to process, interpret and analyse the results of the interviews. Two code systems were made - for determination of participation and the system of socio-pedagogical means, which promote youths' participation in integration processes in multi-cultural environment (see Table 2 & 3).

*Table 2*  
Code System for Determination of Participation

Participation indicators Dimension	Co-determination	Contribution	Co-distribution
Individual	Cdtind	Cind	Cdbind
Micro	Cdtmicro	Cmicro	Cdbmicro
Mezo	Cdtmezo	Cmezo	Cdbmezo
Macro	Cdtmacro	Cmacro	Cdbmacro

Recognition, trust, encouragement, honesty and media were the most significant socio-pedagogical means out of 13 mentioned socio-pedagogical means. The most essential criteria for co-determination were the opportunity to express one's opinion, listening to others' opinion and ability to make

decisions, for contribution – participation and involvement and for co-distribution – collaboration.

*Table 3*  
The Code System of Socio-Pedagogical Means

Socio-pedagogical means Dimension	Recognition	Trust	Encouragement	Ability to act	Media
Individual	Rindivid	Tindivid	Eindivid	Aindivid	Mindivid
Micro	Rmikro	Tmikro	Emikro	Amikro	Mmikro
Mezo	Rmezo	Tmezo	Emezo	Amezo	Mmezo
Macro	Rmakro	Tmakro	Emakro	Amakro	Mmakro

Comparing the answers of Rezekne and Valmiera youths' on understanding the notion of integration the results of the research show that there are no essential differences. Both Latvians and other nationalities consider that community integration is the formation of the united Latvia state. Political integration, in its turn, is mutual approaching of different community groups, but they can't precisely define their objectives. The answers of Latvians and other nationalities' youth on the objectives of community and political integration differ. The Latvian youth have more superficial, more abstract conception on integration. They mainly relate it to people of other nationalities, not to themselves, emphasising the relationship between subject and object. Integration for them is concerned with language knowledge, naturalization process, and respect to the basic nation and Latvia state (so the terminal values dominate). Nouns prevail a lot in the explanation of the notion of integration in answers of the youth:

- *joining the community with corresponding duties;*
- *paying attention to different community peculiarities, uniting on the basis of common interests;*
- *is concerned with community but I don't know – how, accommodating to the community, its law and regulations;*
- *development, progression, replacing of old by the new;*
- *engaging in the process that goes on in the community.*

The youth of other nationalities accept the aspect of language and culture, integration for them is more connected with the realising of cultural values, mutual enrichment, new opportunities, action that encourage the improvement of mutual relationships among people who live in the area of the same country, the uniting of people on behalf of the common objectives, the state stability and development.

79.3 % of the youths consider that integration refers only to them and affects them also in such a way emphasising the position subject – subject in the integration process is much higher. They are ready to participate in the integration process if their culture and language are respected. In understanding other nationalities' youth, integration is concerned with the person's quality. The verbs that characterize dynamics, progression,

development, changeability, flexibility dominated in the explanation of the notion:

- *acquire, study languages, be able to introduce with cultural values of other countries, accept, respect the values and the way of life of other nationalities, cross-cultural links with other cultures,*
- *traditions and politics,*
- *mutual understanding when another language and culture are accepted, skill to agree on common objectives, act to achieve them,*
- *work together, implement projects, uniting of community groups in favour of common objectives,*
- *accepting and broadening community and culture, becoming a sanguine and educated person,*
- *improving and harmonizing mutual relationships and objectives of different communities in favour of another one through culture and language of the future community development, uniting on behalf of community development.*

73 % of the youth recognised that they had got information about the integration processes from mass media and the family. Little is spoken about it at school, actualising the problem about the opportunities that had not been used at school in the solution of integration issues. The lack of the united information space characterises Latgale region. Most of Russian nationality youth read periodicals in Russian where non-objective information and tendentious interpretation of public events are often met.

The second stage of the qualitative research was done from 2003 to 2004. The lack of the united information space was compensated by the analysis of the regional media during the lessons where the first and second year students (174 respondents) had the opportunity to work with the project “Youth’s portrait in the media” of Rezekne region. During the second stage of the research the content analysis of the portraits made by youth and youth interviewing at the end of the project were done.

Using T-criterion, the average indicators of Latvian and other nationalities youths’ variable arithmetical indicators were compared to see if the statistically significant difference exists among them. Statistically significant difference exists at an individual level and at the micro and mezo level. Participation is more expressed at the individual level for Latvian youth. But at the micro and mezo ones – for the youth of other nationalities. The youth of other nationalities get involved more actively in class and school activities, group-work, projects, showing their initiative (see Table 4).

Variables’ empiric distribution was checked using the test of Kolmogorov-Smirnov. It was found that all indicators, except Cdtmacro (co-determination, macro) and Cdbmacro (co-distribution, macro) form a normal distribution. The proportion of participation components is not balanced. Collaboration dominates at all levels. Youths’ experience in decision making is comparatively low. Both in the family and at school adults are the main ones to decide. Decision making dominates at individual and micro levels; it is least expressed at macro (country) level.

Contribution dominates at all levels. It included interviewing, observing in focus groups and analysis of the particular cases. Mass media is an

important socio-pedagogical means. The opportunities of this work were evaluated during the second stage. The data were collected by the help of narrative interview and observation methods.

Table 4

The Comparison of Latvian and Other Nationalities' Youth

Code	Russians M	SD	Latvians M	SD	T-criterion	The level of importance
Cindivid	2,6	1,52	6,2	1,48	-3,795**	0,005
Cmicro	5,2	2,8	2,2	0,44	2,32*	0,049
Cmezo	3,2	1,9	1,6	0,54	1,789	0,111
Cmacro	1,8	1,3	1,6	2,07	0,183	0,860
Cdtindivid	2,4	1,1	4,6	1,67	-2,429*	0,041
Cdtmicro	4,2	2,58	1,6	0,54	2,197	0,059
Cdtmezo	2,6	1,67	1,2	0,44	1,807	0,108
Cdtmacro	0,8	1,3	0,00	0,00	1,372	0,207
Cdbindivid	2,4	0,54	2,2	0,83	0,447	0,667
Cdbmicro	1,6	1,14	0,6	0,54	1,768	0,115
Cdbmezo	1,00	1,41	0,4	0,54	,885	0,402
Cdbmacro	0,6	0,89	0,00	0,00	1,500	0,172
SPM	3,2	2,58	1,2	1,3	1,543	0,161
C	12,8	4,65	11,6	2,96	,486	0,640
Cdt	10,0	4,74	7,4	2,07	1,123	0,294
Cdb	5,6	2,96	3,2	1,3	1,656	0,136
INDIVID	7,4	2,7	13,0	2,91	-3,150*	0,014
MICRO	11,0	6,51	4,4	1,34	2,217	0,057
MEZO	6,8	4,65	3,2	1,09	1,682	0,131
MACRO	3,2	3,03	1,6	2,07	,974	0,359

\* $p < 0,05$ , \*\* $p < 0,01$

The hypothesis was put forward during the third (2004-2005) stage of the qualitative research. The youths' comprehension of integration value as new opportunities and not limitation is formed if

- youths' participation in the evaluation of integration processes that include co-determination, contribution and co-distribution on integration process is facilitated during the Latvian language lessons;
- in the research youth are self-research subjects at individual, micro, macro and mezo perspective as well as demanders and offerers who proficiently observe integration processes;
- teachers help youth to see new participation opportunities in integration processes at individual, micro, macro and mezo levels during studies.

Checking of the hypothesis with AQUAD 6 and SPSS, the formation of value chart with AQUAD 6, Pearson correlation ratio to find out the correlation between youths' participation in multi-dimensional integration processes and the usage of socio-pedagogical means were done.

There is correlation between youths' participation in multidimensional integration processes and the usage of socio-pedagogical means. It is statistically significant at micro and mezo levels. Work with media as a socio-pedagogical means facilitates youths' participation.

The youth of the first and the second year emphasise material values (mobile phone, car, computers, flat), aesthetic values (arts, music, nature) and ethical values (love, friendship, ability to understand another person). They don't have a clear notion how to implement these values into life. The usage of socio-pedagogical means in the studies influences the youths' value orientation, marking the transition from terminal values to opportunity (participation, involvement, teamwork, knowledge of languages, education, ability to apply mastered knowledge, collaboration, acquiring of citizenship and the values of life quality of a holistic personality, successful person, the person who takes the offered opportunities) during the third and the fourth year.

It was established, using Pearson correlation ratio that the correlation between youths' participation in multidimensional integration processes and the usage of socio-pedagogical means exists. It is statistically important at micro and mezo levels. Work with media enforces youths' participation as social pedagogical means.

## **Conclusion**

Terminal values dominate for Latvian youth but opportunity ones – for other nationalities' youth. The youth of other nationalities have larger participation experience. Integration for them is the means for self-realisation in a multicultural environment.

Media is an influential socio-pedagogical means. Through media analysis, youth acquire knowledge about participation opportunities; use them in practice, acquiring participation experience that enforces the formation of integration as self-realisation (opportunity value).

There is an interlink between youths' participation in multi-dimensional integration processes and the formation of integration as a value and there is also an interlink between youths' participation and the usage of socio-pedagogical means at the lessons of the Latvian language. The usage of socio-pedagogical means encourages youths' participation, which in its turn encourages integration as a new opportunity and not as the formation of a limitation value.

## **Discussion**

An important pre-condition of integration is to provide participation opportunities in integration process at individual (personality), micro (family, class, group), mezo (school) and macro (state) levels, but participation experience in integration processes that is acquired at school is the most

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important. If youth can successfully fulfil themselves at micro and mezo levels, they successfully fulfil themselves also at other levels.

Integration becomes an opportunistic value if participation experience is provided for youth through participation in the study process – planning, the choice of study content and methods, involving in evaluation. Learning is perceived as an active deed, participation in organising of their life.

The usage of socio-pedagogical means (mass media, recognition, trust, encouragement) in the studies influences the value orientation of youths', marking the transition from terminal values to instrumental (participation, involvement, team work, language knowledge, education, ability to apply the mastered knowledge, collaboration, acquiring of citizenship) and life quality are opportunity values (a sanguine person, successful person, person that takes the opportunities offered during the third and the fourth years of their studies.

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## **Qualitative Research Methods: “Analysis of Interviews and Focus Group about Strategies of Learning in Primary School Paying Attention to the Students of Foreign Origin”**

*Cristina Sánchez Romero*

### **Abstract**

The methodology used in the study about strategies of learning in primary school paying attention to the students of foreign origin is discussed in the report. The study was conducted implementing qualitative and quantitative methods. But this report focuses only on the analysis of the instruments of collection of qualitative data used in the research: an interview and a focus group. We used opinion of different persons of Education Community for investigation: teachers, inspectors, school directors, assistant teachers, etc. The purpose of the study was to find answers to the situation of intercultural diversity of the educative classrooms of the educative centres of our community with respect to the increase of the matriculation of students of foreign origin and the application of strategies of education for the improvement of the process of learning of these students in primary school.

### **Introduction**

This study investigated primary school foreign student’s situation in education centres, from the point of view of teachers. We have selected a sample of primary school from Madrid’s Community. This situation, examined theoretically in previous studies, is the reflection of the socio-cultural aspects that are topical to the society and which remarkably influence the present situation of the foreign students in the classroom. The design of the research involved a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (interviews and focus groups and self-completion questionnaires). Our educational research tries to analyse the foreign student’s situation in relation to increase, impact, importance, implementation and improvement in learning process.

The question of educational research is to analyse the situation of students of foreign origin in the classrooms of education centres of the Spanish Communities from primary school teachers’ point of view. We have selected a sample of education centres from Madrid’s Community.

The situation of the analyzed foreign students of theoretical form in the previous studies is the reflection of the socio-cultural reality of our society that remarkably influences the present situation of the educating classrooms of the centres.

We researched this question in relation to the following aspects:

- Increase of the number (registration) of the students of foreign origin.
  - Impact of this increase in the society.
  - Importance of this group at primary school
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- Implementation of educational strategies.
  - Improvement of the learning process.
- Our study tries to analyse the situation of students of different cultures from the teachers' viewpoint.

## Research Context

Madrid is a city with a high increase in immigration at this moment; Madrid is considered the “center of foreign immigration” by the Inform 2000. The increase of number of foreign students is a result of immigration question at Madrid. The situation of immigrants has an impact in every context: social, cultural, economic and educational, too. The study claims to analyse the Intercultural Education Difference in learning process and define this concept from the various aspects (origin, family, customs, race, religion...) that influence the learning process. We expected to find the differences between students according to their cultural identity, knowledge, languages, education systems, nationality... For example, analysing the intercultural context about distribution of nationalities concerning the registration for other courses during the year 2003-2004 is as follows: 31% of Spanish students and 69% of the students of foreign origin.

The following graph (see Figure 1) shows an update of increase of registration of the students of foreign origin (Non University Statistics by Regions - Course 2005-2006).

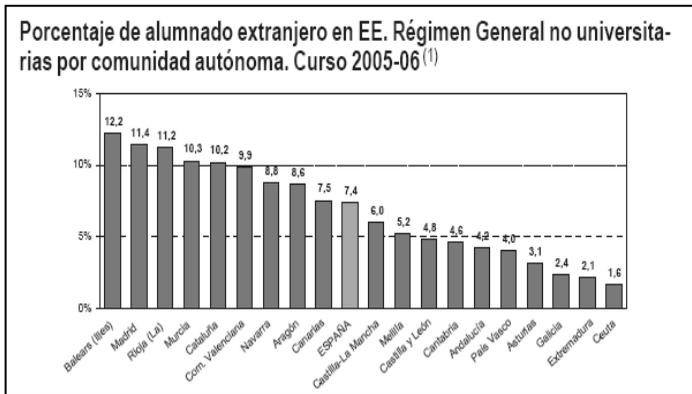


Figure 1: MEC. Technical General Secretary. Statistics Office (<http://www.mec.es/mecd/estadisticas>)

The analysis on distribution by country and the level of education (Course 2005-2006) can be seen in Figure 2.

Distribución del alumnado extranjero no universitario por procedencia. Curso 2005-06 <sup>(1)</sup>		Porcentaje de alumnado extranjero en EE. de Régimen General no universitarias por enseñanza y titularidad. Curso 2005-06 <sup>(1)</sup>		
	%	Total	Centros Públicos	Centros Privados
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>7,4</b>	<b>8,9</b>	<b>4,2</b>
Europa	27,4	6,3	8,0	3,2
África	19,5	9,2	11,4	4,7
América del Norte	1,0	6,9	8,3	5,4
América Central	3,6	7,9	9,6	4,7
América del Sur	43,6	3,4	3,9	2,0
Asia y Oceanía	4,8	4,8	4,9	4,5

(1) Cifras avance.

Figure 2: MEC. Technical General Secretary. Statistics Office (<http://www.mec.es/mecd/estadisticas>)

As we can see from the figure above there were more students from different cultures in the group of Primary School.

Therefore, typical Spanish students are as follows:

- *Students not registered in their country of origin:*
  - Registered at the age of three for the first time.
  - Registered after the age of three, who are not able to read or write.
  - Students of different regions.
- *Characteristics of the students:*
  - Difference of languages.
  - Bilingualism.
  - Intercultural Education Difference.
  - Age of registration.
  - Origin diversity.

The more represented nationalities were from South America.

## Educational Changes and Competence of Primary School Teachers

The perspective about “capacity and competence” defined by Jarolimek and Clifford (1979) emphasize the need to develop diverse activities by the teachers at intercultural context of primary school. In this sense, other authors as Jordan (1994) call for the consolidation of “cultural competence” based on “skills and attitudes that enable all students to function adequately in our multicultural and multilingual societies.

Considering the theory of Hargreaves on the educational changes, we have adapted these changes for different cultures that are present at Primary School (see Table 1). Studies on educational changes (Hargreaves, 2003) emphasized the need for adapted teaching by post-modern; innovation, collapse and methodology aimed at solving a problem; responsibility, morality and creativity. The types of training at intercultural context have changed:

integration of diverse cultures, responsibility of teachers, and open attitude to different people, effective method and strategies are important.

*Table 1*

Educational Changes for Different Cultures (*Adaptation of Hargreaves, 2003*)

Post-modern	Solve a problem	Opening of itself to favor the intergration of diverse cultures
Innovation	Responsibility of teaching staff	Responsibility of the centre and teachers
Collapse	Morality	Change of attitude against Xenophobia or racism
Methods & Strategies	Creativity	Strategies and methods effectiveness

The map of Competences shows that they (Intercultural Competences) are described as:

- Open (diverse cultures),
- Flexible (methods, styles of learning...),
- Cooperative (other professional),
- Creative (use integrated methods and strategies).

According to the literature of teachers' education (Jarolimek & Clifford, 1979), this study considering defined competences is based on:

- Personal interaction (students-students; student-teachers),
- Organizer of learning,
- Planning,
- Impose Discipline,
- Motivation,
- Knowledge (improve),
- Actualization to meet individual needs,
- Complementary methods and strategies.

So, the strategies for educational treatment of diversity are based on four axes: Structuring, Organization, Individualization, and Socialization.

*Structuring of:*

- Education Centre (classroom).
- Learning (by education level), etc.

*Organization of:*

- Space and time.
- Classroom.
- Learning groups.

*Individualization of:*

- Individual characteristic (students).
- Creativity (learning).
- Self-Evaluation.

*Socialization of:*

- Efficiency and motivation (learning groups).
- Collaboration between different cultures.
- Co-evaluation.

This axis is based on Intercultural Education Differences.

## Design of Educational Research

We have made our investigation having followed the phases of:

- Definition of the problem.
- Objectives.
- Sample.
- Variables of the investigation.
- Instruments of data collection.
- Data analysis.
- Conclusions.

And it is based on this scheme of methodological system (see Figure 3).

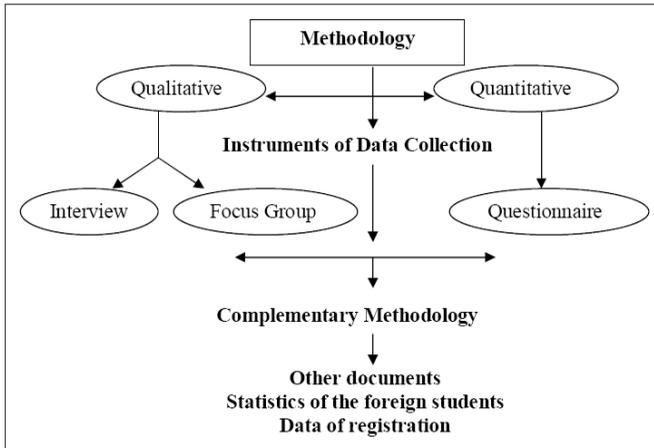


Figure 3: Scheme of methodological system

### Definition of the Problem

The research problem is:

“Educational situation of students of foreign origin at Education Centres of Primary School and the implementation of learning strategies”.

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### ***Questions of the Research***

- How do teachers conceive the cultural diversity?
- How do teachers approach learning to all students?
- What strategies are they using?
- What means can be used in order to identify intercultural situation at primary school?

### ***Aims of the Research***

- To identify the learning process of foreign students intercultural educative differences,
- To analyze the strategies used in intercultural school context,
- To evaluate the educational means of inclusion at the centre and in classroom.

### ***Sample***

The sample included 31 public primary schools (grade age 6-12 years). 197 teachers participated in this study.

### ***Categories of the Research***

The variable of educational research was:

- Data of Teachers (age, gender, centre, formation, subject, experience with foreign students, improved formation...),
- Primary school (increase of foreign students, means of inclusion, resources...),
- Teachers (foreign students' nationality, methods, evaluation, matter, needs, factors that influence learning, learning process),
- Learning strategies (strategies and methods to the development),
- Students of foreign origin-family and centre (relation – family-school and teachers; interaction between students-students, students' teachers; families participation at school and in the learning process...).

### ***Instruments for Data Collection***

The instruments used for data collection were as follows: questionnaires, an interview and focus groups, which involve the development of quantitative and qualitative methods. This methodology was used to investigate the relations of variables of the research and the aims of learning in intercultural context. Considering theories from authors as Taylor (1973); Dockrell & Hamilton (1983); Althide & Jhonson (1994); Collins (1992)<sup>1</sup>; about educational research paradigm and in the line of Cook and Reichardt (1999, p. 28)<sup>2</sup>, who show the use of quantitative and qualitative methodology to improve the research. However, in this study the development the

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<sup>1</sup> Collins (1992) In Rodríguez Gómez, Gil Flores y García Jiménez (1996:37)

<sup>2</sup> In Rufz Olabuenaga (1999)

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complementariness method and integration has been analysed as well, this article is only about qualitative methods (interview and focus groups).

The qualitative instruments were elaborated based on theoretical basis: an interview (Valles, 2003; Santos Guerra, 1993) and focus groups (Patton, 1990; Krueger, 2005<sup>3</sup>).

According to the analysis by Tesch (1990)<sup>4</sup>, Richard & Richard (1994) and Weitzman & Miles (1995)<sup>5</sup> about the software applied for analysis of qualitative data, there is a tendency in the research to use software that corresponds to the development theories (Nudis, AQUAD).

### *Analysis of Interview and Focus Groups*

The analysis is shown in the following scheme (see Figure 4).

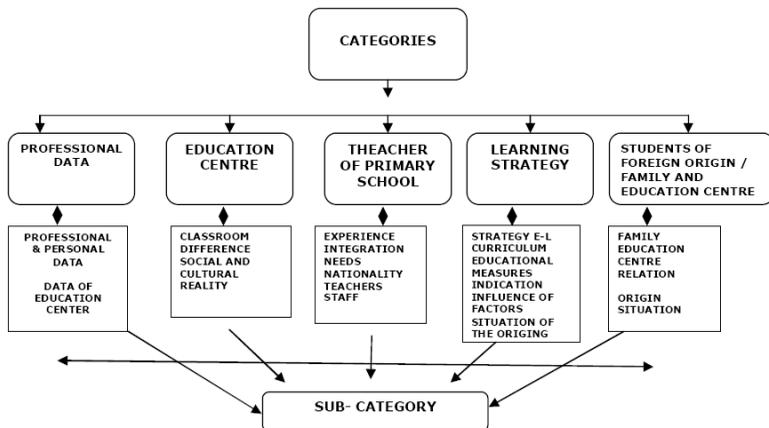


Figure 4: Analysis of interview and focus groups

This analysis included about eight interviews and four focus groups, with more contributions of teachers and other education agents.

### **Characteristics of the Results (Research Analysis)**

<sup>3</sup> Krueger, R. A. (1994) Focus group. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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<sup>5</sup> In De Lara y Ballesteros (2001).

(1) *To identify the learning process of foreign students' intercultural educative differences*

The analysis revealed that:

- The percentage of students of foreign origin is 94%.
- The more represented nationality is the Ecuador (123%).
- The other nationalities are:
  - Peruvian: 28%
  - Chinese : 29%
  - Dominican Republic: 35%
  - Moroccan: 56%
  - Colombian: 64%

The subjects, which need more reinforcement according to the nationality are as follows (see Table 2).

Table 2

Reinforcement According to the Nationality

Students' nationality	Reinforcement (Subject)
Romanian Chinese Arabic African Latin American	Language
Dominican Republic Chinese	Social sciences
Ecuadorian	Mathematics

(2) *To evaluate the educational means of inclusion at centre and in the classroom* (an example of interview (see Appendixes A & B):

This extract of the text analysis has been obtained:

- Working at unitary school.
- Normal integration.
- Curricular adaptation.
- Individualized work.

(3) *To analyze the strategies used in an intercultural school context*

The most useful strategies are as follows:

- *Organizational strategies*: coordination of inter-level groups; flexible groups; team work Vs individual work; distribution of space and time.
- *Curricular adaptations* are implemented as a reinforcement strategy.
- *Problem solving strategy* is a useful learning tool.
- *Education-learning strategies*: individualized work; individualized adaptation; students' needs; reinforcement.

- 
- *Technological strategies:* computer use (mathematics classroom); use of videos.

### Final Conclusion for Discussion

The results obtained in this analysis of interviews and discussion group are as follows:

- Individual learning strategies were implemented working with these students.
- The increase of the students of foreign origin was estimated (more than 50% by course).
- Curricular adaptations corresponding to the education system were made.
- Adequate evaluation determining the needs of different students was done.
- There was contribution with more support teachers in the classroom.
- There was support with the needs by curricular area (mathematics, language, social sciences).

### Appendix A

*Interview (Extract from one of the conducted interviews)*

<b>EDUCATION-TRAINING</b> <b>4.1. E-A – Educational Measures</b>	<b>4.2. E-A – Factors:</b>
22: support classes 24: Reinforcement, support, are support classes and reinforcement, to two or three students and they remove aid and help in those objectives that cost to them just a little bit more 19: What is done to try to survive to give capacity, to try to leave ahead with which is hoped that everything arrives what is necessary always we are to the delay, 29: No, no, the supports are made within the classroom, being the tutor the one that takes the decisions of its incorporation	37: External factors, come normally without having been with their parents during 2 or 3 years, have been living with the family with the grandmother, uncles, have not taken care much of their discipline nor going to school
<b>4.3. E-A - Curriculum:</b> 18: curricular phase angle	<b>4.4. E-A - Level of education-learning</b> 20: More or less the level is similar enough, but considering that, it brings a course, that has made them repeat a course so that they reach the students' level

### Appendix B

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**Discussions groups (Extract from one discussion made in the discussion group)**

The teachers said:

59: *“The teaching style is changing right now because before we worked in the unitary school”.*

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Passage 1 of 12 Section 0, For 59, 348 chars.

61: *“The foreigners are integrated in the normal course”.*

Passage 2 of 12 Section 0, For 61, 118 chars. 61:

65: *They need support, individualized work and compensatory education.*

Passage 3 of 12 Section 0, For 65, 47 chars.

67: *Right now in all the classes more individualized work is represented. The teacher is working in each class with other support teachers who work with three or four students, making curricular adaptations.*

Passage 4 of 12 Section 0, For 67, 289 chars.

92: *In your class the students have serious difficulties, which you can help to overcome by adapting the activities.*

94: *Or a professor assistant who helps them, but not only with students Ecuadorians but also with the rest of the group.*

96: *They are very slow.*

Document 3 of 4 001\_A003\_2004\_05\_05 IF Passage 1 of 4 Section 0, For 90, 13 chars. 90: To support to them Passage 2 of 4 Section 0, You stop 92 to 96, 230 chars.

101: *It depends on the moment and the activities, sometimes strategies in group, sometimes individual.*

Passage 3 of 4 Section 0, For 101, 72 chars.

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## **A Qualitative Approach to Research of Understanding of Children's Social Competence and the Opportunities for Its Development**

*Svetlana Surikova*

### **Abstract**

The paper gives the summary and the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results of the survey about the essence of children's social competence and the opportunities for its development, creating an effective environment inside and outside school. The primary teachers of four Rezekne town (region of Latgale, Latvia) national minority (Russian) schools and the parents of primary school students of Rezekne Secondary School No D took part in the survey. This paper presents only qualitative part of my doctoral research to study the understanding of the essence of social competence and the opportunities for its development creating an effective environment inside and outside school by primary school teachers and primary school students' parents. The following methods were used for data analysis: hermeneutics, survey, and content analysis.

### **Introduction**

The basic ideas of this paper were partially presented and reflected during the CQP 2006 workshop "Qualitative Psychology in the Changing Academic Context" (Latvia, Medzabaki, October 2006). It was a good opportunity to get consultation about the research methodology while taking part in the research consulting group work under the guidance of Dr. Mechthild Kiegelmann.

In the research literature social competence is mentioned as one of the fundamental competences. Understanding of its nature has been developing for many years and it has been defined in different ways. In this paper the notion „social competence” stands for totality of well-founded in individual experience abilities to interact effectively with other people within a framework of interpersonal relationships, to balance harmoniously individual perspective with social perspective, to handle manifold social situations, to choose appropriate strategies and techniques of cognition and social interaction.

The research work is based on the ideas of the scientists (McClellan & Katz, 2001; , 2003; Rubin & Rose-Krasnor, 1992; Sarason, 1981; ten Dam & Volman, 2003; Помер & Помер, 2003 et al.) from different countries about social competence as a concept and opportunities for its development.

The *aim of the research* is to study the understanding of the essence of social competence and the opportunities for its development creating an effective environment inside and outside school by primary school teachers and primary school students' parents.

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## The Methodological Framework

Finnish scientist Pasi Sahlberg and American scientist Doran Christensen emphasize that there is a lack of an authentic learning environment, connection to the real world and children's life experience. Even though in real life there is a great need for people who are able to cooperate, who dare to think in a critical and creative way, who are ready to take risks and use their imagination for work being done, the school prepares obedient people (Sahlbergs, 2003a; Kristensens, 2004). According to Russian psychologist Galina Tsukerman's opinion, „ ... *the only children's life sphere where communication and cooperation with peers are not allowed is currently primary school students' learning process: students are separated with school desks, they are forbidden to talk to each other, mutual help in the lesson is called the negative words – “prompting and cribbing”* (Cukerman, 1994, p. 55). That is a reality, because during primary school students' common learning process directly asking each other for advice and help, thought exchange without their teacher's mediation occurs rarely in practice. Children learn side-by-side but not together, or cooperating with each other. If a child lacks communication with peers but only communication of full value with adults is available for him/her, opportunities to overcome non-critical attitude and egocentric thinking decrease, which halt the child's development (Поливанова & Ривина, 1996; Цукерман, 1996; Cukerman, 1994). Children are not emotionally approved and protected in modern families (Plaude, 2003). We are faced with violence, impatience, aggressiveness among both children and youngsters and in the society as a whole, that causes the necessity to think seriously about new ways of forming sense of community to make it possible for everyone to work, live and think individually and in cooperation with others (Bolcs, 2004; Gundara, 2004). School has to be a safe place for all students. It is necessary to increase all children's social and educational prospects (Gundara, 2004; Sings, 2004). The development of culture of interpersonal relations and the stimulation of preparedness for an intercultural dialogue have become much more essential. Social competence characterizes mutual connection between cognitive process culture and social interaction culture in the changing academic context of the multicultural informative society. Thus a teacher has to be able to stimulate equally both students' cognitive process culture and social interaction culture.

In the context of this research the notion 'social competence' refers to totality of well-founded in individual experience abilities to interact effectively with other people within a framework of interpersonal relationships, to balance harmoniously individual perspective with social perspective, to handle manifold social situations, to choose appropriate strategies and techniques of cognition process and social interaction. Theoretical basis of this definition makes the understanding of children's social competence as the ability to function effectively in social interaction, social situation, social context (Foster & Ritchey, 1979; Sarason, 1981; Rubin & Rose-Krasnor, 1992; Plaude, 2003; ten Dam & Volman, 2003; Maslo,

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2003; Małicka, 2004 et al.); as the ability to interact effectively with other people at the level of interpersonal relationships (Małicka, 2004); the understanding of the research of social competence in the correlation between one's social status among peers and the quality of interpersonal relations (Ladd, 1999; McClellan & Katz, 2001); the understanding of social competence as the ability to reach compromise between self-realization (different from others) and social adaptation (like others) (Pomek & Pomek, 2003); the understanding of necessity of equilibrium between an individual and community (Hubers, 2004; Małicka, 2004; Plaude, 2003; Pomek & Pomek, 2003).

### **The Sample and Methods**

During the 1st semester of academic year 2004 – 2005 to ascertain the understanding of the essence of social competence and to define opportunities for the development of this competence 26 Rezekne town primary school teachers from 4 national minority (Russian) schools (from School No A, School No B, School No C, School No D) and 32 Rezekne Secondary School (No D) primary school students' families were surveyed. The teachers and the parents were asked two open questions:

1. To your mind, what does the term 'social competence' mean?
2. In what ways can the development of primary school students' social competence be stimulated?

In the research such methods as hermeneutics, survey, and content analysis were used for data analysis.

### **Data Analysis and Findings**

Afterwards the content analysis was carried out using the elements of the structural analysis. All the definitions were divided into logical structural units (separate words or phrases) in order to ascertain the most often used structural units in the definitions given by the teachers and the parents. The results of the structural analysis have been summarized in the comparative table (see Table 1).

14 most often used structural units were ascertained in the definitions given by the primary school teachers. But 6 most often used structural units were ascertained in the definitions given by the primary school students' parents. In the context of the research the most often used structural units are considered those ones whose frequency of use was  $\geq 3$ .

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***Understanding of the Essence of Social Competence by Primary School Teachers and Primary School Students' Parents***

The answers of Rezekne town national minority primary school teachers and Rezekne Secondary School No D primary school students' parents to the question „*To your mind, what does the term 'social competence' mean?*” have been summarized in the comparative table (see Appendixes A & B). In the definitions given by the primary school teachers and primary school students' parents' four common structural units were ascertained: *society, sociable; culture, well-mannered; understanding and communication* (see Table 1).

*Table 1*

The Most Often Used Logical Structural Units Answering the Question „To Your Mind, What Does the Term 'Social Competence' Mean?”

Frequency of use	The structural units most often used by the primary school teachers	The structural units most often used by the primary school students' parents
10-12	1. <b>society, sociable</b>	1. <b>society, sociable</b>
	2. life, to live	2. <b>culture, well-mannered</b>
6-9	3. behaviour	3. <b>understanding</b>
	4. skills	
	5. standards	
	6. knowledge	
	7. <b>culture, well-mannered</b>	
3-5	8. used in practice	4. surrounding world
	9. <b>understanding</b>	5. <b>communication</b>
	10. class	6. participation in activities
	11. rule	
	12. <b>communication</b>	
	13. peers	
	14. observance	

Thus, taking into consideration the structural units most often used by the primary school teachers to define social competence, the traits of the model of transmission, positivism and behaviorism were observed (*to live in society observing the standards and rules of behavior, applying the acquired knowledge and skills in practice (in real life), in communication with peers...*). Taking into account the structural units most often used by the primary school students' parents to define social competence, the traits of the model of transaction, social constructivism, cognitivism were observed (*to communicate with surrounding people and to take part in activities, being based on the understanding of the surrounding world (society, culture)...*).

In the definitions given by the primary school teachers and primary school students' parents were mentioned such components of the subject content structure of social competence as *experience, understanding, views,*

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*knowledge (social etc), skills (social, communicative etc), abilities, attitudes (ethical, wish for, interest), mutual relations, behavior (style, culture, manners, tact, adequate reaction, education level, a way of self-expression, readiness, rules, duties, standards, traditions etc). In the definitions given by the primary school teachers and primary school students' parents were mentioned these components of the process dynamic structure of social competence which are known as general processes and conditions (friendship, help, self-management, self-control, knowledge exchange, knowledge acquisition, use of knowledge in practice, communication, observance, participation, recognition of social groups, interaction, belonging to) and as expressions of a particular activity (to communicate; to cooperate; to orient oneself in relations, processes; to take into consideration others' interests; to find a compromise; to give advice; to use a common language; not to impose one's view on someone; to solve social problems; to organize public cultural events; not to offend other's feelings, honor; to be aware of one's age). In the definitions given by the primary school teachers and primary school students' parents were mentioned such subjective and objective components in the social and cultural context of the development of child's social competence as society, the surrounding world, environment, life situations, different layers of culture, social groups, social processes, social phenomena, school, family (parents), peers, friends, adults. Describing the expressions of child's social competence were mentioned such characteristic words of children's personalities and activities as independent, responsible, well-mannered, tolerant, sociable, adequate (corresponding), of full value, social, communicative, national, mutual, surrounding.*

### ***Understanding of the Opportunities for the Development of Social Competence by Primary School Teachers and Primary School Students' Parents***

The answers of Rezekne town national minority primary school teachers and of Rezekne Secondary School No D primary school students' parents to the question „*In what ways can the development of primary school students' social competence be stimulated?*” have been summarized in the comparative table (Appendixes C & D).

Afterwards the content analysis was carried out using the elements of the structural analysis.

All the descriptions of the opportunities for the development of social competence were divided into logical structural units (separate words or phrases) in order to ascertain the most often used structural units in the definitions given by the teachers and the parents. The results of the structural analysis have been summarized in the comparative table (see Table 2).

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Table 2

The Most Often Used Logical Structural Units Answering the Question „In What Ways Can the Development of Child’s Social Competence Be Stimulated?”

Frequency of use	The structural units most often used by the primary school teachers	The structural units most often used by the primary school students’ parents
5	1. meetings	1. public cultural events
		2. <b>an adult as an example</b>
		3. <b>discussions about situations</b>
4	2. creation of situations	4. <b>discussions</b>
	3. <b>a class trip</b>	5. <b>reading and analysis of fiction and non-fiction literature</b>
	4. work with a family (parents’ education)	6. out-of-school and out-of-class communication between a teacher and students
	5. <b>broadening of communication and cooperation experience</b>	
	6. <b>an adult as an example</b>	
3	7. <b>discussions</b>	7. <b>a class trip</b>
	8. games	8. education
	9. mutual help	9. <b>broadening of communication and cooperation experience</b>
	10. <b>reading and analysis of fiction and non-fiction literature</b>	10. other student as an example
	11. <b>discussions about situations</b>	

In the descriptions given by the primary school teachers 11 most often used structural units were ascertained, on the other hand, in the descriptions given by the primary school students’ parents 10 most often used structural units were ascertained. In the context of this research work the most often used structural units are considered those ones whose frequency of use was  $\geq 3$ . In the descriptions given by the primary school teachers and primary school students’ parents six common structural units were ascertained: *a school trip, broadening of communication and cooperation experience, an adult as an example, discussions, reading and analysis of fiction and non-fiction literature, discussions about situations.*

## Conclusions

The findings of this research show clearly that there is a difference in the understanding of the nature of children’s social competence comparing the definitions given by the primary school teachers and the primary school students’ parents.

Taking into consideration the structural units most often used by the primary school teachers to define social competence, the traits of

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transmission, positivism and behaviorism were observed. The research has shown that there is a problem in primary school teachers' understanding because the elements of socialization, adaptation, observance of standards, and standard thinking are dominant in the teachers' understanding of the nature of children's social competence.

Taking into account the structural units most often used by the primary school students' parents to define social competence, the traits of transaction, social constructivism, cognitivism were observed. The elements of joining in, participation, and understanding of the surrounding world are dominant in the parents' understanding of children's social competence.

## Discussion

The analysis of the obtained data demonstrated that both primary school teachers and primary school students' parents pointed to various opportunities for the development of social competence that promote communication and cooperation. The teachers and parents' responses proved the fact that social competence characterizes mutual connection between cognitive experience and social interaction experience.

The author admits that more attention in teachers and parents' education should be paid to understanding of the necessity to create an effective environment inside and outside school in order to provide various opportunities for developing primary school students' social competence. The author suggests that the development of student/child-needs oriented thinking, lifelong learning in and from experience, partnership are the main principles of teachers and parents' life activities in this changing world. These principles pose new challenges for teachers and parents as creators of effective environment inside and outside school therefore these principles would be a matter of discussion and contextualization for the further teachers and parents' education.

## Appendix A

### ***The answers of Rezekne town national minority primary school teachers to the question: "To your mind, what does the term 'Social Competence' mean?"***

Teacher 1: *To orient oneself in the surrounding world, to feel one's belonging to the society.*

Teacher 2: *The skill to be aware of one's own age and to correspond to it.*

Teacher 3: *The skill to behave in public; friendship skill, help skill. Understanding of rules and duties.*

Teacher 4: *To be able to lead oneself, to control oneself, to behave everywhere according to a set of rules for cultural behaviour.*

Teacher 5: *A set of rules for behaving in public, one's national traditions, holidays.*

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Teacher 6: *Understanding of the world where a child lives, knowledge and skills how to live in this world.*

Teacher 7: *Understanding of the world where a child lives, a skill to use one's knowledge for leading life of full value.*

Teacher 8: *To be able to acquire knowledge: library, computer, literature, knowledge exchange, to be able to use the acquired knowledge in practice (life).*

Teacher 9: *Correct, adequate reaction to different life situations, social knowledge + experience.*

Teacher 10: *Social knowledge, knowledge about life, use of knowledge in practice.*

Teacher 11: *Use of social knowledge in practice.*

Teacher 12: *Volume of knowledge and skills of cultural, social communication, understanding of standards and rules for behaving, the skill to use this knowledge in a particular situation within a framework of the corresponding community.*

Teacher 13: *Totality of child's social, cultural, communicative skills and notions.*

Teacher 14: *Readiness to live in society, with a base of one's nation's culture, traditions, religion.*

Teacher 15: *No answer.*

Teacher 16: *Is connected with student's manners in public and in a family.*

Teacher 17: *Knowledge of rules for behaving and living in society, the skill to use those in a class, a family, with friends etc.*

Teacher 18: *No answer.*

Teacher 19: *The skill to behave at school and in other places, observance of rules for behaving, observance of rules for politeness, mutual relations (peers, adults, parents).*

Teacher 20: *Knowledge of rules for behaving in public, observance of generally accepted behaviour at different communication levels.*

Teacher 21: *The child's skill to live in a class, to associate, to cooperate with peers. The skill „to be a personality”, taking into account other children's interests.*

Teacher 22: *The skill to communicate with other people, understanding of one's place in the world (society), belonging to society, understanding of one's own nation.*

Teacher 23: *The skill to live in society.*

Teacher 24: *The skill to orient oneself in community life, the skill to find compromise in controversial cultural questions.*

Teacher 25: *The skill to adapt oneself to the environment, to associate with peers, adults. Necessary knowledge of rules for behaving, standards, skills to be independent and responsible.*

Teacher 26: *The skill to behave in public, to be aware of rules for behaving and communication, knowledge of a language (languages) and its(their) use in a corresponding national environment.*

## Appendix B

### ***The answers of Rezekne Secondary School No D primary school students' parents to the question: "To your mind, what does the term 'Social Competence' mean?"***

Family 1: *Participation in comprehensive extra-curricular activities.*

Family 2: *Not „a white crow" in society.*

Family 3: *The style of behaviour in a lesson, one has to be well-mannered everywhere, not only at school.*

Family 4: *The skill to behave well among adults, to understand something and the skill to give advice.*

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- Family 5: *Wish for studying, interest in knowledge.*
- Family 6: *To be well-mannered in public.*
- Family 7: *It is an ethical attitude to the surrounding world.*
- Family 8: *As a whole: a family, school, society are connected.*
- Family 9: *To orient oneself in the surrounding world: in the events, the national holidays, geography.*
- Family 10: *Understanding of social processes which take place in society.*
- Family 11: *No answer.*
- Family 12: *The ability to start communication easily with different culture groups (a professor, a chef, a passer-by) and the ability to keep communication.*
- Family 13: *The skill to be well-mannered and tolerant of the society.*
- Family 14: *Firstly, it is a tact, secondly it is experience. One can't impose one's point of view.*
- Family 15: *No answer.*
- Family 16: *Culture acquisition at the level of social education.*
- Family 17: *Is connected with culture, hikes, class trips to museums, history of our town.*
- Family 18: *Both a teacher and a student are well aware of rules for exemplary behaving in public, can solve any social problems, can provide with help.*
- Family 19: *Social and cultural understanding.*
- Family 20: *The ability to organize a public cultural event.*
- Family 21: *Recognition of different social groups, communication culture with those, not to offend other's feelings, honour etc.*
- Family 22: *It is a pity that this competence is losing its significance. I can often read and listen to not cultural things.*
- Family 23: *How a teacher understands the meaning of social phenomenon, the meaning of social relationships (among people). Understanding of the cultural and social development of society.*
- Family 24: *The way of child's self-expression, which depends on intellectual, financial, family environment where a child grows up, is raised, depends on child's circle of communication.*
- Family 25: *The level of one's education.*
- Family 26: *Person's individual inner rules and regulations, according to those he/she lives and interacts with others.*
- Family 27: *Understanding and knowledge of school social life (parents and children's social life).*
- Family 28: *It is a more abstract idea about person's place in the modern society.*
- Family 29: *Knowledge of behaviour patterns, communication with other people in public.*
- Family 30: *The ability to orient oneself in social relationships.*
- Family 31: *No answer.*
- Family 32: *Well developed person's skills in free understanding and knowledge of cultural objects in significant social situations.*

## Appendix C

***The answers of Rezekne town national minority primary school teachers to the question: „In what ways can the development of primary school students' social competence be stimulated?“***

Teacher 1: *By discussions, creation of situations, a class trip, meetings, games.*

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Teacher 2: *By educating parents.*

Teacher 3: *By organizing class education lessons, activities when students are supposed to take roles, to help each other, to organize class trips and meetings, to get acquainted with different professions.*

Teacher 4: *By conducting games – practical classes.*

Teacher 5: *By practical classes, video.*

Teacher 6: *By being involved more in public organizations.*

Teacher 7: *By teaching flexible approaches, rules (it is more convenient for me ..., it is better for me ..., it is not dangerous ...).*

Teacher 8: *By visual aids which arouse interest, fiction and non-fiction literature, implementation of up-to-date teaching methods and approaches in the study process, work with parents.*

Teacher 9: *By communication with outstanding personalities. Child's senses and sensuous perception have to be developed.*

Teacher 10: *By working with a family, meetings with interesting people, out-of-school and out-of-class communication between a teacher and a student.*

Teacher 11: *By working with parents, meetings with interesting people.*

Teacher 12: *By stimulating teacher's work (facilities and equipment, availability of up-to-date teaching aids), close mutual connection between a teacher's work and social structures, an individual approach to each student.*

Teacher 13: *Motivating, teaching/learning, education.*

Teacher 14: *By giving an opportunity for representatives of all nations to learn and to develop their cultures.*

Teacher 15: *No answer.*

Teacher 16: *No answer.*

Teacher 17: *More class trips, hikes have to be organized to give a child opportunities to expand his/her communication experience, behaviour culture in different life situations and places- in a theatre, a factory, a museum.*

Teacher 18: *No answer.*

Teacher 19: *By discussions, a teacher as an example, creation of situations, experience exchange, analysis of a literature work (analysis of a character's actions, assessment, how I would act in a similar situation).*

Teacher 20: *A teacher as an example (students imitate). Observance of behaviour standards, students' awards. Having discussions about condemnable behaviour.*

Teacher 21: *By having class discussions about situations, visiting different events, paying attention to situations preferable and not desired, reading literature, watching films, a teacher as an example in communication.*

Teacher 22: *By creating play situations where a child learns to cooperate, to communicate. To conduct lessons with mutual help elements (mutual testing, control).*

Teacher 23: *By creating conditions for communication, for class and school cooperation.*

Teacher 24: *By broadening of child's outlook, development of the skills to communicate with peers as well as adults, with the surrounding world.*

Teacher 25: *By showing one's individual attitude to the surrounding world as an example. By organizing discussions, discussing different situations, providing a child with an opportunity to express his/her opinion, to explain a reason.*

Teacher 26: *By providing cooperation and mutual helpful atmosphere doing creative tasks in groups which consist of students of different nations; using play situations, class trips.*

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**Appendix D*****The answers of Rezekne Secondary School No D primary school students' parents to the question: „In what ways can the development of primary school students' social competence be stimulated?“***

Family 1: *By organizing holiday events, extra activities.*

Family 2: *By communicating with society (friends etc).*

Family 3: *By punishing but not very severely, by mentioning good children as examples.*

Family 4: *By correct education, teaching a child to respect adults.*

Family 5: *By adults as examples.*

Family 6: *By development of both parents and school.*

Family 7: *By discussing (analysing) definite situations day by day, repeating many times the same things.*

Family 8: *By teaching to act correctly (what is allowed and is not allowed).*

Family 9: *By informative lessons, cultural events, class trips.*

Family 10: *By telling children the truth about current events and to try to explain reasons for them (why it is going on).*

Family 11: *By getting children acquainted with culture of other nations, with their traditions.*

Family 12: *By teaching good manners, to read more, to go out more often, to meet different social groups, to meet not only that group which a child belongs to but upper class society.*

Family 13: *By teaching children how to behave in public.*

Family 14: *With a personal example in a family.*

Family 15: *No answer.*

Family 16: *No answer.*

Family 17: *By telling children more, by showing the whole culture.*

Family 18: *With a personal example; observing others' behaviour, watching films, reading books, a positive classmates' (colleagues') example.*

Family 19: *No answer.*

Family 20: *No answer.*

Family 21: *By correct and true introduction of a definite situation.*

Family 22: *By organizing more cultural events.*

Family 23: *By going to a library, reading literature and fairy tales, visiting exhibitions, taking part in school and public activities, knowledge about local and world current events. Getting acquainted with professions, role plays.*

Family 24: *By working with parents and children from hard-up families involving psychologists. By teaching children to treat others with respect, to create class solidarity, to create mutual help environment, sympathy atmosphere, parents and children obey God's Commandments.*

Family 25: *Using imitation examples in all spheres which surround children, parents' active participation in their children's education.*

Family 26: *By deep respect for a child's personality, pleasant psychological atmosphere (microclimate) at school and in a family, to encourage children to work out school rules and regulations.*

Family 27: *By child's participation in out-of-school life, participation in class life.*

Family 28: *The same methods are appropriate, plus hikes, class trips, lectures, discussions. Information + conclusions, generalization, true-to-life examples.*

Family 29: *By organizing class trips, to visit museums, exhibitions, theatre performances.*

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Family 30: *By the study of literature, films and other information and discussions about them.*

Family 31: *No answer.*

Family 32: *The term "competence" does not refer to a child.*

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## Part Three: Potentials for Interdisciplinary Approaches and Purpose of Qualitative Research Methods: Lifelong Learning and Education Issues

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### A Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods for Data Sequential Analysis in PhD Thesis “Transdisciplinarity of Learning for Promoting Physical Literacy”

*Andra Fernate*

#### **Abstract**

Sport education shall adjust the bio-psychosocial perspective that simultaneously includes the physical, psychological, and social context. It means that more attention is focused on cumulating on the basis of the unity of somato-psychic and socio-cultural aspects in an individual, changing the priorities in the understanding of this area from somato-psychic to socio-cultural, at the same time, not ignoring the equally significant value of both; thus, justifying the unrealised unique possibilities in the sports area. It means that the study and development of physical literacy is based on the transdisciplinary approach. Based on new progressive educational ideas and reinforced by insights from constructivism and system-theories as well as neurophysiology, and results of quantitative and qualitative sequential explanatory research applied within the framework of this study, a new didactic model, which makes the learners responsible for certain parts of their training situations, was created.

#### **Introduction**

Holistic education is education in which spiritual, social, emotional, moral, and physical growths are valued in addition to cognitive development. Unfortunately, traditional education does not meet the current needs of all the community and the environment. In Western society, mainly people view themselves to be separate from Nature. This separation is understandable as today's youth is growing up in an industrialized society with limited connections to the natural world. The goal of holistic education is one of personal growth while empowering persons to make positive social changes and to develop environmental responsibility (Miller, 1999).

The Swiss humanitarian Johann Pestalozzi, the American Transcendentalists - Thoreau, Emerson and Alcott, the founders of “progressive” education - Francis Parker and John Dewey. - and pioneers such as Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner, among others, all insisted that education should be understood as the art of cultivating the moral, emotional,

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physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of the developing child. During the 1970s, an emerging body of literature in science, philosophy and cultural history provided an overarching concept to describe this way of understanding education - a perspective known as *holism*.

Orienteering may provide means to practice holistic education. Through integration of real life experiences and learning, orienteering provides a place for athletes to explore connections with self, sport, community, and nature. Yet few studies have explored orienteering as it relates to education theories and in particular to holistic education and analysis of its position within the context of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Delors et al., 1996) .....

The purpose of this study is to determine athletes' physical literacy development in training process. Physical literacy requires a holistic engagement that encompasses physical capacities that are embedded in athletes' self-confidence, motivation, knowledge and understanding to maintain sports activity at an individually appropriate level, through integration in environment.

## **Theoretical Background**

Holistic education theory and practice encourage the use of integrated training programmes. However, there are variations within integrated training programmes. Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary are three variants of integrated training programmes, which differ in relation to the kinds of connections with various disciplines. Transdisciplinary integrated training involves the integration of nearly all subjects around broad themes or activities. In addition to connecting subjects, a holistic training program approach aims to create connections within self as well. The results of this study will provide the necessary data to a growing area concerning the design of integrated training programmes and to the field of holistic education.

### ***Concept of Physical Literacy and Holistic Education in Sport***

Definitions and understandings of literacy have broadened considerably over the past fifty years. As early as 1949, the United Nations General Assembly envisioned the minimum requirements for fundamental education as including domestic skills, knowledge of other cultures and an opportunity to develop personal attributes such as initiative and freedom (Jones, 1990). According to UNESCO's 1958 definition, it is the ability of an individual to read and write with understanding a simple short statement related to his/her everyday life. The concept of literacy has since evolved to embrace multiple skill domains, each conceived on a scale of different mastery levels and serving different purposes.

As definitions of literacy shifted from a discrete set of technical skills to human resource skills for economic growth, to capabilities-for socio-cultural

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and political changes, international organizations acknowledged broader understandings of literacy, which encompass literacy practices, lifelong learning and information and communication technology literacy.

Since the mid-twentieth century, scholars have devoted considerable attention to defining literacy, and their work has had direct implications for approaches to practice and policy (Fransman, 2005). Academics from such wide-ranging disciplines as psychology, economics, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy and history have engaged in an ongoing and, at times, highly contested debate over the meaning and definition of the term 'literacy' and how it is related to the broader notions of education and knowledge. Taking into account these evolving debates, including the major traditions, critiques and approaches to literacy, this section presents four discrete understandings of literacy:

- literacy as an autonomous set of skills;
- literacy as applied, practiced and situated;
- literacy as a learning process;
- literacy as text.

These broad areas of enquiry accommodate almost all theoretical understandings of literacy. Excluded is a postmodernist theory of literacy that views it as an instrument of power and oppression legitimating dominant discourses and endangering languages, cultures and local knowledge. This view - literacy is a 'meaning making' tool.

As the world works to implement the goals of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the use of quality literacy practices occupies a place of importance. The United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012) provides a special focus for enhanced collective endeavour and is a chance that must not be lost. Literacy is about more than reading and writing. It is about social practices and relationships, about knowledge, language and culture. As reading and writing what is called literacy opens innumerable doors in life, and the management of figures numeric is the springboard for a range of opportunities, so everyone should develop literacy in movement which motivates them to establish a lifelong habit of taking up options in one or more areas of physical activity.

As individuals learn, they become literate. This idea is at the core of literacy as a learning process approach, which views literacy as an active and broad-based learning process, rather than as a product of a more limited and focused educational intervention. Building on the scholarship of Dewey and Piaget, constructivist educators focus on ways in which individual learners, make sense of their learning experiences. In the field of adult education, some scholars see personal experience as a central resource for learning.

Education is an essential key to achieving development and progress. In such a context, physical education and sports are considered an integral part of quality education within the framework of Education for All (EFA). Physical education and sports do indeed contribute to developing "generic" skills, the cognitive and physical potential of a child, and provide him or her with the foundations necessary for complete development and well-being. As humans,

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we all experience the world from an embodied perspective and that physical literacy would attract one definition. The concept would need to be applicable to all human beings no matter when or where they lived.

A preliminary definition of a physically literate individual as being able to: “move with poise, economy and confidence in a wide variety of physically challenging situations. Furthermore the individual is perceptive in 'reading' all aspects of the physical environment, anticipating movement needs or possibilities and responding appropriately to these, with intelligence and imagination” according to Whitehead (2001). The concept of physical literacy fits very comfortably because literacy is not only just about being able to do, it is about being able to perceive intelligently and respond appropriately.

Physical literacy then must encompass more than physical skills, it must include an ability to read the environment and to respond effectively. The issue of physical challenge is complex. Physical literacy requires a holistic engagement. Defining the concept needs careful analysis and this will be approached by looking at four issues, being - the embodied capacities that would seem to form an essential ground to the state; the range of environmental situations with which the individual should be able to interact; the range of personal and inter-personal situations in which the individual should be able to deploy their embodied dimension effectively; and the holistic capacities that are essential to achieving the state.

The embodied capacities that we need to interact effectively with the environment: co-ordination (balance, agility, movement control, precision, the ability to move at different speeds), speed, flexibility, strength, power and endurance. They describe our potential. Without any one of these capacities our ability to interact with the world would be restricted.

The physically literate individual has the ability to ‘read’ the demands of the situation. New knowledge is created while reading situations. The achievement and exercise of physical literacy plays a very significant part in the development of self realization, self-awareness, self-confidence and positive self-esteem. Whitehead (2001) stated that: “A physically literate individual has a well established sense of self as embodied in the world. This together with an articulate interaction with the environment engenders positive self-esteem and self-confidence. Furthermore, sensitivity to and awareness of our embodied capacities lead to fluent self-expression through non-verbal communication and to perceptive and empathetic interaction with others”.

It was Sartre (1957) who first engaged in serious debate as to different ways in which we can view our embodiment. He asserted that to understand existence we have to appreciate that there are three ways in which we can conceptualize our embodiment. For Sartre we have a body-for-itself, a body-for-others and a body-for-Others as perceived- by-the self.

Maude (2001) likens physical literacy to Gardner's (1993): “bodily kinesthetic intelligence; the ability to use one’s body in highly differentiated and skilled ways, for expressive as well as goal-directed purposes”.

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To become physically literate, the first and fundamental stage is learning about our physical selves; the second stage - the developing, expanding and additional understanding of our own unique physical potential, and how we can utilize this throughout our lifetime experience of physical activity. In addition the individual has the ability to identify and articulate the essential qualities that influence the effectiveness of his/her own movement performance, and has an understanding of the principles of embodied health, with respect to basic aspects such as exercise, sleep and nutrition.

Summarizing all the thoughts on physical literacy it is finally defined according to Whitehead (2001) as "a combination of an individual's motivation, confidence, physical competence, understanding and knowledge to maintain physical activity at an individually appropriate level, throughout life through integration in environment."

With the intent of sport education as the nurturing of physical literacy there would need to be a move away from a prescribed activity-centred performance model, to a person-centred participation model.

### ***Transdisciplinarity of Learning in Training Process***

Constructivism is defined as a view regarding to which an individual's mind constructs the reality but within a systematic interaction with the external world. Constructivism is associated with the names of Jean Piaget and George Kelly. Cognitive constructivism is a metatheoretical position that sees knowledge production as the creation of mental models. This position has been influenced by Piaget's theory of cognitive development proposing that individuals cannot be "given" information which they immediately understand and use. Instead, they must "construct" their own knowledge through their experiences which enable them to build "mental models" of the world. Mental models consist of schemas, scripts and knowledge structures. These models may change and become more detailed and sophisticated as individuals receive new sensory data or encounter novel situations. Yet, mental models are understood as relatively stable conceptual structures orienting action. Cognitive constructivism approaches information processes by describing how vitally the information is needed, seeking the relevance of the individual's current emotional and cognitive states to situations and work tasks. In cognitive constructivism, uncertainty is an important concept, referring both to the cognitive and affective states of the user in specific stages of problem-solving processes (Kuhlthau, 1993), and to task uncertainty, the degree and structurality of knowledge available for decision making (Byström, 2000; Vakkari, 1999).

Central to constructivism is its conception of learning. Von Glasersfeld (1995) argues that: "From the constructivist perspective, learning is not a stimulus-response phenomenon. It requires self-regulation and the building of conceptual structures through reflection and abstraction". Fosnot (1996) adds that "Rather than behaviours or skills as the goal of instruction, concept

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development and deep understanding are the foci. For educators, it is a challenge to be able to build a hypothetical model of the conceptual worlds of students since these worlds could be very different from what it is intended by the educator (von Glasersfeld, 1996).

The culture of teaching and learning is characterized by paradigm of humanistic pedagogy. Outlining new progressive didactical models, an alternative form is being developed, the “model of mathematics” that attributes a new role to the personality of the teacher (Kösel, 2003).

The classical area of didactics is the theory how to teach, but the area of mathematics is the theory of how to learn. Mathematics is not from the point of view of inter –or multidisciplinary, but in the tradition of transdisciplinarity (Kohlberg, 2002).

The logical context of mathematics explained learning as construction: “We are coupled with environment only by structures, i.e. we convert impulses from the outside within our nervous system in a “structure determined” manner, i.e. on the basis of biographically coined psycho-physical cognitive and emotional structures (Siebert, 1999)”.

Mathematics supports self-organization: both cognitive and social systems are characterized by their non-linearity and self- control. Didactical action may therefore only energize but not determine the process of learning. Coaching is thus the attempt to energize complex systems that operate according to their own logic. This implies that it is basically impossible to teach in a direct manner, and that it is only possible in active process of learning.

According to the constructivist approach we learn in a recursive manner, i.e. the content of learning is being transformed, structure- determined by the previous learning content. Learner himself or herself attributes meaning to the incoming coded flow of energy. Self – directed learning is a form of learning, during which an individual decides himself/herself which kind of self-control measures he/she wants to apply according to his/her motivation of learning (of cognitive, volitional or behavioural kind) and controls, regulates and evaluates the progress of learning by him/herself (meta-cognitive level) (Konrad & Traub, 1999).

In 1947 Bernstein presented the theory of movement construction. This theory is available for athletes’ physical competence as physical literacy self-development promotion. This model consisted of five levels, corresponding to definite parts of central nervous system and responsible for particular categories of motor activities. Analyzing the evolution of living beings, Bernstein took into account four factors determining the motor efficiency, namely:

- Ability to perceive stimuli from environment and react to them (sensitivity and excitability);
  - Ability to perceive new motor tasks and necessity of solving them;
  - Occurrence of new executor organs or development of already existing ones, enabling creation of new sensomotor abilities;
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- Creation of varied sensomotor abilities, which enable construction of new skills and capabilities, thus solving more and more complex motor tasks.

Bernstein's theory is valuable for contemporary sensomotor control and learning models in the orienteering training for athletes physical literacy self development.

The psycho-neuroimmunology research (Miketta, 1997) has given proof of close linkage between psyche, central nervous system, hormones system, immune system and environmental influences; e.g. social contacts. These findings justify the reason for the necessity of mathematics. This new concept of the human organism conceives a person as bio-psycho-social being. Only if the human organism is in homeostasis, it is able to learn.

### **Sample of the Study**

- for the quantitative research – 135 (68 male, 67 female) orienteering athletes (36 of them were the athletes of the Latvian National Orienteering Team and its candidates (18 male, 18 female)), 300 representatives of other sports (150 male, 150 female);
- for the qualitative research – 8 athletes of the Latvian National Orienteering Team and its candidates (4 male, 4 female).

### **Methods**

Transdisciplinary sequential explanatory research design is applied within the framework of this research. This research design is applied with the purpose to use the results achieved in a qualitative research for the interpretation of the results achieved in a quantitative research (Morse, 1991). The results achieved in a qualitative research are used for a more detailed confirmation of quantitative data, or the collection and evaluation of qualitative data may be set as a priority. The results of quantitative data are used for the purpose of identifying guidelines for a qualitative research (Tashakkori, Teddlie, 2003, 227). One of the weaknesses of this design is the time consuming data collection process, as it takes place in two separate phases.

Thus, a transdisciplinary research, grouped as to the applied methods, can be referred to as a quantitative and qualitative (mixed) research. As to its application, it can be both applied (Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, 1994; Klein, 2004), and fundamental (Nicolescu, 1996). With reference to the devised transdisciplinary research approach, in the three research cycles, the mutual interconnection of the research parts through scientific integration has been emphasized, as well as the impact of changes in each part on the action and interaction strategy in order to promote the development of orienteering athletes' physical literacy and enhancement of their sports proficiency.

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In order to achieve the aim of this research in line with the sequential explanatory research design, both quantitative and qualitative research methods have been used. Qualitative research methods: scientific literature research and analysis; narrative interview; pilot research. The research of athletes' physical literacy development in training process through integration in environment was carried out on the basis of the analysis of biographical cases with the narrative interview method.

### *Quantitative Data Processing Methodes*

Quantitative research methods: M. J. Mahoney's test for Psychological Skills Inventory for Sports; method of control exercises; laboratory experiment; pedagogic experiments (fact-finding and transformational); analysis of competition protocols; mathematic statistic methods. Criteria and indicators for further performance of the research have been reflected.

Empirical methods of data collection with the direct involvement of the author: laboratory experiment; narrative interview. Without the direct involvement of the author: M.J. Mahoney test (PSIS R-5) for stating athletes' psychological skills in sport; analysis of competition documentation. The Psychological Skills Inventory for Sports (PSISR5) was used during a non-competitive time to establish the baseline data. The questionnaire consisted of 45 items using a 5 point Likert response which Mahoney (1989) reported an internal consistency with split-half correlation coefficient at 0.567 and Spearman-Brown coefficient of 0.724, Guttman coefficient of 0.70.

Mathematic statistic methods of data processing (SPSS 14 and AQUAD 6 software have been used for data processing). Primary mathematic statistic methods: descriptive statistics (frequencies, central tendency, dispersion, skewness and kurtosis analysis). Secondary mathematic statistic methods: correlation analysis (Pearson correlation coefficient), T test, reliability identification method of test parts (Cronbach's alpha coefficient, Guttman split-half correlation coefficient, Spearman-Brown coefficient), Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy test, Bartlett's Test, factor analysis, single factor dispersion analyses ANOVA, non-parametric statistic methods (Spearman range correlation coefficient, X<sup>2</sup> test, Kendall's tau-b coefficient, Kolmagorov-Smirnow test).

### *Qualitative Data Processing Methods*

When processing the qualitative data from narrative interviews, the coding of characteristics was done by means of the programme AQUAD 6. First of all, the primary coding was carried out, but as the number of the codes assigned is usually very big, they were subsequently combined into groups – meta codes. A system of codes has been elaborated that cover three dimensions of athletes' physical literacy development through interaction

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environment: *micro system* (parents, friends, sports club, coach, school) and *meso system* (several elements of micro systems join) and *macro system* (on national level, international level). Exploring the results was carried out according to the frequency, correlations and frequency differences of codes.

### ***Verification of Quantitative and Qualitative Data Processing Results***

Complete verification of the quantitative and qualitative research results was achieved using mixed methods for obtaining, interpretation, and verification of data. The quantitative data numerically confirmed the general trends and causal relationships, while the qualitative data gave an opportunity to get a deeper insight into the obtained regularities.

### **Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods for Data Analysis**

For the determination of some factors of athletes' physical literacy in the training process of orienteering I have combined qualitative and quantitative approach.

As stated above physical literacy is a combination of an individual's motivation, confidence, physical competence, understanding and knowledge to maintain physical activity at an individually appropriate level, throughout life through integration in environment.

As for athletes' motivation and confidence they were evaluated using Psychological Skills Inventory for Sports (PSISR5) during a non-competitive time.

### ***Using of Quantitative Research Methods for Analysis***

Descriptive statistics, reliability and internal consistency estimates for Psychological Skills Inventory for Sports (PSIS R-5) were determined.

Test-retest reliability was conducted. In the investigation students (n=130) completed the inventory, and two weeks later completed the same test. Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were calculated for each of the psychological skills assessed by the PSIS R-5. Results yielded correlation coefficients that ranged from .12 to .58. The actual correlations were as follows: anxiety control  $r=.49$  ( $p<.01$ ); concentration  $r=.58$  ( $p<.01$ ); confidence  $r=.48$  ( $p<.01$ ); mental preparation  $r=.12$ ; motivation  $r=.54$  ( $p<.01$ ); team emphasis  $r=.20$  ( $p<.05$ ). The results show statistically significant positive correlations between psychological skills with the exception of mental preparation.

The Pearson Product Moment scale inter correlation matrix revealed low positive relationships between scales are presented in Table 1. As expected,

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the confidence and concentration, anxiety control and concentration scales were moderately related to each other rather than to other scales.

*Table 1*

Scales Intercorrelations for Psychological Skills Inventory for Sports

	Anxiety control	Concentration	Confidence	Mental preparation	Motivation
Anxiety control					
Concentration	.55*				
Confidence	.49*	.55*			
Mental preparation	.25*	.24*	.14		
Motivation	.15	.33*	.38*	.03	
Team emphasis	.24*	.31*	.08	.23*	.25*

\*  $p < .01$ , two-tailed

Internal consistency and split-half reliability estimates for PSIS R-5 for total scale is adequate Cronbach's alpha is .79, correlation between forms .67 and high Spearman-Brown coefficient is .80, Guttman Split-Half coefficient .77 in the students' sample ( $n=300$ ).

The numbers of scale items, scoring ranges, means, standard deviation and internal consistency estimates are presented in Table 2. The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) estimates for each scale were from low ratio - .24 to high .80. The value of - .24 for the mental preparation scale was particularly unusual and appeared to be the result of several items that were negatively correlated with one another.

*Table 2*

Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency Estimates for the Psychological Skills Inventory for Sports (PSIS-R-5) ( $n=300$ )

Scales	N of items	Possible range	M	SD	Cronbach's alpha
Anxiety control	10	0-40	21.26	4.97	.52
Concentration	6	0-24	13.12	3.72	.47
Confidence	9	0-36	20.55	6.18	.80
Mental preparation	6	0-24	12.14	2.85	-.24
Motivation	7	0-28	15.81	4.72	.65
Team emphasis	7	0-28	18.51	3.61	.46

For example, item 33 ("When I mentally practice my performance, I "see" myself performing- just like I was watching a videotape") was negatively correlated with both item 3 (-.04) ("I often dream about competition") and item 45 (-.05) ("When it comes down to the last hours before a meet. I often wish that I were better prepared"). This suggests that internal consistency would be increased if the scoring directions were changed so that item 33 was given a positive rather than negative weight. With the exception of the confidence scale, the internal consistency estimates were considerably below .80, which is the minimum level recommended for applied purposes (Nunnally, 1978).

Reliability statistics, scale items and numbers are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
Reliability Statistics for the Psychological Skills Inventory for Sports (PSIS-R-5)

		Anxiety control	Concentration	Confidence	Mental preparation	Motivation	Team emphasis
Total N of Items		10	6	9	6	7	7
Correlation Between Forms		.38*	.24*	.68*	-.07	.43*	.33*
Spearman-Brown Coefficient	Equal Length	.55*	.39*	-	-.15*	-	-
	Unequal Length	-	-	.81*	-	.61*	.50*
Guttman Split-Half Coefficient		.55*	.38*	.79*	-.15*	.60*	.49*

\* $p < .01$ , two-tailed

Results of the reliability statistics for each scale were from quite low to very high: correlation between the forms ranging from  $-.07$  to  $.68$ ; Spearman-Brown coefficient ranging from  $-.15$  to  $.81$ ; Guttman Split-Half coefficient  $-.15$  to  $.79$ . PSIS R-5 scales had internal consistency problems, with the exception of the confidence factor ( $.68 \leq r < .82$ ) as well as motivation, anxiety control and concentration had a moderately positive correlation ( $.40 \leq r < .60$ ). This suggests that internal consistency would be increased if the scoring directions were changed to a positive rather than negative weight for same negative correlated items.

Correlation between psychological skills and performance in orienteering was presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
Spearman's rank correlation between Rank of Competition and Rank of Scales, Rank of Scales Intercorrelations for Psychological Skills Inventory for Sports (n=21)

	Rank of competition	Anxiety control	Concentration	Confidence	Mental preparation	Motivation	Team emphasis
Rank of competition							
Anxiety control	-.13						
Concentration	.44 **	.23					
Confidence	.41 *	.46 **	.59 ***				
Mental preparation	.05	.07	.05	-.17			
Motivation	.41 *	.13	.41 *	.61 ***	-.36		
Team emphasis	-.09	-.04	.21	-.06	.53 **	.20	
Average	.37 *	.61 ***	.70 ***	.87 ***	.15	.50 **	.23

\*  $p < .10$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , two-tailed, \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , two-tailed

Concentration, confidence, motivation - these psychological skills influenced the results of orienteering performance. Average score of the psychological skills influenced the rank of orienteering competition result, too. The actual inter correlations between the rank of scales were as follows:

confidence and anxiety  $r=.46$  ( $p < .05$ ), concentration  $r=.59$  ( $p < .01$ ), motivation and concentration  $r=.41$  ( $p < .10$ ), confidence  $r=.61$  ( $p < .01$ ), team emphasis and mental preparation  $r=.53$  ( $p < .05$ ). Concentration and confidence scales were highly related to average score of the psychological skills than other scales.

As for athletes' motivation and confidence they were evaluated using Psychological Skills Inventory for Sports (PSISR5) during a non-competitive time in the beginning and in the end of a mental training season. The mental training was based on the concepts of Mathematics. The results are shown in Table 5.

*Table 5*  
Orienteer (n=18) Psychological Skills Dynamics after Psychological Skills Training

	Anxiety control	Confidence	Concentration	Mental Preparation	Motivation	Team Focus
Mean <i>b</i>	68.88	54	65.76	31.56	64.24	77.12
<i>a</i>	77.12	64.44	62.64	40.44	71.12	76.88
SD	21.48	21.08	22.2	13.36	20.24	18.28
SE	1.26	1.24	1.31	.79	1.19	1.08
<i>Mean increase</i>	8.24	10.44	- 3.12	8.88	6.88	- .24
t-test	2.90**	3.94**	.63	4.43**	1.78*	.06

\* $p < .10$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , two-tailed

The results reveal that mental training programme was favourable for strengthening athletes' anxiety control, confidence, mental preparation and motivation.

Physical competence indices in orienteering were determined in laboratory and field experiments. Various parameters of performance (aerobic threshold, anaerobic threshold and VO<sub>2</sub> max), blood pressure, running speed, lactate (LA) concentration, ranking and training load were recorded. The results of work capacity of 18 Latvian orienteering national team candidates were registered with the further analysis of how informative they are (see Table 6).

The interconnection between the results of orienteering in middle and long distances and physical work capacity indices are the following: the most informative (high statistically significant correlation) in middle distance is 7.5 km cross-country - .97; running speed at aerobic change threshold - .92; and at anaerobic change threshold - .89 ( $r \geq r .05$ ;  $n$ ;  $r \geq .47$ ). But leg extensor explosive power results have low correlation: in angle jump - .46; in straight jump - .36, in free jump - .28.

*Table 6*

Interrelationship between vertical jump test, speed on a treadmill, 7.5 km cross-country run results and distance running time (n=18)

Variable	Correlation with distance running time	
	Middle distance	Long distance
Vertical jump test (cm):		
• angle jump	.46	.00
• straight jump	.36	.00
• free jump	.28	.09
Speed (m/s) on a treadmill:		
• AT	.92*	.85*
• AnT	.89*	.59*
7.5 km cross-country (min)	.97*	.84*

\*  $p < .05$ , two-tailed

In long distance the highest informative (high statistically significant correlation) is running speed at aerobic change threshold – .85; and 7.5 km cross-country race - .84. Average correlation is running speed at anaerobic change threshold – .59. But leg extensor explosive power results have low statistically non-significant correlation: in free jump – .09; in straight jump – .00; in free jump – .00. The highest informative indices, which were determined in laboratory and field experiments, characterize athletes' physical competence in orienteering sport.

The correlation between the criteria of physical literacy, motivation, self-confidence and participation in competitions in orienteering sport can be estimated as medium close ( $r = .41$ ;  $p < 0.1$ ). Hence, self-confidence and motivation influence the competition results in orienteering sport.

### *Using Qualitative Research Methods for Analysis*

The qualitative research of athletes' physical literacy development in training process through integration in environment was carried out on the basis of the analysis of the narrative interviews. A possibility to become a volunteer in narrative interviews was offered to the athletes of the Latvian National Orienteering Team and its candidates who were training according to the mental training programme, which facilitated physical literacy development and was based on the concepts of Mathetics. A system of codes has been elaborated that cover three dimensions of athletes' physical literacy indices (*physical competence, motivation, self-confidence, knowledge and understanding*) through interaction environment: *micro system* (parents, friends, sports club, coach, school) and *meso system* (several elements of micro systems join) and *macro system* (on national level, international level). In this research, physical competence, motivation, self-confidence, knowledge, and understanding in the course of sports action are considered to

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be the criteria of physical literacy. The indicators of these criteria are the following:

- the indicators of physical competence are physical and mental working capacity, the unity of which is reflected in integral working capacity. Within the framework of this research, the indicators of physical working capacity are the following: health condition, aerobic and anaerobic capacity. The evaluation criterion of mental working capacity as a component of integral working capacity is competition performance;
- the indicators of motivation as a physical literacy criterion are: motivation, an externally motivated action, an internally motivated action;
- the indicators of self-confidence as a physical literacy criterion are: a person's ability to realise their physical, mental aptitude; a positive assessment of their abilities in different situations; belief in their abilities to gain achievements in their sport activities;
- the indicators of knowledge as a physical literacy criterion are: knowledge about oneself and the respective kind of sport and on general regularities in nature and social environment and cognitive strategies.

The athletes' biographies have been divided into four groups (A, B, C, D), on the basis of the gender and performance level (A, C - Latvian National Orienteering Team athletes and B, D - its candidates). When exploring the results according to the frequency of codes, one has to conclude that interaction environment *exo system* (professional sport) does not appear in any interview (see Appendix A).

As to *motivation* as a physical literacy criterion the code *internally motivated action* has been marked most frequently – 28 times at *micro system level*, but *externally motivated action* has also been marked frequently at *macro system level* – 25 times.

### ***Quantitative Analysis of Qualitative Results***

The results of the athletes' motivation scale, which was evaluated using Psychological Skills Inventory for Sports (PSISR5), reflect similar tendencies as interviews. The differences of the performance level of athlete groups after the motivation scale are statistically very significant ( $F = 10.20$  with  $p < .01$ ), the mean for the athletes having international success – 65.2, having national success – 53. The results of the interviews verify these differences, for example, the differences in performance level of athlete groups after the code *externally motivated action* at *macro system level* was statistically significant ( $t=2.14$ ,  $p<0.1$ ).

In relation to *self-confidence* as a physical literacy criterion in total the code *appropriate self-confidence* has been marked 28 times at *micro system level*, but in *macro system level* – 30 times. Whereas the code *a lack of appropriate self-confidence* has been marked most frequently at *micro system*

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level – 16 times, but at *macro system level* this code has been marked 12 times only by the Latvian National Orienteering Team candidates.

The results of the athletes' self-confidence scale, which was evaluated using Psychological Skills Inventory for Sports (PSISR5), reflect similar tendencies as interviews. The differences of the achievement level of athlete groups after the self-confidence scale are statistically significant ( $F = 2.74$  with  $p < .01$ ), the mean for the athletes having international success – 61.2, having national success – 57.8. The results of the interviews verify these differences, for example, the differences in performance level of athlete groups after the code *a lack of appropriate self-confidence* at *macro system level* was statistically significant ( $t = -2.78$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The athletes of the Latvian National Orienteering Team do not reflect about a *lack of appropriate self-confidence* at *macro system level*, but each candidate of the Latvian National Orienteering Team reflects 3 times on average.

As to *physical competence* as a physical literacy criterion the code *appropriate physical competence* has been marked frequently – 31 times at *micro system level*, but most frequently there has been marked *appropriate physical competence* at *macro system level* – 56 times.

The relations stated in the quantitative research proved true in the qualitative research. The athletes' physical literacy indices *knowledge and understanding* correlate closely ( $r = .9$ ;  $p < .01$ ), *self-confidence* ( $r = .65$ ;  $p < .05$ ) correlates fairly closely with the sum of the physical literacy indices. The lack of physical literacy is due to the lack of *knowledge and understanding* ( $r = .93$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and *physical competence* ( $r = .77$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

## Findings

On the basis of the results of the quantitative and qualitative research, the model of orienteering athletes' integral work capacity development has been worked out. The structure of the model is determined by the mutual interrelation of physical literacy components and their correlation with sports achievement.

Physical literacy as the key to elite athlete's activity in orienteering sport was a sport-specific long-term athlete self-development aim. The development of athlete's physical literacy in orienteering sport depends as much on the nature of the interaction between the coach and the athlete in the particular environment, as on the content of the training program, which was based on the concepts of Mathematics in the tradition of transdisciplinarity. The motivation to take part in sports activity forms the basis of physical literacy. This is acquired as athletes make progress in sports proficiency and develop self confidence in this significant aspect of their human potential.

## Conclusions and Discussion

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The transdisciplinarity provides athletes with opportunities to learn in multiple ways, which are developmentally appropriate for physical literacy.

In the course of the research certain factors of athletes' physical literacy were determined. The key of physical competence in orienteering is aerobic capacity. Concerning physical competence in orienteering, it was stated that athletes' aerobic capacity indices are more informative for middle distance and long distance orienteering. In middle distances the most informative was the result in cross-country running (7.5 km), while in long distances - the indices of aerobic change threshold.

As to the athletes' motivation and confidence as of physical literacy indices, the research revealed that they have certain impact on sport performance.

Mental training has a positive effect on physical literacy development increasing motivation, self-confidence, anxiety control and mental preparation. Learning in orienteering training and competitions foster physical literacy development. The development of physical literacy is more explicit for more experienced athletes.

The transdisciplinarity of learning challenges educators to design experiences, which make learning meaningful and rewarding for athletes in orienteering training. By all means the model for learning orienteering should take into account the transdisciplinary nature of human being.

## Appendix A

### *The frequency of codes of the athletes' narrative interviews*

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<i>Appropriate physical competence at macro system level</i>	8	13	18	17
<i>A lack of appropriate physical competence at macro system level</i>	1	6	2	9
<i>Appropriate physical competence at meso system level</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>A lack of appropriate physical competence at meso system level</i>	0	0	0	2
<i>Appropriate physical competence at micro system level</i>	4	15	6	6
<i>A lack of appropriate physical competence at micro system level</i>	2	2	3	1
<i>Externally motivated action at macro system level</i>	8	5	10	2
<i>A lack of externally motivated action at macro system level</i>	0	2	2	3
<i>Internally motivated action at macro system level</i>	5	3	2	5
<i>A lack of internally motivated action at macro system level</i>	1	0	0	0
<i>Externally motivated action at meso system level</i>	0	0	2	2
<i>A lack of externally motivated action at meso system level</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Internally motivated action at meso system level</i>	0	2	0	2

	A	B	C	D
<i>A lack of internally motivated action at meso system level</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Externally motivated action at micro system level</i>	5	4	0	6
<i>A lack of externally motivated action at micro system level</i>	2	2	0	2
<i>Internally motivated action at micro system level</i>	3	9	6	10
<i>A lack of internally motivated action at micro system level</i>	1	0	1	0
<i>Appropriate self-confidence at macro system level</i>	5	11	10	4
<i>A lack of appropriate self-confidence at macro system level</i>	0	4	0	8
<i>Appropriate self-confidence at meso system level</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>A lack of appropriate self-confidence at meso system level</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Appropriate self-confidence at micro system level</i>	8	11	6	3
<i>A lack of appropriate self-confidence at micro system level</i>	3	8	2	3
<i>Knowledge and understanding at macro system level</i>	16	15	32	27
<i>A lack of knowledge and understanding at macro system level</i>	0	14	2	6
<i>Knowledge and understanding at meso system level</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>A lack of knowledge and understanding at meso system level</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Knowledge and understanding at micro system level</i>	3	33	5	7
<i>A lack of knowledge and understanding at micro system level</i>	5	8	4	6

A (female), C (male) - Latvian National Orienteering Team athletes

B (female), D (male) - Latvian National Orienteering Team candidates

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## **An Evaluation Research for Supporting of Students' ESP Competence in the Studies of a Higher Educational Establishment**

*Ineta Luka*

### **Abstract**

The topicality of the present evaluation research is determined by the development of tourism industry in Latvia whose labour market has recently increased. It is also marked by the changes in teaching-learning process, which is shifting from teaching to learning. The study was conducted from 2003 to 2007. Mixed method design was applied. Theoretical (study of theoretical literature and sources) and empirical methods of the research – data obtaining methods (students' narrative interviews, educators' semi-structured interviews, students and tourism employers' survey, students' observation, students' self-assessment, analysis of students' tests) and qualitative and quantitative data processing methods were used. This paper deals with the chosen scientific paradigm, the research design and the methods used. These were the issues discussed during the workshop "Qualitative Psychology in the Changing Academic Context" in Latvia, Medzabaki in October 2006 in research consultation session with Dr. Mechthild Kiegelmann and Dr. Andreas Witzel which led to a successful defence of Doctoral Thesis in 2008.

### **Introduction**

The twenty-first century is characterized by mobility and ever-increasing flow of information. In these conditions specialists' professional competence is becoming more and more important. Growing demands to employees' professionalism set new requirements to education. The main terms that describe the quality of higher education nowadays are "critical thinking, autonomous learning, lifelong learning, creativity, openness to changes, innovations, co-operation and teamwork, integration, partnership and flexibility" (Blūma, 2001, p. 30). The studies should be student-centred and oriented towards the holistic acquisition of study courses.

The educator's professionalism is characterized by wide strategic, creative knowledge, imagination and creativity, organizing of pair work, group work, teamwork, mutual help among the students, and strengthening students' independence, as well as the ability to integrate interdisciplinary knowledge in continuous professional development (Žogla, 2006). This means a shift from teaching to learning. Students themselves have to construct their knowledge; the educator advises and helps in this process. Students are active participants in the process.

The tourism business requires creative, educated specialists with a good command of several foreign languages, specialists who are able to make decisions and work observing traditions of different cultures. As tourism

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specialists will use language competence in many situations in different socio-cultural contexts alongside with language communicative competence they need to possess high intercultural competence which according to R. Alijevs (2005) includes tolerance, understanding and acceptance of different cultures, respect to cultural differences, strengthening of cultural differences. Students have to be ready to co-operate with representatives of different cultures, understand and accept differences and perceive them as development of experience (Byram, Gribkova et al., 2002). Therefore, with the growth of requirements for language competence, the language-learning model changes, as well. This situation proves a topical need to study the relationship between students' English language competence and tourism specialists' professional competence, determine the goal and objectives of the English language course, and create a theoretically grounded holistic model for learning English in tourism studies at tertiary level which would form the basis for tourism curriculum and would favour the development of students' professional competence.

One of the problems a researcher faces in conducting the research is the choice of the research paradigm, corresponding research design and research methods that would result in obtaining valid and reliable results of the research. This paper theoretically arguments the chosen research paradigm, research design and the methods used in the present qualitative evaluation study, as well as introduces the conducted empirical research sequentially revealing all its stages. *The purpose of this paper* is to present the qualitative evaluation research conducted in the field of the development of tourism students' ESP competence paying special attention to the chosen research design, selected research methods and data validity and reliability.

*The sample of the research* consists of 485 respondents: 442 tourism students, 17 educators and 26 tourism employers. Some respondents were involved in several stages of the research. 26 tourism employers and 433 students were involved in the quantitative research, 17 educators and 18 students were involved in the qualitative research (9 students in needs analysis and 9 students to create and test the model).

## **Methodological Framework**

The *methodological basis* of the research lies in *humanism* which is applied implementing social constructivism theory and action theory, based on the cognitions of adult psychology, social psychology and symbolic interactionism. The study comprises an analysis of competence theories, language competence theories, curriculum and syllabi theory, theory on needs analysis, E.de Bono's ideas of lateral thinking (deBono, 1996a, 1996b, 2002) and an analysis of the corresponding EU theories on language competence development and language competence levels.

*An interpretative research paradigm*, which corresponds to the nature of humanistic pedagogy, has been chosen for the research. Interpretative paradigm creates a context for an individual's development and

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helps them to develop their potential. It tends to understand the subjectivity of human experience, is oriented towards one's conscious activity, thus it is future-oriented. The core of this paradigm is human experience, people's mutual everyday interaction. Its aim is to understand people's activity, how a certain activity is exposed in a certain environment, time, conditions, i.e., how it is exposed in a definite socio-cultural context.

Interpretative paradigm is also characterized by the researcher's practical interest in the research question (Cohen, Manion et al., 2003). Thus the choice of the interpretative paradigm in the research was determined both by the researcher's practical interests – the creation of holistic curriculum, which would be used in further pedagogical activity – and the correspondence of social constructivism theory, symbolic interactionism theory and action theory to the given paradigm.

The choice of *the research design* includes defining of the research question, the choice of the corresponding research methodology, the choice of instruments for data obtaining, the selection of the sample of the study, determining data validity and reliability, the observance of scientific ethics, the choice of corresponding data analysis methods, data interpreting and informing a wider scientific audience about the results of the study (Cohen, Manion et al., 2003; Flick, 2004a, 2004c; Schwandt, 2000).

While studying several research designs (Cohen, Manion et al., 2003; Denzin, Lincoln, 2003; Flick, 2004a, 2005; Flick, von Kardoff et al., 2004b; Kardoff, 2004; Kelle, Erzberger, 2004; Kemmis, McTaggart, 2000; Kropljns, Raščevska, 2004; Mayring, 2002), *qualitative evaluation research* (Mayring, 2002) has been chosen as it best corresponds to the problem and the goal of the research. *The research problem* of the conducted study is double-sided – how to bring studies nearer to professional activity and how to further an educator's professional help for students in order to realize a humanistic pedagogic paradigm in tourism studies, to activate students' purposeful and meaningful participation in this process and to develop students' ESP competence so that prospective tourism specialists could wholeheartedly express themselves and be competitive in the labour market. *The goal of the research* was to study the efficiency of the English language learning model in the development of tourism specialist's English for Special Purposes (ESP) competence.

The origin of qualitative evaluation research is traced back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when development schemes and intelligence tests were introduced in pedagogy. During the second phase of their development from mid thirties to the end of the fifties such research was used creating and evaluating school curricula. Later qualitative evaluation research was used to evaluate both the results and the aims. Lately qualitative evaluation research has gained a higher significance in research. It is not only result-oriented, but it also includes evaluation of the process (Kardoff, 2004). These cognitions justify its use in the present study as the author's task was to create a model which would follow students' needs and wishes, their learning styles, would correspond to the requirements of the tourism business as well

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as involve the students and the educator in a continuous learning process based on mutual co-operation and understanding.

Evaluation includes five steps: design of the evaluation plan, defining of aims, concretizing the aims of the changes and evaluation criteria, evaluation of the changes and the report. Qualitative evaluation research scientifically arguments changes in the practice and evaluates their effectiveness by describing the processes openly, sometimes – intensively and in a subject-oriented manner. Qualitative evaluation research is started with an analysis of the initial situation and conditions, as well as with the creation of a curriculum or model. In order to evaluate the created curriculum/model, a certain case is described, thus creating a basis for criteria evaluation. This process also includes self-evaluation and general open final evaluation. At the end of the qualitative evaluation research it is essential to make the final evaluation of the curriculum/model and its aims. This results in a new theoretical conception – creation of the new curriculum/model (Mayring, 2002). The research described in this report was done implementing P. Mayring's research design (Mayring, 2002, p. 64) which corresponds to the aim of this study (see Figure 1). Figure 1 shows all the stages of the research pointing to the approach, data obtaining methods and data analysis methods used during each sequential stage of the study. A detailed analysis of the research methods used in the present study is given in the Part "Methods and Results".

As an essential component of every research is *data reliability and validity* theoretical literature was studied in order to choose appropriate data obtaining instruments and data analysis methods for getting valid and reliable results of the research.

According to A. Kroplijs and M. Raščevska (2004) the research validity has two forms: internal and external validity. Internal validity shows that there are no other factors that influence the results. External validity shows the level to which the research results may be transferred to other context which differs from that one of the research. Reliability refers to the possibility that repeating the research it is possible to get similar results (Kroplijs, Raščevska, 2004; Hunter, Brewer, 2003).

Validity and reliability of the research results are determined by the use of corresponding research methods. In order to strengthen validity of the research results recently in social sciences mixed methods have been used more frequently than ever before (Hunter, Brewer, 2003; Kelle, Erzberger, 2004).

As validity and reliability of the research results may also be provided by involving other researchers (colleagues) into the study (Freeman, deMarrais et. al., 2007), in several stages of the conducted research (description of the practice based on certain cases, justification of the criteria and final evaluation) several educators were involved.

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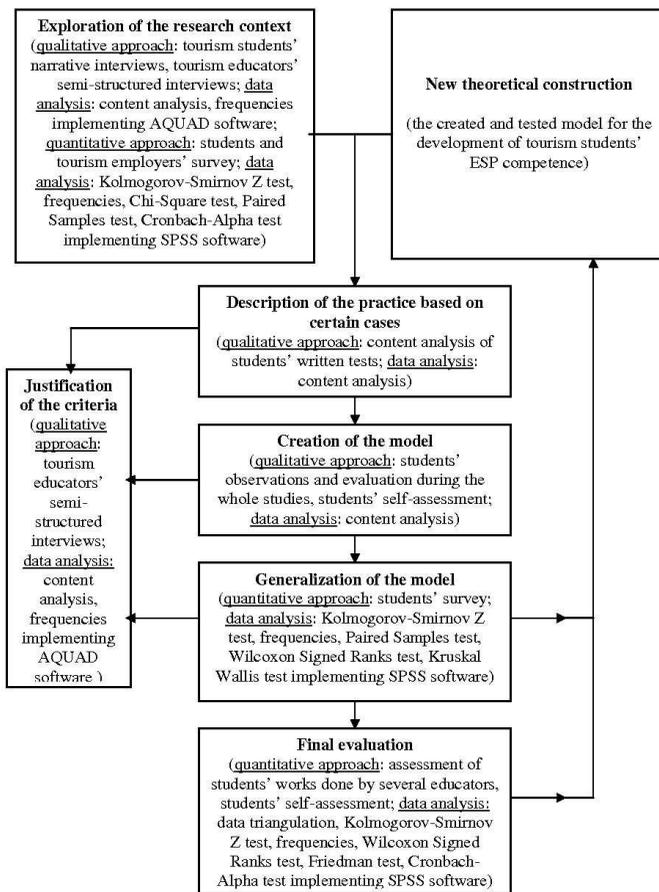


Figure 1: Created based on Mayring, P. Einführung in die qualitative Sozialforschung. Beltz, Basel: Beltz Verlag, 2002, p. 64.

In foreign language methodology there is a tendency to shift from absolutely qualitative or quantitative studies to such in which *mixed methods* of the research are used. It is done in order to measure the phenomena observing students' social and individual differences, which is an essential feature of human pedagogy. Implementation of both qualitative and quantitative methods in the study provides more precise results as quantitative methods mainly reveal the amount of differences but qualitative methods enable the researcher understanding these differences thus adding to their

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strengths (Hunter, Brewer, 2003). The use of qualitative approach in the study also provides the researcher's close contact and interaction with the people involved in the study, which is an advantage in obtaining the research results. Another advantage of qualitative approach is its publicity (Freeman, deMarrais et. al., 2007).

The use of mixed methods is a necessary precondition to obtain generalized information about the research context. They are appropriate for curriculum evaluation as they cover a longer period – from the curriculum piloting to its final evaluation. They comprise specific factors that are related with the context, which influence the result of the curriculum. Implementation of the mixed methods includes formative and summative assessment thus providing a feedback and interaction among curriculum evaluators. It gives an insight into successful curriculum realization possibilities, causal relationship and conditions of curriculum implementation (Chatterji, 2005).

The use of mixed methods in the research enables the researcher evaluating the results of a new approach or didactic model, because qualitative data, which were obtained using observations and were interpreted implementing qualitative data processing methods, may be generalized by conducting surveys and statistical analysis of the obtained quantitative data (Siegel, 2006). Implementation of mixed methods enables a researcher obtaining wide scope of data at the same time studying a research question in a more detailed way thus providing more comprehensive results of the research (Hunter, Brewer, 2003).

E. von Kardoff recommends using the following qualitative research methods in a qualitative evaluation research: different interviews, problem-centred group discussions, participants' observation, documenting of the events, analysis of the documents, and exploration of the research context. The author suggests using quantitative data obtaining and data processing methods for descriptive statistics. He also offers innovative methods – future workshops, workplace conversations, simulations and brainstorming (Kardoff, 2004).

The conducted study was done implementing mixed methods of the research. In needs analysis that was carried out to explore the research context both qualitative and quantitative approach was used. The qualitative approach was used in the following stages of the research: the description based on certain cases, creation of the model and justification of the criteria. In its turn for generalization of the research results and for final evaluation the quantitative approach was used (see Figure 1).

A. Kroplijs and M. Raščevska point out that there exists systemic relationship between the research dimensions, reliability and validity (Kroplijs, Raščevska, 2004). According to their created scheme (Kroplijs, Raščevska, 2004, p. 32) the selected non-experimental research design and conducting of the research in real environment, not in a laboratory, provide highly favourable external validity. The chosen data obtaining methods (surveys and students' tests) provide highly favourable reliability and internal validity, but the respondents' narratives (interviews) – highly favourable

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external validity. Numerical data provide highly favourable reliability and internal validity but descriptive statistics – external validity. Similarly, statistical testing of hypothesis provides highly favourable reliability and internal validity but content analysis – external validity.

In order to strengthen reliability and validity of the research P. Mayring suggests finishing qualitative content analysis by quantitative analysis of frequencies (Mayring, 2004), which was also carried out at the conducted research.

In order to provide reliability and validity of the chosen methodology it is recommended to perform Cronbach-Alpha Reliability Statistics and Item-Total Statistics test (Lasmanis, 2007). The data validity and reliability is also validated by the calculated p-value in statistics tests and the selected reliability level of 95% (Lasmanis, 2002).

Now, let's follow through the stages of the conducted research in order to see the aim of each stage, its procedure, the research methods used and the results reached.

## Methods and Findings

*Exploration of the research context* includes an analysis of curriculum and syllabus theories, theories of needs analysis and an analysis of competence theories as well as an empirical needs analysis. For detailed theoretical analysis refer to Lūka, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2008. The main conclusions from theoretical analysis are as follows:

- While creating an *ESP course for tourism students* the most useful type of syllabus is the integrated one which includes content, process and results, stressing the process aspect of an activity, which means learning by doing, and observing socio-cultural aspect as students will use the language in different situations and various cultural contexts. Topical syllabus is chosen as the leading syllabus and situational, task-based and process syllabi are used as the supplementary ones. The use of topical and situational syllabi ensures its content correspondence to the requirements of the tourism industry. The elements of the task-based syllabus help to develop students' communication skills, creative thinking and problem-solving skills, but the elements of process syllabus enable its innovative approach as the course content, teaching aids and teaching-learning methods are selected in co-operation between students and an educator.
  - *ESP competence* consists of communicative, intercultural and professional activity competence. Each of them consists of several sub-competences that interact. Communicative competence includes: grammatical competence (basic lexis, semantics, morphology, syntax, phonology and orthography), pragmatic competence (contextual lexis, language functionality, unity and constructions for turn turning and continuity of communication), discourse competence (language exposure and the unity of text and situation), socio-linguistic competence
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(understanding of other cultures, register, accent, dialects and interaction skills) and strategic competence (verbal and non-verbal communication strategies and compensation strategies). Intercultural competence consists of attitude (inquisitiveness and openness, tolerance), declarative knowledge of cultural aspects (facts, concepts) and an ability to operate in different cultural contexts. Professional activity competence for tourism specialists consists of cognitive competence (theoretical and practical knowledge of the industry), personal competence (communication abilities and social skills) and technologically professional competence (creative and constructive problem solving, communication skills, co-operation). The development of ESP competence takes place in action (process) and it is based on students' experiences, and consequently students form new experiences.

- *A tourism specialists' ESP competence* is an individual combination of gained experience, attitude and abilities developed on the basis of learning, which allows a specialist, observing different cultural traditions and peculiarities, to creatively implement the English language both receptively and productively in communication and professional work, responsibly develop tourism industry and offer the client a product in an understandable and acceptable way.
- *ESP competence criteria and indicators* include: *language use for professional duties* (indicators: *mutual oral communication, understanding of a specialized text, business correspondence*); *professional thinking* (indicators: *co-operation and creativity*); *abilities of intercultural communication* (indicator: *openness and understanding*).
- *ESP competence* can be measured according to three *levels*: basic user (elementary level), independent user (medium level) and proficient user (high level).

The *empirical needs analysis* consisted of 3 stages. During the *first stage of the needs analysis* a group of 9 third-year students of the Faculty of International Tourism (FIT) who had worked in different sectors of tourism industry, was selected and narrative interviews with them were conducted. The aim of the interviews was to study the basic situations in which the students had used the English language at work, as well as to find out the used language skills. The data were analyzed applying qualitative data analysis software AQUAD. The sequence of codes was determined. To group the data five metacodes were chosen: students' work experience, listening skills, reading skills, writing skills and speaking skills.

The interviewed students could be divided into two groups: Group A – two students who had worked in travel agencies, Group B – seven students who had worked in restaurants and hotels. Group A had not used English at work, which could be explained by the fact that Latvian travel agencies mostly deal with outbound tourism. Group B had used all language skills, most of all – speaking skills (50 codes), followed by reading skills (39 codes), listening skills (38 codes) and writing skills (28 codes). One of the respondents in her interview said that in her work she “had to speak about life

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in Latvia, give information about everything” which shows that for successful work in the industry tourism specialists need to have specific professional and profound general knowledge (geography, history, culture). For more examples refer to Appendix A.

In order to provide data reliability and validity, the qualitative interviews were supplemented with a quantitative survey. Based on the gained results a standard questionnaire including the mentioned language themes was designed and a survey of 90 second year FIT students applying the designed questionnaire was conducted. The aim of the survey was to get more detailed information about the use of the English language in tourism industry. Applying quantitative data analysis software SPSS 15.0, frequencies were determined and analysed and in order to find the correlation between the included topics and students’ language use in the industry, Chi square value was determined.

The second year FIT students’ survey showed that the students had used English most frequently in the following situations: answering the clients’ questions (85 students), giving information (83 students) and asking questions (73 students). Least of all the students had used writing skills: writing recipes (7 students), filling in check-in cards (8 students). The survey revealed a discrepancy between the requirements of *English for Tourism Industry* (EFTI) exam (English for the Tourism Industry, 2004) and the students’ work experience as the exam pays special attention to applicants’ writing skills whereas in practice the students had used this skill least of all. In 41 situations (60.29%) from 68, Chi Square value was below the critical one (7.81 at df 3). A conclusion was drawn that the students working in tourism establishments had most often used their speaking skills and listening skills and that in 60.29% of situations the language use in all tourism spheres is similar. Therefore syllabus has to include tourism lexis and the situations related to tourism profession that are typical to any tourism enterprise.

During *the second stage of the needs analysis* 12 educators of tourism subjects were interviewed. The aim of the semi-structured interviews was to gain information about the components of tourism specialist’s ESP competence and about the syllabus of such an ESP course that would further the fulfilment of the curriculum requirements. The data obtained was analysed first using content analysis and then applying qualitative data analysis software AQUAD. The sequence of codes was determined. To group the data three metacodes were chosen: the choice of teaching methods in the studies (MMIS metacode), analysis of students’ language skills and language level (VPLA metacode), professional lexis necessary for work in the tourism business (SKNT metacode).

The interviewed tourism educators admitted that when creating the ESP course an interdisciplinary link should be observed (NSNN code) and the ESP curriculum has to provide the unity of the studies and practice (NSPP code). The ESP course has to develop students’ knowledge of professional lexis (LPLA code), their listening skills (NKLP code), speaking skills (NRUP code), intercultural communicative abilities (NSKT code), including students’

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ability to operate in different socio-cultural contexts. One of the respondents admitted that “it is not possible to work in tourism business if a person is not able to communicate with people, because tourism means hospitality. The tourism specialist has to welcome a guest, speak not only about his/her preferences when choosing a travel. The tourism specialist has to be ready to speak about everything: the weather, everyday life, guests’ impressions, etc.” This marks the necessity of developing tourism students’ intercultural communicative competence. Examples from the interviews are provided in Appendix B.

As the frequency of codes in tourism educators’ interviews was comparatively small (from 0.08 to 2.25), in order to provide data validity and in order to get comprehensive information and objective results (Hunter, Brewer, 2003), the empirical needs analysis was continued (*the third stage*) by conducting a survey of 26 tourism employers. The aim of the survey was to find out the necessity of using English when being a lower level, medium level and top-level employee of a tourism establishment. The frequencies were determined and analysed and Student’s T test value was calculated.

As a result it was concluded that the language use of medium level tourism employees partly depends on the tourism sphere (in 9 situations from 17  $p$ -value  $\leq 0.05$ , which shows that the use of English depends on the exact tourism sphere), therefore it is necessary to develop students’ intercultural communicative competence. In its turn, the language use of top-level employees (managers) depends on the tourism sphere (in 14 situations  $p$ -value  $\leq 0.05$ ) therefore alongside with the development of communicative language competence it is necessary to develop students’ knowledge of professional lexis. During the exploration of the research context an ESP syllabus for tourism students was designed, ESP competence for tourism specialists was defined, ESP competence components, criteria and indicators were determined and the description of the competence levels was created.

The next stage of the research – *the description of the practice based on certain cases* – involved the selection of the sample who would take part in the creation of the model. 156 students took an international exam *English for Tourism Industry* using the sample paper 2043/3/04/F (Written English for Tourism. Level 2, 2004). Students had to write four business documents based on the texts read – a letter, two faxes and a memorandum. Three ESP educators according to common criteria (*content, layout, the choice of lexis, grammar and spelling*) marked students’ works. The students’ works were analysed using content analysis. A common mistake in the students’ works was verbosity. Students frequently told all the information they had read but did not include the required relevant information.

A sample was composed of nine first-year students in order to continue the study – to design a model for the development of students’ ESP competence, test it and introduce into the studies. 8 students from the sample had an independent user’s language competence but one student’s language competence corresponded to a proficient user’s competence level. The

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students' needs and wishes, their language learning experience and preferred learning strategies were studied as well.

During the next stage of the research – *the creation of the model* – the sample studied English co-operating among themselves and with the educator and using the designed ESP syllabus. After having studied each theme the students filled in a self-assessment form (adapted from Nunan, 1991, p. 131-133) on their ESP competence development, as well as evaluated the methods and teaching aids used to study the theme. The educator had been observing the students during the studies and filled in an observation form (adapted from Nunan, 1991, p. 142-143). The educator marked in the form students' activity, attitude and the competence level. After having filled in self-assessment forms and students' assessment forms the students and the educator reflected upon their results thus improving the created ESP syllabus, selecting the most appropriate teaching-learning methods and teaching aids. During this stage of the research the model for the development of tourism students' ESP competence was created and tested in practice.

*Justification of the criteria* included semi-structured interviews with four educators of tourism subjects, in whose courses students' intercultural and professional activity competences are developed. The educators reflected upon their experience in teaching these subjects as well as measured the students' competence in the corresponding indicators: *openness and tolerance* and *co-operation*. They were requested to define a high, medium and low level of intercultural competence. An example from one of the interviews is provided in Appendix C.

The educators associated intercultural competence with empathy, interest, tolerance, inquisitiveness, openness, language skill, cultural knowledge, behaviour. In its turn they associated professional thinking with theoretical knowledge, education, emotional intelligence, experience, communication, problem solving, information exchange, etc. They admitted that students may face problems when working in intercultural context as they had learnt the subjects theoretically but they lack experience and there might also be a language barrier. Qualitative data analysis software AQUAD was applied. 2 code catalogues – *intercultural communication abilities* and *professional thinking* were created. 3 different metacodes according to the components of intercultural competence and professional activity competence (refer to previous section) were created for each code catalogue. The conducted interviews enabled formulating the criteria more precisely, validating the correspondence of the criteria and their indicators to the content structure of ESP competence, as well as improving the created description of ESP competence levels.

*Generalization of the research results* included a survey of 187 third-year and fourth-year tourism students who had studied ESP using the designed ESP syllabus. The survey was conducted implementing a questionnaire validated in an international study and adapted for the needs of this research. The respondents evaluated the created syllabus and the development of their ESP competence in the studies. The data was analysed

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applying quantitative data analysis software SPSS 15.0. The students' self-assessment of their ESP competence revealed a significant competence improvement ( $p = 0.000$ ;  $\alpha = 0,794$ ). The students admitted that ESP studies using the designed syllabus had favoured the development of their *mutual oral communication* ( $p$ -value  $\leq 0.05$ ; it is ranging from 0.001 to 0.030) and *understanding of a specialized professional text* ( $p$ -value is ranging from 0.024 to 0.031), but had partly improved the development of *co-operation* skills ( $p$ -value ranging from 0.001 to 0.120), *business correspondence* skills ( $p$ -value ranging from 0.003 to 0.185), *creativity* ( $p$ -value ranging from 0.007 to 0.066) and *abilities of intercultural communication* ( $p$ -value ranging from 0.001 to 0.231). The syllabus evaluation revealed the necessity to supplement it by such topics as *E-correspondence* and *Contracts in tourism industry*. During this stage of the research the components of ESP competence, the designed description of ESP competence levels and the created ESP syllabus were concretized and improved.

*Final evaluation* of the research involved the sample of the study, their ESP educator, an independent ESP educator and 4 educators of tourism courses. First, the students filled in self-assessment forms and evaluated their ESP competence development during the studies. Their self-assessment in the criterion *language use for professional duties* revealed that most of the answers were concentrated around the option *a fairly high* competence level. The analysis of the students' self-assessment results in the criterion *professional thinking* revealed that six students (66.67%) found that ESP studies *had favoured* the development of their professional thinking, and three students (33.33%) admitted that they were *quite certain* that ESP studies *had favoured* its development. The students considered that the course had promoted the development of their cognitive, personal and technologically professional competence. When analysing the students' answers in the criterion *abilities of intercultural communication*, a conclusion was drawn that the majority of the sample positively valued the influence of the study course in this criterion. The students' self-assessment revealed that they evaluated their competence higher in the following indicators: *openness and understanding*, *co-operation* and *mutual oral communication*, but the lowest rank was given to the indicator *business correspondence*.

The students' self-assessment showed a significant improvement in their ESP competence ( $p = 0.000$ ;  $\alpha = 0.978$ ) and revealed a significant influence of the students' work experience upon the development of their ESP competence ( $p = 0.012$ ). A significant connection was discovered in the indicators: *mutual oral communication* and *understanding of a specialized professional text*. In its turn it was discovered that the development of the students' ESP competence in the indicator *business correspondence* had not been influenced by the students' work experience in tourism. Analysing the influence of the students' work experience upon the development of their *professional thinking* and *abilities of intercultural communication*, a significant connection between them was found.

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Second, in order to measure the students' ESP competence in the indicators *understanding of a specialized text*, *business correspondence* and *creativity* the students took *English for International Tourism* exam using the sample paper 2043/1/01 (Written English for Tourism. Level 2, 2001). The exam works were marked by two ESP educators using the same evaluation criteria as before. The content analysis of the written works showed that the students had improved their knowledge of professional lexis. They had better understood the details of professional texts as well as used more tourism lexis in their written work. The students had learnt the difference between formal, semi-formal and informal language styles as they had chosen the appropriate language style for writing the required documents. However several students had not acquired the language peculiarities for writing contracts. The students had developed their professional activity competence as they were able to provide more professional solutions for problems. There was less verbosity in their work; the required information was expressed more precisely. Most of the students had tried to express themselves briefly and accurately. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test and Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistics test and Item-Total Statistics test showed significant competence development in the criterion *language use for professional duties* in the indicator *business correspondence* – the use of grammar knowledge ( $p = 0.026$ ;  $s = 0.633$ ), but it did not show a significant competence improvement in the indicator *understanding of a specialized professional text* ( $p = 0.083$ ;  $s = 0.820$ ).

Next, the students' ESP competence in the indicator *mutual oral communication* was measured at the oral exam-conference in which they had to make a presentation about tourism in some country. The students' ESP educator and an independent ESP educator measured their ESP competence in the above-mentioned indicator. Comparing the students' ESP competence at the start and at the end of the study, it was discovered that ESP competence of the sample of the study in the mentioned indicator had significantly improved ( $p = 0.046$ ).

Finally, the measurement of the students' *professional thinking (co-operation and creativity)* and *abilities of intercultural communication (openness and understanding)* was done by the students' self-assessment, and by the ESP educator, an independent ESP educator and four tourism educators. All the involved parties filled in evaluation forms designed based on ESP competence criteria. Comparing the ESP competence level of each participant of the sample at the start and at the end of the study, their competence development was observed (see Table 1).

At the end of the research ESP competence of the sample of the study has attained independent user's (medium level) and proficient user's (high level) competence level, which corresponds to the demands of the tourism industry. Thus the results of the research validate the efficiency of the created ESP competence development model in full-time tourism studies.

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Table 1

Measurement of ESP competence of the sample of the study at the end of the research (n = 9)

Students	Language use for professional duties			Professional thinking		Abilities of intercultural communication	ESP competence level
	mutual oral communication	understanding of a specialized professional text	business correspondence	co-operation	creativity	openness and understanding	
STPI01	high	medium	medium	high	medium	medium	medium
STPI02	medium	medium	high	medium	low	low	medium
STPI03	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium
STPI04	high	high	high	high	high	high	high
STPI05	high	high	medium	high	high	high	high
STPI06	high	high	high	high	medium	high	high
STPI07	high	high	medium	medium	high	high	high
STPI08	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium
STPI09	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium

## Conclusion

The conducted qualitative evaluation research implementing the mixed method design resulted in the creation and testing of a new model designed for the development of tourism students' ESP competence.

The model was designed in mutual co-operation between the educator and the students. Students' observations done by their ESP educator and students' self-assessment created a feedback on the learning process and helped not only to improve the methods and teaching aids used but also favoured the creation of a positive learning environment thus stimulating the students' learning. The students and the educator were equal partners who helped each other. The students developed their language competence but the educator widened her knowledge in tourism business, economics, etc. Both the educator and the students developed co-operation skills.

The chosen qualitative approach for the justification of the criteria enabled the researcher improving the created ESP competence criteria, indicators and their description which according to the theory analysed in this report provides highly favourable external data validity.

As the sample involved in the creation and testing of the model was small (9 students), generalization of the model enabled supplementing the qualitative analysis with the quantitative data thus adding to the validity of the research results. The generalization stage revealed the shortcomings of the designed ESP syllabus thus helping to improve it.

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During final evaluation of the designed model data triangulation was used to validate the model. As a result an overall development of the students' ESP competence was revealed – 4 students from 9 had ESP competence corresponding to a proficiency level and 5 students – to the level of an independent user, which corresponds to the demands of the tourism industry. The study showed that the selected qualitative evaluation research and the mixed method design enabled the researcher reaching the goal of the research.

The use of the mixed methods in the given qualitative evaluation research provides data validity and reliability of the conducted research and shows the efficiency of the created ESP competence model in full-time tourism studies. However, as the model has not been tested in part-time studies where different teaching-learning methods are used, stressing students' independent studies, additional study may be needed to adapt the created model for the use in part-time studies.

### **Discussion**

- The selected qualitative evaluation research and the mixed method design involve students in continuous research process thus making them feel personally involved and responsible for the results of the research. This helps forming a microclimate in the group, creating a favourable study environment, and forming continuous feedback, which, in its turn, helps selecting the most appropriate teaching aids and teaching-learning methods. The students and the educator's wish to co-operate and learn together promotes the development of students' ESP competence.
  - The educator's purposeful activity helping students to develop their ESP competence enables him/her to use the model created for the ESP competence development in realisation of human pedagogic process. The exposure of the content and the teaching-learning methods in ESP studies are based upon the study of the objective tourism industry's needs and the subjective students' wishes, which are included in the model. It is an essential requirement for the change of the emphasis in the ESP course – the aim of the ESP course is significantly widening – the language learning is changing into a means of acquiring of one's profession.
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**Appendix A**

*Typical statements from the third year tourism students' interviews to demonstrate their use of English at work (needs analysis)*

<b>Metacode</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Statement</b>
Listening skills	Student 2	It was necessary to understand clients, when they are speaking.
	Student 3	I needed to understand telephone conversations, listen to the guests' complaints and their thoughts about our country, people, hotel, etc.
	Student 5	I had to answer the phone calls, accept bookings, satisfy the clients' wishes, including, their complaints, listen to their questions, understand the employer's information, as well as everyday conversations among the personnel.
	Student 6	I didn't have to use English at all at my work. [the student worked in a travel agency]
Reading skills	Student 1	I didn't have to read in English at all. [the student worked in a travel agency]
	Student 4	Some brochures and magazines.
	Student 7	It was necessary to read and understand letters, complaints and contracts.
	Student 8	10% of my work was connected with reading: faxes, bookings done by e-mail, guests' forms, guests' registration cards, and tourism brochures in order to show the guests where tourism objects are located.
	Student 9	To understand tourism brochures.
Writing skills	Student 5	I had to take notes for the guests, write letters of confirmation, write messages, and write e-mails, faxes, letters, fill in registration cards.
	Student 7	Write letters and fill in the forms.
	Student 8	It was again 10% of the work: some refusals for hotel reservation, some confirmations for hotel reservation, giving information to the clients or business partners abroad (travel agencies, tour operating companies, etc.) written information for the guests how to find some tourism object.
	Student 9	I didn't have to write at all. [the student worked in a hotel]
Speaking skills	Student 1	I didn't have to speak in English.
	Student 2	Communicate with the clients, provide information or help if necessary.
	Student 3	I had to speak about everything – checking in clients, providing information about hotel, breakfast, transport, escort services. I had to try to help everyone – someone needs medicine, another one can't find the way somewhere or find the plane or coach timetable, the best restaurant, information about souvenirs and so on.

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**Appendix B**
*Typical statements from tourism educators' interviews (needs analysis)*

<b>Metacode</b>	<b>Educator</b>	<b>Statement</b>
the choice of teaching methods in the studies (MMIS metacode)	Educator 3	The language learning process should be practically oriented, e.g., dialogues from their professional setting.
	Educator 6	People learn the best when they are doing something. Case studies are very useful because they make people look at the problems from a different angle.
	Educator 7	Students' training in tourism enterprises motivates them learn the language. It is a stimulus that makes them learn a language, to see that something is happening.
	Educator 8	It would be useful to do more self-study tasks connected with scientific literature as students have to write course papers. Reading, translating, writing a summary.
analysis of students' language skills and language level (VPLA metacode)	Educator 1	It is very complicated to stimulate the students' reading. They read neither in English nor in their native tongue. If a student does not read, he/she is not capable to synthesize and analyse the information. The educator provides a lot of information but the student cannot cope with it. His/her knowledge is fragmentary, like separate slides which he/she cannot "glue" together.
	Educator 5	The most important skill is a capability to scan a difficult professional text and in a very short time find the necessary information. The texts may be full with foreign words and complicated constructions but they have to solve the situation at a short notice.
	Educator 9	As hotel guests are people whose native language is not English, tourism specialists have to develop a skill to express themselves concisely using simple vocabulary.
	Educator 12	The most important language skills for studies by all means are reading and listening skills to understand information.
	Educator 2	The main problem the students come across while communicating in the tourism business is the specific lexis. Most of the hotel terms are in English. As the Latvian language does not have many of these terms, it is necessary to create new words that correspond to the original meaning. An example is 'a receptionist'. It is often used in Latvian as 'recepjonists', which makes no sense in the Latvian language.
professional lexis necessary for work in the tourism business (SKNT metacode)	Educator 4	They have to know the lexis from catering industry and they must follow all the new tourism trends in tourism industry in Europe. They have to know the lexis for special equipment and work division in enterprises.
	Educator 10	The most useful topics for tourism students are connected with hotels and telephoning, but I am not an expert in this field [teaches ITS for tourism students].
	Educator 11	Tourism students must know all the phrases of politeness, e.g., questions, requests, offers, etc.

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## Appendix C

### *An example of coding from the tourism educators' interviews describing low, medium and high level of intercultural competence*

The coded text (in the original language – Latvian)	Codes in English
56 I.: Kas jusuprat raksturo augstu starpkulturu kompetences 57 limeni?	
58 D.: Emocionala inteligence, speja saturet emocijas. Prast -> ( 58- 58): emoc inteli	<b>58</b> emotional intelligence
59 izturiesies ta, ka gaida otrs kulturas parstavis. Viennozīmīgi,	
-> ( 59- 59): tolerance	<b>59</b> tolerance
60 labas valodas zinanas.	<b>60</b> good language
-> ( 60- 60): komunicesana	competence
-> ( 60- 60): valodas	<b>60</b> communication
61 I.: Kas jusuprat raksturo videju starpkulturu	(process).
kompetences	<b>60</b> languages
62 limeni?	
63 D.: Tas varetu but standarta speja komunicet, veidot saskarsmi.	<b>63</b> interaction
-> ( 63- 63): komunicesana	<b>63</b> communication
-> ( 63- 63): komunikacija	(process)
-> ( 63- 63):	<b>63</b> communication
saskarsme	
64 Cilveks ir apguvis valodu, bet nav domajis, ka but	
patikamam	<b>64</b> communication
-> ( 64- 64): komunicesana	(process)
-> ( 64- 64): valodas	<b>64</b> languages
65 otras kulturas cilvekiem. Manuprat, starpkulturu	
kompetenci var	<b>65</b> culture
-> ( 65- 65): kultura	
66 iemacities, ja ir velme iemacities, ja ir motivacija to	
darit.	<b>66</b> skill which can
-> ( 66- 66): apgustama speja	be acquired
-> ( 66- 66): motivacija	<b>66</b> motivation
67 I.: Kad jusuprat studentu starpkulturu kompetences	
limenis	
68 vertejams ka zems?	
69 D.: Ta varetu but zema pasapzina pamata tam, kas veido	
velmi	<b>69</b> low self-
-> ( 69- 69): zema pasapzina	confidence
70 norobeozoties no citiem, nestastit par sevi, nejautat par	<b>70</b> isolation
-> ( 70- 70): norobezosanas	
71 citiem. Pasapmierinatiba ir otrs galejais punkts - ja man	
ir	<b>71</b> self-
-> ( 71- 71): pasapmierinatiba	contentment
72 labi, man vienalga par citiem.	

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## **The Basic Concept for Following and Evaluating of Learning/Teaching in Evaluation Process: the Role of Teachers – or – What Do Teachers Really Need to Teach?**

*Heidi Flavian*

### **Abstract**

The teaching approach that is presented throughout this paper is flowing from the need to follow up after learning processes rather than measuring the learning results. Moreover, this paper focuses on the teachers' need to follow their teaching processes as well! Following and evaluating both processes can be done only by researchers who believe in qualitative approach. In regard to the psychology point of view of the paper; this integrates through the required understanding of learning theories and thinking development theories. An educator cannot follow the suggestions of this article without deep self-learning about the human-mind and the variety of uses one can do with his own mind. Teachers, who want to become truly effective in teaching, should reconsider their role and prepare themselves for thinking-experts.

### **Introduction**

Choosing to become a teacher, as a profession, means to teach others things they do not know, and cannot learn without a teacher (Runder & Schafer, 2002). Therefore, teachers, all over the world, throughout the variety of school-types, keep developing new ways of teaching. Moreover, the role of teachers has been a part of society ever since people were living in communities; older people were in charge of teaching the youngsters, therefore, the educated ones were the leaders. As society became larger and more complex, education became available to many people. This was the starting point where teaching became a profession, not everyone who wanted to be a teacher could become one. As a result of the changes around the world and in order to create an efficient education process and system, the study of education officially began as well.

Nowadays, while considering conducting a new research in the education field, people usually accompany the process by the will to develop a new approach that may help students to better gain new knowledge. By doing so, educators develop new syllabi for young children in order to better prepare them practically for reading and writing in school. In regard to older students; those in secondary school and in high school, their syllabi focus on different subjects such as history, geometry, science, etc. As an educator, I keep asking myself if the learning process they go through is an efficient one. Does teaching young children practically how to gain knowledge should be the main goal of teachers? And, who should teach children how to use the new knowledge? Throughout this paper I would like to present my point of view in

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regard to what I believe should be our guide-lines for preparing new learning programs.

### **Theoretical Background to Following and Evaluating Learning and Teaching Processes**

The world we live in is a dynamic place that changes consistently through all domains of life. Therefore, many syllabi are changing as well. Different cultures no longer live as separate and isolated ones, but integrate through variety of community channels. In spite of all the changes around us, talking to teachers makes us understand that from their point of view, teachers' role has always been the same, as some teachers say: "to better prepare children to life" (Flavian, 2002). But, although the main role of teaching remains the same throughout many generations, it is hard to notice it through the process of teaching. Teachers, on a daily basis, should ask themselves what "life" is and what the cognitive and emotional needs of their students are. As Presseisen (1999) claims, teachers should view their students from as many points of view as possible, in order to help them become independent learners. Moreover, educators must keep in their mind that their understanding of their role may vary from other teachers' understanding and from one culture to another. But, I believe that in spite of the differences among children, the core role of teachers should remain common to all cultures and generations.

In addition to the above, my suggestion is, to help teachers to become experts in one's thinking process rather than in one's academic achievements. Nowadays, when it is easy to get information through various options, the focus of the teachers should mainly concentrate on understanding and using the knowledge, rather than providing it. We need to teach how to think rather than what to think! My suggestion is not a radical one. It is based on integrating theories that were published many years ago and from no reason were put aside. One of these theories was developed more than 50 years ago by Feuerstein (, Klein, & Tannenbaum, 1994) who founded a cognitive developmental theory and practical approach that focuses on ones' understanding of thinking processes. This theory is called "the mediated learning experience theory", and is based on the society importance role through one's cognitive and emotional development. Feuerstein defines the optimal educator as "a mediator" that focuses on thinking processes more than increasing one's amount of knowledge.

By following 12 basic criteria of mediation, as they appear in detail later in the paper, the mediator provides the learner with cognitive tools to better understand the main idea of the information, its meaning and by that to better internalize and use it.

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***Intentionality and Reciprocity:***

The concept of “intentionality” expresses the mediator’s judgment of what to mediate to the child according to the child’s needs, in relation to the subject they study. The intentions are focused on major thinking processes one needs to go through. Reciprocity is the process of co-operation between the mediator and the students.

***Transcendence***

The main goal of the mediation process is to widen the main learning ideas toward other domains than the one that is studied. The question both the mediator and the child should ask themselves is: “where else, besides the learning situation, can we use the knowledge we have just studied?”

***Mediation of Meaning***

By mediating meaning, mediators refer to the process of “endowing of affective and value-oriented dimensions, that is, feelings and beliefs, to the content mediated to the child” (Feuerstein, Feuerstein, & Mintzker: 2001, p. 15). affi.

***Mediation of Feeling of Competence***

This criterion refers to the development of self-image. There is no doubt that developing self confidence and self belief of your own ability to study, is a basic condition for learning and preparing yourself for engaging in new experiences, while you also know what your difficulties are and how to cope with them.

***Mediation of Regulation and Control of Behavior***

The goal of this type of mediation is to enable the child to control his own behavior instead of its being controlled mainly by external sources.

***Mediation of Sharing Behavior***

“Sharing behavior expresses the need of the individual to move out of his own self towards participating with others and making others participate with him” (Feuerstein, Feuerstein, & Mintzker: 2001, p. 27). affi.

***Mediation of Individuation and Psychological Differentiation***

Whereas through the previous criterion of mediation, one should develop social skills of sharing, throughout this criterion, the individual brings about the crystallization of the uniqueness of every human being and set up boundaries between oneself and others.

***Mediation of Goal Seeking, Goal Setting and Goal Achieving Behavior***

This criterion approaches the child’s capacity to delay immediate gratification, to choose long-term goals, and to plan how to achieve them.

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This type of behavior is hardly developed without an appropriate mediation, because it is not spontaneous.

***Mediation of Challenge; the Search for Novelty and Complexity***

This process of mediation occurs when the mediator arouses in the child an interest, will and readiness to cope with a new and complex task. In order to succeed in this process, mediation of competence should be approached a head.

***Mediation of an Awareness of Human Being as a Changing Entity:***

This mediation process can happen only when the mediator imparts to the child that he is capable of cognitively changing and improving his functions well beyond age-related changes.

***Mediation of the Search for an Optimistic Alternative***

Understanding that there is always an optimistic alternative makes one believe in the possibility of solving problems and overcoming obstacles. Understanding this process, is based upon both stable self-competence and dealing with challenges.

***Mediation of the Feeling of Belonging***

This criterion develops from the main idea of the whole learning theory. Belonging to a family, a community or to any other collective is an essential aspect of human experience and is vital to the cognitive and personality development of the child.

The above explained criteria describe the complete process of mediation that should be developed in stages according to the children's cognitive needs. Using these criteria as a guiding tool for educators helps one focus on developing independent thinkers.

Only by becoming such an expert of one's own thinking process, one can prepare himself to life. Moreover, reaching children and motivating them to learn, from the point of view that accept their differences in thinking processes, only increase their motivation to co-operate with their teachers (Flavian, 2002).

Feuerstein does not stand alone with this approach of focusing on one's cognitive development as a basis of learning. Bloom (in Hativa, 2003), from a similar understanding of learning goals, and during the same time, developed the taxonomy that analyzes thinking and learning processes to six levels. Each level describes different cognitive activities, and the learning process should begin at the basic knowledge stage, whereas the goal is to lead the child toward the sixth one. The stages are as follows:

1. *Knowledge:* arrange, define, duplicate, label, list, memorize, name, order, recognize, relate, recall, repeat, and reproduce state.
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2. *Comprehension*: classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognize, report, restate, review, select, translate,
  3. *Application*: apply, choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, practice, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write.
  4. *Analysis*: analyze, appraise, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, and test.
  5. *Synthesis*: arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up, and write.
  6. *Evaluation*: appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose compare, defend estimate, judge, predict, rate, core, select, support, value, evaluate.

As shown up to here, Bloom's approach supports teachers who wish to follow their students' process of learning and absorbing of knowledge.

Although effective learning process is studied through variety of theories, I believe that mediators and educators should consider once in a while leaving theoretical approaches out of the classroom, in order to focus on the children; the human being we want to teach! We should know what the academic requirements are, but we should better know who the child we teach is. As Levine (2002) claims, each one of our students is a different person with a unique and individual thinking process. The sooner we understand thinking differences and approach them correctly and directly, the better chance a child has to overcome the cognitive difficulties (Greenspan & Wieder, 1998., Feuerstein, Klein, & Tannenbaum, 1994). .I.My approach is, that unless we recognize how many kinds of young minds there are in addition to our own mind, we will never come to the point we better prepare children to be self-thinkers and independent ones.

Briefly reviewing these few approaches toward theories of learning, out of others that may be developed as well, they open the opportunities for educators to focus on learning processes that contributes to one's learning ability, rather than considering how to teach more information. But, although following these approaches seems to be practical, teachers still focus on different techniques of teaching subjects more than on understanding the processes. Usually, the reason for choosing the material rather than the process may be the fact the teachers need to assess and to grade their students' final outcomes and not to evaluate their processes.

Becoming a teacher, a mediator, or any other type of educator that focuses on children's thinking processes is not just a title; it is a process by itself. Moreover, as educators we also need to follow the process a person go through in order to become a teacher. In most universities and other institutes that train teachers, the focus throughout different programs is on how to teach specific material and how to become expert of specific domains, rather than how to become experts in understanding thinking processes. Again, this may be because of the reason that university students are assessed by grades and practical results, and not evaluated throughout the process, just the same as in schools.

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**Evaluation for Following and Evaluating of Both Processes**

Evaluation is another domain that teachers hardly learn and practice. Learning and understanding the importance of implementing thinking processes throughout school day is only the first step educators should take. The next step should be the stage of evaluating one's thinking development in order to better mediate for further development. Following Taylor and Bogdan (1998) methods of qualitative research, pure evaluation and deep understanding of complex processes can be done only by using methods such as observations, interviews and variety of ways for analyzing data. Learning to use qualitative methods on a daily basis at school, will contribute to educators who wish to develop thinkers.

In addition to the reasons I have just mentioned, guiding teachers throughout their work brought me to the conclusion that one of the reasons they have difficulties in implementing the above approaches, is their lack in understanding their role as educators. Apparently, some teachers do not always understand how to practice the idea of teaching how to think, and they approach to it with stress and confusion. Some teachers admitted that focusing on thinking processes seemed to be less esteem from a professional point of view (Flavian, 2002). From the above reactions and other like those I realized that teachers should learn more about the importance of thinking processes and how they use them, before they teach the domain to their students.

Another point that must be emphasized is the individual and internal change teachers should go through. As students in the same school system they teach at, they were never taught to think beyond and different than others. They were taught how to learn specific domain and how to expand their knowledge of these domains. Nowadays, they need to first teach themselves how to widen their thinking processes, and then to endow the process to their students.

All of the above theory-screening is not for noting. It is all in purpose to better consider the goal of this paper: how should people define and explain the role of teachers in our dynamic, on going, changing world? What should educators plan to do with their students throughout the learning process? The common idea of the learning approaches above is the clue to my educational prophecy.

My claim is unequivocal. I truly believe that teachers, educators, and every person who want to prepare children for the future, should gain updated knowledge in the field of human's thinking processes. Teachers should teach how to think! We should help children better understand how to use their mind and how to become independent thinkers. I am aware of the fact that some educational critics may object the idea by claiming that it is too theoretical, and I agree with them as well. Therefore, in addition to the role of developing human thinkers, and in order to give deep meaning to the thinking process, teachers should integrate relevant contents. Teachers should teach

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thinking through reading and writing, thinking through math and history, how to think through geometry and science, etc.

Only by educating children to think on a daily basis, the role of teachers will be significant all over the world, among all cultures, despite the dynamic changes around us. On condition that teachers focus on thinking process, the race after teaching the most updated information to children will be no longer necessary. When children understand how to think on their own, how to solve problems on the basis of their own thinking ability, their ability to learn new information will be much better and they will be ready for life.

## Conclusion and Discussion

The teaching approach that is presented throughout this paper is flowing from the need to follow up after learning processes rather than measuring the learning results. Moreover, this paper focuses on the teachers' need to follow their teaching processes as well! Following and evaluating both processes can be done only by researchers who believe in qualitative approach. In regard to the psychology point of view of the paper this integrates through the required understanding of learning theories and thinking development theories. An educator cannot follow the suggestions of this article without deep self-learning about the human-mind and the variety uses one can do with his own mind. Teachers, who want to become truly effective in teaching, should reconsider their role and prepare themselves for thinking-experts.

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## Implementation of Humanistic Principles of Teaching for Improving Learning of ICT for Adult students

*Rita Birzina*

### Abstract

The basic ideas of this paper were partially presented and reflected during the CQP 2006 workshop “Qualitative Psychology in the Changing Academic Context” (Latvia, Medzabaki, October 2006). The paper explains the possibility of interdisciplinary approach to exploring of the learning situation of ICT of adult students with different professional background. The main pedagogical question is – how to support the ICT learning for adults. The research is related to the research question – to evaluate the adult educator’s role in the creation of the learning environment as well as to evaluate adult students’ readiness to self-directed learning in the acquisition of personal computer competences. Both quantitative and qualitative research instruments to identify the computer skills of adults, accessibility to the computers, appropriate instruction and learning methods, and attitude using the computers in their daily work have been used. Indicators for finding of connection between (a) adult student’s competences, (b) adult educator’s teaching methods and (c) learning environment were determined; on the basis of this research four different types of computer users from adult students’ point of view to effective teaching and learning were elaborated.

### Introduction

In the past decade, many adults have undertaken the task of learning to use personal computers, employing individual learning styles, resulting in varying levels of success. The main pedagogical topicality is how to organise and facilitate ICT learning for adults. The author’s research is related to assessment of the impact of humanistic approach from teaching to learning, the role of adult educator and student, adult student’s readiness to self-directed learning and the learning environment on the acquisition of personal computer competency.

The research on implementation of humanistic principles in learning of ICT for adult students was carried out from 1999 to 2006. In total 283 natural science teachers from the comprehensive schools of Latvia and 221 employees of Lattelecom Ltd (LTC) participated in the study. The respondents completed a questionnaire that identified their computer skills, accessibility to the computers, appropriate teaching and learning methods, and attitude using the computers in their daily work. Criteria demonstrating interaction between (a) adult student, (b) adult educator and (c) learning environment were elaborated on the basis of this research. Four types of computer users for characterising students’ point of view for effective teaching and learning have been designed on elaborated criteria.

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## The Methodological Framework

Theories concerning adult learning emphasize using students' experience and independence, which form the essence of andragogy (Hogson, 1999) and are considered as the humanistic approach to the process of learning. Humanistic theories concerning adult education have been known since 1920. Humanism promotes person's development and is focused on a student. Its purpose is to develop a personality possessing self-actualization potential. Students are characterized as self-directed and having internal motivation.

Knowles considers the implementation of the andragogical approach as a focus on achieving results in adult education. The main emphasis is laid on the planning of the learning process rather than on its content. His views on adult students are as follows: they are self-directed; their experience is a resource for learning; their learning needs are connected with their social position; in terms of the temporal perspective, they are interested in immediate implementation of their knowledge; they have internal motivation; they want to use the problem solving approach, and they want to understand why exactly they have to know certain things. Adults want to be actively involved in the learning process: it is desirable to have the environment which stimulates learning, co-operation in planning the learning process, the analysis of learners' needs, setting goals, planning of the results of learning, goal-oriented activities, and performance evaluation (Knowles, 1968).

Knowles defined andragogy as „the art and science of helping adults learn” and put forward its four crucial assumptions (Knowles, 1980, p. 43):

- educators have to undertake responsibility for helping students to become independent – self-directed,
- each adult student has already gained considerable experience, which is his/her most valuable resource for learning,
- individuals want to learn because they believe this will enable them to deal with their life problems and solve them,
- adults consider learning as a means to develop their competitiveness.

Two additional assumptions were recognized later (Knowles, 1998):

- adults need to be certain what they have to learn,
- adults are mainly driven by internal motivation, their self-respect in particular.

Having incorporated some Lindeman's insights, Knowles formulated his views on adult learning as an andragogical model of adult education:

- Adults are motivated to learn if their experience/work needs and interests are satisfied. This should be the primary consideration when organizing adult education.
  - Adult education is focused on real life; thus, when offering them some kind of learning, the life situation not the subject has to be taken into account.
  - Adults' experience is their richest resource for learning; consequently, the analysis of experience should be the methodological basis in adult education.
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- Adults need the form of learning centred on themselves; therefore, it is important for instructors to engage in mutual co-operation with their adult students and not to be just sources transmitting information and assessors of students' knowledge.
  - Individual differences among people increase with age; therefore, it is important to take into account people's learning styles, time, place, and pace of learning.

Thus, compared with the traditional pedagogy focused on the educator, andragogy recognizes five factors which refer to helping adults learn:

- The change in student's role from dependence to independence and self-direction;
- The increasing role of experience as a resource for learning;
- Readiness to learn in relation with adults' social roles;
- Necessity for immediate implementation of knowledge;
- The predominance of internal stimuli over the external ones.

Consequently, when characterising adult computer users, the most important factor is their ability to engage in self-directed learning, which results from the most characteristic features of adult learners presented in Knowles' andragogical model, i.e., their readiness to learn in connection with (a) learning motivation, (b) setting learning goals, (c) the importance of learning and work experience, and (d) the reflection of student's individuality in the process of learning, i.e., the selected learning methodologies and his/her attitude to gains and problems encountered in the ICT acquisition process.

According to Knowles and Rogers educator's main task is facilitating adult student's learning; consequently, their main characteristics are (a) individual character features, (b) professionalism in delivery and organisation of the learning material, as well as the choice of methods used in the process of learning, in view of the creation of favourable learning environment (Rogers, 1969). Favourable learning environment is one of the key factors in adult education, which influences the formation of mutual relationships between an educator and a learner. This aspect is of particular importance in the acquisition of computer skills where an instructor has to be able to „humanize” the process of learning. Thus, based on the humanistic approach, the factors constituting the learning environment are (a) designing an appropriate curriculum, (b) selecting appropriate methods of instruction, (c) supplying teaching materials and (d) providing the computer environment.

Based on the characteristics of the humanistic approach discussed above, the present research deals with the ICT acquisition by adults from three aspects: from the point of view of a student, an educator, and the context of learning. The research was carried out in formal and informal medium, based on criteria elaborated from Knowles' humanistic principles (see Figure 1).

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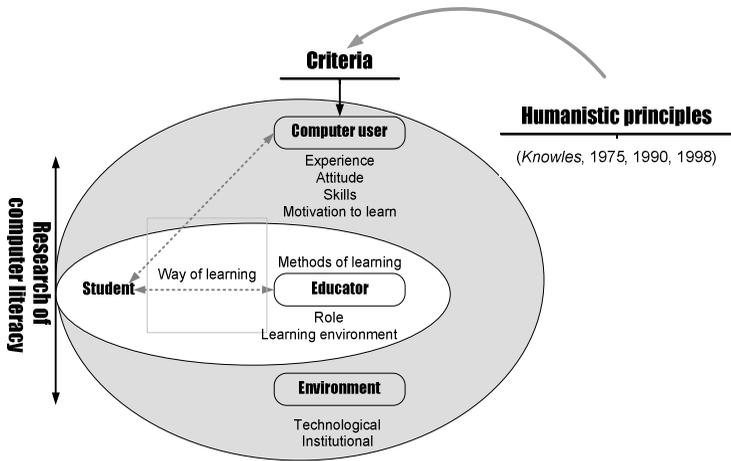


Figure 1: Scheme of the design of the research

## The Methods and the Results

According to the purpose and the objectives of the study a pedagogic experiment was carried out (Albrehta, 1998, p. 20) in order to explore the situation in ICT acquisition. The study took place in three successive stages: the pilot study (PS), the situation analysis (SA), and the verification study (VS), using the pragmatic approach characteristic of research in adult education both in the inductive and the deductive way (Morgan, 2007; Kroplis, 2004). During the pilot study, the analysis of quantitative data was carried out and the initial hypothesis of the study was posed. During the second stage – the situation analysis (SA) – applying the concurrent nested design of quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell et. al., 2003) (taking quantitative data as a priority, but using qualitative data as supplementary material), the range of issues whose approbation was necessary during the subsequent stage of the study was determined; a set of criteria characterising computer users was identified; and the typology of computer users was developed. During the third stage – the verification study – the developed types of computer users were identified. Generally, the procedure of the research process is depicted in the following chart (Figure 2):

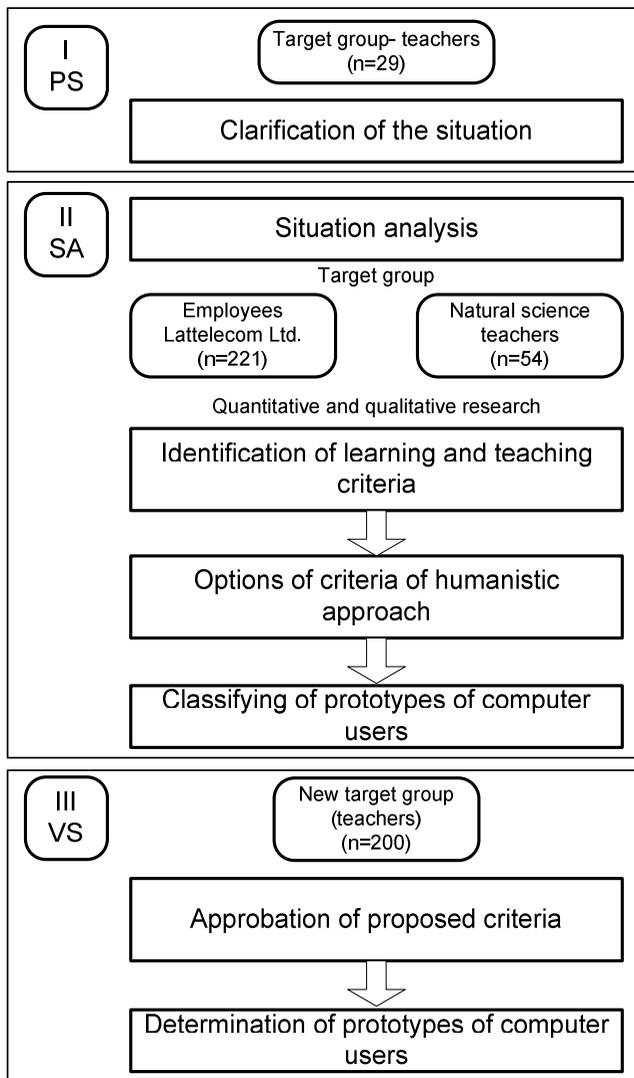


Figure 2: Stages of the study

Both theoretical and empirical research methods were used in the present study. The analysis of theoretical and methodological literature was carried out in order to determine and elaborate the criteria characterising the levels of adults' computer literacy. The methodology of the research is characterised in the following chart (Figure 3), reflecting the use of the humanistic approach in

the elaboration and selection of criteria referring to the ICT acquisition process, developing the typology of computer users according to the level of their computer literacy.

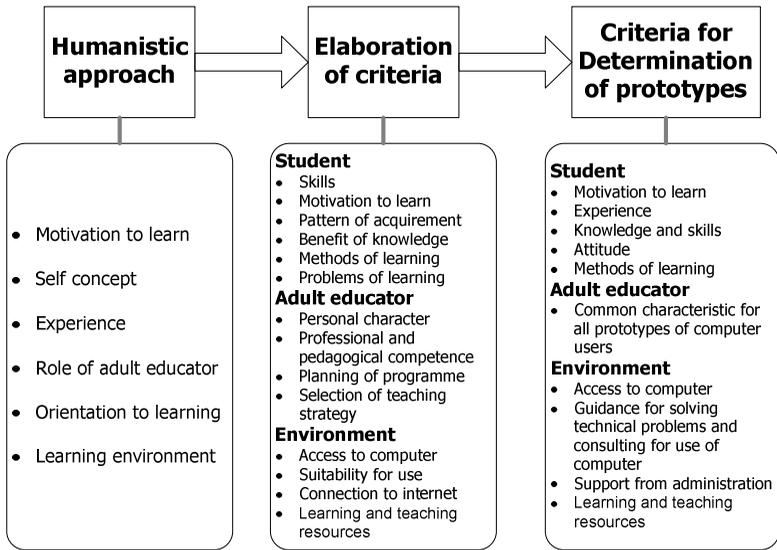


Figure 3: The methodology of the process of study

In order to obtain the research data, mixed methods were used for obtaining data, their analysis, and interpretation (Newman et. all., 2003; Creswell et. all., 2003; Morse, 2003; Kroplijis, 2004).

### *Obtaining Quantitative and Qualitative Data*

Primary quantitative and qualitative data were obtained by means of a questionnaire using nominal and order (Likert's) scales of two or more answers or discrete or dichotomous choice questions and continuous or open-closed questions. During the PS and VS stages, quantitative data were obtained by means of closed questions, while during the SA stage, a survey was carried out asking both kinds of questions simultaneously, where quantitative data were considered as a priority (Figure 4).

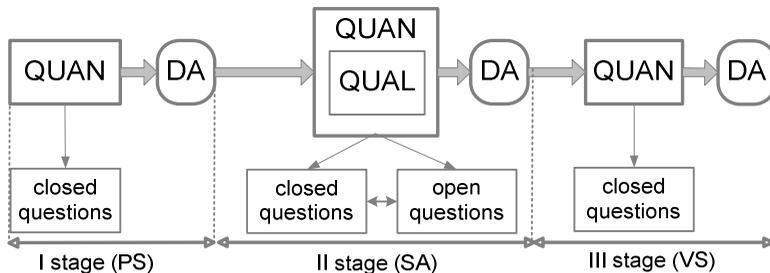


Figure 4: Obtaining of the research data (QUAN – quantitative analysis, QUAL – qualitative analysis, DA – data analysis)

### ***Qualitative Research Methods***

When processing the qualitative data, coding of characteristics was done by means of the software *AQUAD 6.0*. First of all, the primary coding was carried out, but as the number of codes assigned is usually very big, they were subsequently combined into groups – meta-codes, thus identifying similar and different characteristics of a large amount of data. Qualitative data were used to supplement those obtained in the quantitative research, focusing on the unique features of a personality. By means of the qualitative analysis (SA) problems of personal and institutional character, as well as the gains both for teachers and the employees of *Lattelecom Ltd.* resulting from the process of ICT acquisition and use were defined. During the exploration of the situation, the positive and negative aspects concerning interaction between an educator and an adult student in computer courses were also explored in the target group of teachers.

### ***Quantitative Data Processing Methods***

In the analysis of the data, primary mathematical statistical data processing methods were used to reveal the research results (descriptive statistics depicted by tables and graphs), and secondary mathematical statistical data processing methods to reveal the hidden interconnections. The data were processed applying *SPSS. 15.0* software using: (1) the method of descriptive statistics, to determine the mean value, the standard deviation, and the standard error, and the method of cross-tabulation Crosstabs, (2) One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, by means of which the correspondence of the empirical distribution to the theoretical distribution was tested, (3) Mann-Whitney U-test for analysing continuously variable characteristics, which was used to verify the hypothesis about the belonging of two independent samples to one general cluster, and (4) Factor-Analysis method to determine the

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closeness of the connection between more than two quantitative characteristics. In order to facilitate the grouping of separate characteristics together, Varimax rotation was used in the factor analysis with the purpose of simplifying the factors by maximizing and equalizing the dispersion parts of factors, thus increasing high scores of each factor and reducing the low score in an interrelated system of factor coordinates, (5) Chi Square independence method, which was used to test whether the data obtained during the research correspond to the theoretical distribution of probabilities and to verify whether two characteristics are independent of each other, (6) Cronbach's alpha relevance test, by means of which the survey questions were selected, measuring the overall relevance of the whole questionnaire and that of separate questions, thus identifying appropriate questions and excluding the inappropriate ones.

### **The Sample of the Study**

The research was conducted using the method of convenience (Geske, Grīnfelds, 2006). It means that the sampling was made out of two convenient groups which were accessible in the given circumstances: natural science teachers of Latvian secondary schools (283) and *Lattelecom* Ltd. employees (221). The selection of such target groups was determined by the author's own practical experience in conducting computer training courses both at the Faculty of Biology of the University of Latvia and at the Training Centre of *Lattelecom* Ltd. *Lattelecom* Ltd. was one of the first Latvian companies that opened its own Training Centre in 1994, where company's employees could develop their professional competencies. The selection of teachers as a target group was determined 1) by their dual experience concerning the practical use of ICT (a teacher as an educator and a teacher as a student) (King, 1999) and 2) teachers being the most sensitive indicator group most subjected to the processes taking place in the society (Figel, 2005). Latvian teachers first encountered the opportunities of using computers on a mass scale later – only in 1997 – when the project concerning the computerization of the Latvian educational system (LIIS) was launched based on the principle “technology together with application for educated users” (Vēzis, 2000).

### **The Stages of the Study**

The research was conducted in three stages in the period from 1998 to 2007.

#### ***Stage I. The Preparation Stage or Pilot Study (PS) – 1998–2001.***

During the preparation stage from 1998 to 2002, a pilot study was conducted involving only teachers and selecting a small sample (under 30). As a result of

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the study, their views concerning the possibilities and the necessity of using computers were determined by means of a survey and their knowledge and skills in using computers were explored. 29 teachers took part in the pilot study (PS): MA students of the Institute for Environmental Studies and Management at the University of Latvia (the year 1998) and secondary school teachers from Cesis and Limbazi Regions (the year 2002). As a result of the pilot study, questions for the situation analysis were clarified and the initial research hypothesis was posed.

### ***Stage II. The Situation Analysis (SA) – 2002–2004.***

Using the results obtained during the pilot study, the situation analysis was carried out. Questionnaires containing similar questions were prepared for teachers and *Lattelecom* Ltd. employees (questions concerning teacher's role in the educational process, the use of electronic teaching materials, and the role of LIIS project in teacher's work were different). The questionnaires contained both open-response and closed-response questions. The responses were obtained both during the courses conducted by the author and by correspondence. The participants in the situation analysis included *Lattelecom* Ltd. employees (February, 2003), the survey of the participants of various computer courses was carried out in the Training Centre during one month; teachers, whose students participated in the National Biology Contest (28.01.2004); participants of a seminar for the Environment Educators of Riga City (16.02.2004); students of the professional study programme "Secondary Education Biology Teacher and Elementary Education Chemistry Teacher" at the University of Latvia (18.02.2004), and natural science teachers, participants in the further education programme "Professional Development for Teachers of Biology" (2004). The obtained empirical data and the analysis of theoretical findings resulted in a more precise research hypothesis and the summary of characteristics and features referring to the interaction of a student, an educator, and the learning environment. All in all, 54 teachers and 121 LTC employees were involved in the situation analysis.

### ***Stage III. The Verification Study of the Posed Hypothesis (VS) – 2005 – 2007.***

On the basis of the obtained results a questionnaire for the verification study was designed. In the period from November 2004 to March 2005, the verification of the posed hypothesis and the approbation of the identified criteria were carried out. Participants in the verification study included biology teachers from Riga City (November 2004 – February 2005, May–July 2006); biology teachers from Valmiera Region, participants in the professional development courses (March 2005); teachers participating in the ESF projects "Information and Communication Technologies in the Educational Process" and "The Development of Jelgava Teachers' Professional Competencies in Technologies and Sciences" organized by

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Jelgava Regional Adult Education Centre (January–March 2007); participants of the national programme “Improving Learning Quality in the Subjects of Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Technologies in Secondary Education”, the project “The Development of Learning Content and Further Education of Teachers in Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Technologies” (August 2006), as well as the teachers of Riga Classical Gymnasium participating in the ESF project “Teacher Training to Facilitate the Implementation of the New Basic Education Standard in Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Mathematics in Form 8 by Means of IT” (August 2006), and participants of the teacher training course „The Use of ICT in Biology” for general secondary school teachers in Riga (May 2007). The survey was also carried out electronically among the members of the Internet portal “Teacher” (June–July 2006). All in all, 200 teachers were surveyed during the verification study.

## **The Obtained Research Results and Their Analysis**

### *The Results of the Pilot Study*

The aim of this stage of the study was to clarify the views of natural science teachers of Latvian general secondary schools regarding computer’s role in their daily life, its accessibility, and usability. The research methods used in the present study were as follows: descriptive statistical methods, Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test, Mann–Whitney U–tests, and Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  relevance analysis. Comparing two target groups (teachers who studied and those who did not) it was found that differences among them could only be observed in some particular questions regarding the programme *MS PowerPoint*, obtaining information about the LIIS project and its effect on teachers’ lives, as well as the use of electronic materials. According to the descriptive statistical data, the group of teachers involved in MA studies demonstrated lower results in all questions. This can be due to the fact that this group was involved in the study much earlier (already in 1998 when LIIS project was just launched in Latvia), while other teachers were surveyed some years later, which is also an indicator of the development of ICT technologies in Latvia and the involvement of teachers in this process. When testing the overall and internal consistency of the questions, it was found that the selectivity coefficient for Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  Test was 0.732, which corresponds to the average level of reliability. As the selection was done choosing a rather high value (under 0.4), and bearing in mind that for pedagogic studies „0.3” is also an appropriate value, the excluded questions were evaluated selectively. As a result, it was clarified that during the next stage of the research a more detailed study should be carried out concerning: the use of computers (kind, length of time), computer’s accessibility, users’ knowledge and skills, attitude to using computers, users’ motivation, and forms of acquiring ICT knowledge and skills.

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*The Results of the Situation Analysis*

The aim of this stage of the study was to work out the criteria of computer literacy, based on the fundamental principles of adult learning respecting the value of an individual in the humanistic interaction, and to classify computer users according to the level of their computer literacy and the stage of ICT acquisition. The following quantitative research methods were used: descriptive statistical methods, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  relevance analysis, and factor analysis. As the study had to result in the elaboration of the typology of computer users, the qualitative research method was used to reveal the individuality of personality.

Comparing two different target groups (teachers and *Lattelecom* Ltd. employees), respondents' knowledge and skills in using computers, their working and learning experience, the forms of ICT acquisition, as well as respondents' motivation and attitude were determined. By means of qualitative research methods, the impact of personal and institutional factors on the process of ICT acquisition was determined, and educator's diverse role in the process of learning was analysed.

Summarising the results of the situation analysis, i.e. using the empirical data and the theoretical basis of the study, computer users were classified into four groups, and four types of users were identified according to the level of their computer literacy (Appendix A).

The typology of each computer user was characterised with corresponding indicators (from the position of a computer user, educator's role in the process of learning, and the environment ensuring the acquisition of computer skills). The indicators and the characteristics of prototypes are shown in Appendix B.

Based on the characteristics each identified type (antagonist, avoider, follower, and initiator) and the levels of computer literacy, as well as theoretical findings concerning the stages of acquiring computer literacy ( et al., 1990; Kotlik & Redmann, 2005; Russel, 1995; Sandholz et al., 1990, 1997), .H. a certain correlation was established among these components, which is depicted in the following chart (Figure 5).

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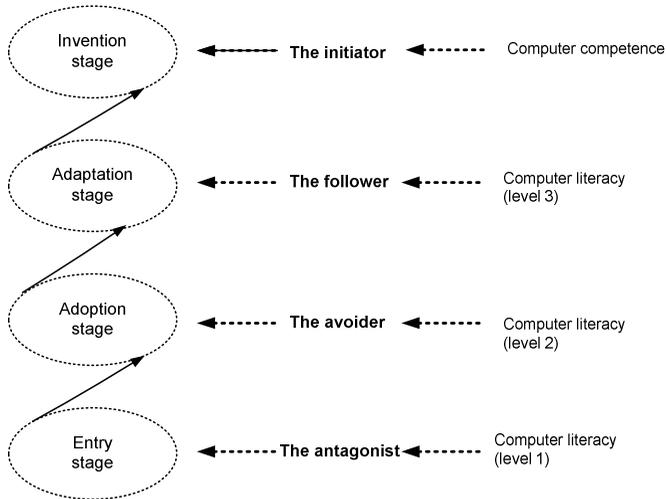


Figure 5: The typology of computer users according to the level of their computer literacy and the stages of ICT acquisition

### ***The Results of the Verification Study***

The aim of this stage of the study was to test the identified types of computer users experimentally. The following quantitative research methods were used: the methods of descriptive statistics, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, Mann-Whitney U-test, Cronbach's alpha relevance analysis, and factor analysis.

By means of Mann-Whitney Test, differences and common features based on respondents' self-evaluation of knowledge using a five-point scale were studied. It was found according to the relevance ( $p$ ) that most differences are among the respondents whose self-evaluation of knowledge is "very poor", "poor" and "good", "excellent". There are considerably fewer differences among the responses in the group which evaluates their knowledge as "very poor" and "poor", "good" and "excellent". Correlation can also be observed in the responses concerning the recognition of the advantages of using computers and avoiding using them – it is bigger among the groups with the self-evaluation "very poor", "poor" – "good", "excellent", which shows that teachers who evaluate their knowledge with a lower grade recognize the insufficiency of their knowledge compared to those who evaluate themselves higher and can help others solve the problems caused by computers, which proves the possibilities of a competent user. Differences among users are also revealed by the views of this group of respondents concerning technical

possibilities (a slow computer) and the complexity of information. As regards the choice of learning forms and recognition of educator's role, there are significant differences among those respondents who evaluate their knowledge in the range from "poor" to "satisfactory", which shows the importance of the initial stage of ICT acquisition, as both these groups are the most sensitive target groups.

The characteristics of the questions used in the verification study were tested by means of Cronbach's alpha method. When comparing pilot study ( $\alpha=0,684$ ) and the situation analysis ( $\alpha=0,854$ ), Cronbach's coefficient ( $\alpha=0,973$ ) proves the consistency of the chosen questions and the increasing degree of relevance for the questions designed during the study. Although it could also indicate to a certain similarity of some questions, in this case these questions are intended for the selection of similar common features, and this is an indicative of the appropriateness of the questions. In order to test the relevance of particular questions, the adjusted correlation was determined, the so-called selectivity coefficient (under 0.4). In this way, 82 questions out of 93 were selected and found to be appropriate. Thus, 11 questions were excluded, but bearing in mind that „0.3" is considered to be a sufficient indicator in education research, the selective analysis of the questions was done, paying attention to the combinations of variables in factor analysis.

Factor analysis was carried out in order to clarify whether respondents' answers form mutually correlating sets of questions, which could subsequently be used to characterise the typology of computer users. First, an analysis was carried out resulting in the identification of factors. After that, the analysis was repeated with Varimax rotation in order to simplify the factors increasing the high scores of each factor and decreasing the low scores. To avoid overlapping of variables in several factors, a very high value (0.5) was chosen as the relevance level. In the factor analysis, 18 factors were initially identified based on the eigenvalue more than "1", which explained 70.409% of the data. Then, the number of factors was reduced to 8 comprising 56.142% of the data (Table 1).

*Table 1*

The statistical characteristics of factors identified as a result of the factor analysis during VS

The number of the factor	Factor	Eigenvalue	Range of variables	Proportion of variance (%)	The number of cases in a cluster (n)
1.	Computer users lacking confidence (Avoiders)	14.629	0.854–0.503	15.730	82
2.	Innovative computer users (Initiators)	7.957	0.739–0.500	8.556	8
3.	Educator's role	7.331	0.713–0.507	7.882	22
4.	Working and learning environment	6.736	0.759–0.557	7.243	11
5.	Learning forms and methods	5.882	0.751–0.570	6.324	13
6.	The vision of ICT acquisition	5.027	0.743–0.536	5.405	7
7.	Motivation to acquire computer skills	2.395	0.499–0.432	2.575	8
8.	Unfavourable working and learning environment	2.256	0.478–0.377	2.426	49
	Total			56.141	200

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Varimax rotation was carried out with eight factors. After evaluating the factors, it was concluded that the 8th factor could be considered as insignificant because the values of variables were lower than the relevance level "0.5", and some of them appear in other factors. As a result, seven factors were obtained, which conclusively reveal two types of computer users (avoiders and initiators), characterise the motivation for the acquisition of computer skills, show educator's role and the choice of learning forms and methods, and reveal the present working and learning environment as well as the vision for the future.

Bartlett's criterion (Sig.=0.00) and KMO (0,894) are indicative of the statistical relevance of the data for factor analysis since according to Bartlett's Test of Sphericity factor analysis can be carried out as Sig.=0.000<0,05, and KMO criterion (*Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy*) has good conformity (over 0.8). The numerical amount of the sample (n=200) is also representative enough.

### ***The Reliability and Validity of the Study***

The validity and reliability of measuring instruments and data ensure the reasonable and credible results of the empiric research. In the present study, the sampling was based on the method of convenience involving the respondents (teachers and *Lattecom* employees) who wanted to take part in the present study so as to highlight issues concerning the ICT use in the PS, to explore the tendencies revealed during the PS in the SA stage, to perfect the research instruments and methodologies, and to approbate the results in the final stage of the study. The representative nature of the sample results from the selection of two different target groups (the obtained answers were analysed and generalised) and the amount of the sample (a sufficient number of the respondents were surveyed, which corresponded to the chosen methods for obtaining data). The conclusions drawn in the present study cannot be generalised unequivocally and referred to all computer users; nevertheless, the obtained results are valid in the chosen target group (teachers of natural sciences in Latvian general secondary schools and *Lattecom* employees) and reproducible. Although the possibilities of using ICT are changing very dynamically, the general trends will certainly remain the same, thus proving the credibility of the study. The results of the present study are comparable to the data obtained by other researchers, which is indicative of the external validity of the study.

The internal validity of the study is determined by the adequacy, content, and usefulness of the conclusions, substantiated by the collected data. Complete verification of the research results was achieved using mixed methods for obtaining, interpretation, and verification of data. The quantitative data numerically confirmed the general trends and causal relationships, while the qualitative data gave an opportunity to get a deeper insight into the regularities obtained. The choice of two different samples

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(teachers and *Lattecom* employees) also testified to the reliability of the obtained results and conclusions.

### Conclusions and Discussion

Based on the regularities observed during the theoretical and empirical study, the following conclusion can be obtained:

1. As a result of the study of computer literacy, it has been revealed that the acquisition of ICT knowledge and skills is a long-term process consisting of various stages: entry → adoption → adaptation → invention. During these stages of ICT acquisition, there takes place the development of an adult computer user through the typology of an antagonist → an avoider → a follower → an initiator.
2. The acquisition of computer literacy is affected by various factors: affective, cognitive, and connotative ones, which cause problems of the secondary (personal) level. The impact of the primary (institutional) factors is also essential. In the process of ICT acquisition, computer users' professional development, personal growth, and the manifestation of their creative abilities are promoted by the implementation of fundamental humanistic principles, which encourages students to undertake responsibility for their own learning, thus transforming from a dependent student into an independent self-directed student.
3. The age of information is characterised by a transition from the quantitative accumulation of knowledge to the qualitative use of knowledge; therefore, the development of competent computer users is a necessity of the 21st century. The characteristics of students – competent computer users – in the process of ICT acquisition are as follows:
  - learning is mainly determined by internal stimuli – the advancement of professional skills, undertaking a new challenge, comprehensive use of modern opportunities, and raising the quality of one's life.
  - the previous learning experience is the basis for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills in order to use them creatively both in traditional and non-traditional situations.
  - the forms of ICT acquisition are chosen by students themselves. There has been a shift in the acquisition of knowledge, as a result of which attending courses and seminars is not the principal way of obtaining knowledge any longer. Knowledge is needed for immediate use; therefore, students study independently using manuals, programme instructions, and experimentation.

The author admits that the need for humanistic approach in acquiring computer literacy and computer competence has been substantiated and a set of criteria respecting human value has been developed, the implementation of ICT acquisition facilitated. As the dynamic development of new technologies will make the acquisition of ICT knowledge skills even mere topical in the future, the developed typology of computer users, based on

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the levels of computer literacy and the stages of ICT acquisition, could be useful to adult educators.

## Appendix A

### *Classification of computer users according to the level of their computer literacy*

Types of computer users	Quotations from the quantitative research
<p>Type 1 – initiators or pathfinders (IN) – use computers in their everyday life without any problems. Have achieved the highest level of computer literacy – computer competence. Work in a qualitatively different way. Less time is spent to acquire different programmes as the previously obtained knowledge enables them to master new programmes effectively. Learning is more motivated and better planned. They have intuitive understanding of the situation and are usually able to find the most appropriate execution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is so „cool” to work with a computer.</li> <li>- The computer offers a lot of possibilities which have to be known, and it is necessary to know how to use them. My work cannot be imagined without the computer – it is a possibility to change work.</li> <li>- Administrator’s restrictions are annoying.</li> <li>- There is a possibility to help colleagues work with the computer.</li> <li>- There is improvement in personal life. It is a necessity for work and life – an ideal source of reference for education, learning. Provides an opportunity for self–education and self–development. Develops logical thinking. It is a rest from work. A possibility to spend time in an interesting way.</li> </ul>
<p>Type 2 – <b>Followers</b> or <b>traditional users</b> (FO) – recognize the advantages of using computers. Have achieved the intermediate level of computer literacy. Feel comfortable working with several widely used applications: <i>MS Word</i>, <i>MS Excel</i>, <i>MS PowerPoint</i>, e–mail, and the Internet browsers. Making use of the accumulated experience, form a holistic generalising understanding of particular situations. Are able to identify similarities in various situations, which beginners usually fail to notice. Computer knowledge helps them to tackle the encountered problems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When you do not use all the programmes regularly, the details of some programmes are forgotten, and then it takes time to remember them.</li> <li>- I am used to working with one computer programme, and then working with another programme I feel the lack of its functions.</li> <li>- I cannot stand when I encounter some technical problems.</li> <li>- To be at the same level with others.</li> <li>- One has to go along with life irrespective of one’s personal views.</li> </ul>
<p>Type 3 – <b>Avoiders</b> (AV) – use computers only if it is essential and unavoidable. Their computer skills correspond to the basic level of computer literacy. <i>MS Word</i> is used</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I think it will be difficult to do without computers in the future. In the labour market, preference is often given to people having computer skills. There is no future without this knowledge.</li> </ul>

Types of computer users	Quotations from the quantitative research
<p>as the principal computer programme. Have a general idea of the most widely used programmes, which are used for making calculations, drawing, and e-mail (if there is access to the Internet). The previously gained experience working with the computer begins to merge with knowledge: procedural knowledge combines with concession knowledge. Practical and situational knowledge is accumulated. They still lack confidence and often do not know what to do and what not to do, but they start noticing similarities in performing different actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A computer is like “a bog”, you can get stuck in it and not be able to get out. Eventually, everything will be computerised.</li> <li>- Insufficient knowledge limits the possibilities of action, and longer time has to be spent at the computer because of that.</li> <li>- I do not like writing on the computer; I emotionally feel that it is an inanimate thing, a lot of time has to be spent.</li> <li>- I prefer giving computer work to my colleague, let him do it.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Type 4 – Opponents or antagonists (AN)</b> – practically do not use computers or do it very seldom. Their computer skills correspond to the lowest level of computer literacy. Start familiarising themselves with the computer environment and acquiring the most elementary skills working with the computer. Are able to switch the computer on and off. Try to understand and learn separate elements of the tasks: opening files, saving them, shifting, and copying. Lack flexibility – they can perform the acquired operation only in one definite way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are other sources of information as well. There are specialists, let them work.</li> <li>- I think that because of using computers human contact with other people is reduced: there is less direct communication among colleagues; direct contact with people disappears.</li> <li>- I have reserved attitude towards technology. I have difficulties working with the computer because I do not have a personal computer; the skills are very weak due to the lack of time. I cannot really use the Internet, do not understand English.</li> <li>- Working with the computer only causes additional problems and bad mood. No computer – no problems. Using the computer has not given me anything so far, I have no need for it.</li> <li>- The first course was very unsuccessful, after which I developed an inferiority complex.</li> </ul>

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**Appendix B**
*The typology of adult computer users*

Component	Indicator	Characteristics of the prototype
Adult	Motivation of learning	<p>IN – Learning is mainly determined by internal stimuli: advancement of professional skills, undertaking a new challenge, the more comprehensive use of modern opportunities, and raising the quality of life. Typical characteristics include achieving a higher level of self-confidence and ability to help others, which gives satisfaction to themselves. Typical external stimuli are competence in using computer capabilities and advantages in the labour market.</p> <p>FO – Consider that computer usage provides a wide range of opportunities and try to advance their knowledge and skills; possess internal motivation. Are focused on the acquisition of new skills and accumulation of experience needed to deal with work responsibilities. Users' motto is that technologies are developing very fast, and they have to follow this process.</p> <p>AV – Seemingly recognize the necessity of using computers but do not consider it as an essential element in their everyday life. Their learning is determined both by internal stimuli (computer skills are needed due to work requirements) un external ones (everybody thinks that computer skills are necessary).</p> <p>AN – Believe that they can do without using computers. There exist only external stimuli (it is necessary nowadays; it is modern; the employers require higher qualification) that make them acquire computer skills.</p>
	The role of learning experience	<p>IN – Consider that the previous learning experience in ICT acquisition, just like any other experience, forms the basis for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills and their creative use.</p>

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Component	Indicator	Characteristics of the prototype
		<p>FO – Believe that experience in ICT acquisition, alongside with other kinds of experience, forms the basis for improving the existing knowledge.</p> <p>AV – Admit that their experience in ICT acquisition is too small; therefore, other types of experience facilitating the acquisition of computer skills are more important.</p> <p>AN – Practically have no experience in ICT acquisition; for this reason, it is difficult for them to learn to work with the computer as new knowledge has to be acquired.</p>
	Knowledge and skills	<p>IN – Have mastered many programmes and have no obstacles in mastering new programmes; are able to use the acquired knowledge in an innovative way in non-traditional situations; have high self-evaluation.</p> <p>FO – Are able to use various programmes, but not at the level of effective usage; have intermediate self-evaluation.</p> <p>AV – Have acquired basic skills and minimum usage of one or two programmes; intermediate or low self-evaluation.</p> <p>AN – Practically cannot work with the computer; have low self-evaluation.<b>Error! Bookmark not defined..</b></p>
	Attitude to using computers	<p>IN – Like using computers; work brings satisfaction; use computers systematically.</p> <p>FO – Recognize advantages in using the computer, but do it inefficiently and spend too much time and energy; use computers regularly.</p> <p>AV – Using the computer causes stress, tiredness, and nervousness; are not always able to get the desired result; use computers occasionally.</p> <p>AN – Are afraid of the computer and prefer not to use it; do not use the computer.</p>
	The choice of study forms and methods	<p>IN – Self-directed; develop their skills learning independently. If they attend courses, there is a very specific goal</p>

Component	Indicator	Characteristics of the prototype
		<p>– to acquire the whole potential of computer capabilities and to broaden their knowledge continuously. During the course, they actively participate in the learning process and help others; accept both theoretical lectures and practical demonstrations or tasks as they are goal-oriented and know what they want to learn. Have experienced a shift in the acquisition of knowledge; as a result, attending courses and seminars is not the principal way of acquiring knowledge. Knowledge is needed for immediate implementation; therefore, they use manuals, programme instructions, experimentation.</p> <p>FO – Focused on enhancing their knowledge and skills; voluntarily attend various computer training courses and use any other opportunities to learn like learning from colleagues and family members; gladly accept other people’s help. During the course, prefer completing practical tasks; need instructor’s consultation; gladly accept group-mates’ help, and help group-mates if they have mastered a particular operation.</p> <p>AV – When offered, use the opportunity to attend courses to acquire computer knowledge and skills, but do not look for such opportunities themselves and take no action if it is not compulsory. Need more time to acquire specific actions; want to repeat them several times, write down all details, and check if they can do the actions in practice. Prefer working independently, but, given the opportunity, choose to work in pairs. At work, rely on colleagues and gladly let them do the tasks that involve using the computer.</p> <p>AN – Practically do not use computers; therefore, attend computer training courses only driven by external conditions. The main emphasis is laid</p>

Component	Indicator	Characteristics of the prototype
		<p>on instructor's demonstration and practical use of the computer; work very slowly; worry about possible mistakes; prefer working in a group or in pairs.</p>
Educator	Educator's role	<p>IN – A co-operation partner sharing theoretical and practical knowledge. During the course, allows a learner to work independently.</p> <p>FO – An advisor; is accommodating and kind; listens to students and can understand them; uses various methods of instruction.</p> <p>AV – A supporter; students like if their performance is checked; provides practical help; can persuade and rouse interest.</p> <p>AN – An authority; teaches by using the same approach consistently; is reserved and keeps distance between himself/herself and the students.</p>
Environment	Provision of the learning environment	<p>IN – Need modern technology, powerful computers, and high-speed Internet connection; have computers both at work and at home; practically, can work with any type of computer and can do without technical and consultative assistance.</p> <p>FO – Need adequate technical equipment: a medium capacity computer and fast Internet connection; have access to computers at the time convenient for them: most have computers both at work and at home; need technical and consultative assistance.</p> <p>AV – need adequate technical equipment: a medium capacity computer and fast Internet connection. Do not always have access to the computer at the time convenient for them; do not always have a computer at home; often need technical and consultative assistance as well as ITC acquisition courses.</p> <p>AN – Do not have access to the computer, but are not worried about that; always use the same computer for work; cannot do without technical and consultative assistance.</p>

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## **Developing Students' Enterprise: the Gap between the Needs and the Reality**

*Karine Oganisjana & Tatjana Koke*

### **Abstract**

To develop students' enterprise capability, which is one of the prerequisites of successful participation in lifelong learning, has become a crucial pedagogical task in contemporary Europe. However, teacher students, who are to promote their own students' enterprise capability in the future, don't consider themselves to be enterprising and the study environment in the University to be favourable for developing their enterprise capability. The doctoral research "The development of students' enterprise capability in study process", which is in progress, aims to study this problem and elaborate appropriate ways of its solution. The main ideas, logic and design of the research were offered for the discussion in the workshop "Qualitative Psychology in the Changing Academic Context".

### **Introduction**

The working group "Key Competences" of the "Education and Training 2010" Work Programme (2004) of the European Council and Commission defined those competences, which should be acquired and on which any successful outcome of any further learning depends. There are eight domains of lifelong learning key competences, and one of them is entrepreneurship.

The materials of Commission of the European Communities "Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through education and Learning" (2006) reveal that sustainable growth based on innovation and excellence requires an increasing number of start-ups, which are likely to provide more and better jobs. Countries exhibiting a greater increase in entrepreneurship rates tend to exhibit greater subsequent decreases in unemployment rates. Moreover, social systems are increasingly under pressure due to the shrinking labour force. If Europe wants to successfully maintain its social model, it needs more economic growth, more new firms, more entrepreneurs willing to embark in innovative ventures, and more high-growth small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Though the Europeans are reluctant to take up opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurial activities, which came to light in the course of the "Flash Eurobarometer 160" survey (2004) on entrepreneurship" carried out by the request of the European Commission. Meanwhile the Americans tending to be more entrepreneurial than Europeans, are more self confident, able to see good business ideas and opportunities, ready to take a risk and mainly reckon on themselves rather than on external factors. While various factors influence entrepreneurship, cultural aspects need to be taken into account. Besides, traditionally, formal education in Europe has not been conducive to entrepreneurship and self-employment. However, as attitudes

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and cultural references take shape at an early age, the education system can greatly contribute to successfully addressing the entrepreneurial challenge within EU.

The pedagogical part of the solution of this problem should be provided in all levels of education: primary school, secondary vocational and higher educational establishments, which must be tailored to meet the needs of national economy. According to the Latvian National Development Plan 2007-2013,

*“The task of the education system is to foster an educated individual’s competitiveness in the labour market, as well as to develop his or her initiative and an enterprising and creative approach.”* (2006, p. 15).

However, pedagogical science lacks researches on what enterprise is and how it should be developed.

### ***The Research Questions***

1. What is “enterprise”?
2. How should students’ enterprise capability be developed in study process?

### ***The Goals of the Thesis***

1. To elaborate a model and methodology for developing students’ enterprise capability in study process.
2. To create a specialized study course on how to promote students’ enterprise capability in study process probing it in the course of the research. It should be especially important to students of pedagogy and to practicing pedagogues as professional means for making their own lessons more enterprising.

### ***The Hypothesis of the Research***

Students’ enterprise capability in the study process can be followed successfully if:

1. “opportunity friendly attitude to different life situations” is purposefully promoted in the classroom be it planned beforehand or occur accidentally;
2. students’ non-standard thinking is fostered systematically by the use of different techniques in order to generate new ideas and opportunities;
3. teaching and learning process is organized according to the principles of enterprise which will enable the students to realize their new ideas into innovative products.

### ***Research Methods***

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- Survey of students to ascertain the topicality of developing students' enterprise;
  - Factor analysis with data processing by SPSS programme to reveal in what way students of higher educational institutions of Latvia understand the essence of enterprise;
  - Qualitative research with data processing by AQUAD 6 programme to analyze the structure of enterprise on the basis of theories and interpretations of enterprise from different sciences, which deal with enterprise;
  - Triangulation of the results of the quantitative and qualitative researches to create the holistic definition of enterprise to be widely used in pedagogy;
  - Analysis of the projects developed by students individually and in team.
- As absolutely all the material prepared for the discussion couldn't be presented in the workshop because of time limit, in this paper it is reasonable to disclose the details of the first part which concerns the first research question and topicality of the research on promoting students' enterprise capability in study process.

### What is Entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship is considered a key competence for growth, employment and personal fulfillment in the papers of the Commission of the European Communities (2006, p. 4):

*"Entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage project in order to achieve objectives. This supports everyone in day – to – day life at home and in society, makes employees more aware of the context of their work and better able to seize opportunities, and provides a foundation for entrepreneurs establishing a social or commercial activity."*

Despite the seeming clarity of the essence of entrepreneurship, researchers face certain complexity of the problem since

*"entrepreneurship research is at the pre-paradigmatic phase where typical features are theoretical dispersion, existence of many competitive theories and schools of thought, lack of common starting points and unconsciousness of selection of rational research problems. A consistent universal theory does not exist in entrepreneurship, but rather it consists of several different approaches including psychology, sociology, anthropology and economics"*, as analysed and concluded by Virtanen (1997, p. 1).

As there is no common theoretical framework, in order to define entrepreneurship:

- 1 part of approaches focus on personal traits and motives of an entrepreneur - McClelland (1965), Collins and Moore (1970), Palmer
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- (1971), Singh (1989), Hébert & Link (1989), Singer (1990), Rushing (1999), Kearney (1999), Wennekers & Thurik (1999), Rauch & Frese (2000), Faltin (2001), Korunka et al (2003), Flora (2006); .G. N. .C.
- 2 while entrepreneurship researchers focus on the field of the entrepreneurial process, and, as a result, entrepreneurship is defined by the entrepreneur's participation in that process, but not by a unique set of characteristics - Schumpeter (1934), Drucker (1985), Gartner (1988), Virtanen (1992), Bygrave (1993), Curran & Stanworth (1998), Shane & Venkataram (2000), Audretsch (2002).

### ***Personality Approaches to Entrepreneurship Interpretation***

Personality research plays a critical role in the investigation of the entrepreneurial personality. The word "entrepreneurial" has become a common term used to describe people who are innovative, creative, open to change and able to take responsibility for his/her actions. Entrepreneurial individuals also have the ability to identify opportunities and control resources to achieve their goals. Researchers have examined several characteristics typically associated with entrepreneurial inclinations.

McClelland (1961) .C.described the entrepreneur as primarily motivated by an overwhelming need for achievement and strong urge to build. Brockhaus (1980) and Palmer (1971) focused on entrepreneur's risk taking propensity, Faltin (2001) argues that entrepreneurship has more to it than just self-employment and hard work; to tap its full potential one needs to put emphasis on the generation and development of ideas, thus creativity is in the centre of entrepreneurship. The researches conducted by Singh (1989) revealed successful entrepreneurs' high emotional stability, self-assurance, upward striving, competitiveness and education.

Rushing (1999, p. 10) summarizes the research on entrepreneurs, concluding that they:

- have a need for achievement, for independence and autonomy;
- have motivation, energy, and commitment;
- have creativity, an internal locus of control, and initiative; and
- are risk takers, self confident, persistent and set objectives.

Based on their study of the history of economic thought about entrepreneurship, Hébert and Link (1989, p. 47) .N. proposed the following 'synthetic' definition of who an entrepreneur is and what he does:

*"the entrepreneur is someone who specializes in taking responsibility for and making judgemental decisions that affect the location, form, and the use of goods, resources, or institutions".*

Korunka et al (2003) .found three start-up configurations which reveal different patterns of characteristics associated with the entrepreneurial

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personality - internal locus of control, high need for achievement and a moderate risk-taking propensity.

Collins and Moore (1970) .G. concluded that entrepreneurs are tough, pragmatic people driven by needs of independence and achievement.

Flora (2006) suggests that nonconformity, self-efficacy, achievement motivation, preference for motivation and low uncertainty avoidance are those individual characteristics of entrepreneurs, which contribute to their innovation, determination and success.

Rauch & Frese (2000) found clear, albeit often small, relationships between need for achievement, locus of control and the emergence of entrepreneurship (start-up). Additionally, these variables are also related to success. Factors related to success are need for achievement, locus of control, low risk taking, human capital, planning and strategies, innovation, entrepreneurial orientation, and tough environmental conditions.

One operational definition of entrepreneurship that successfully synthesizes the functional roles of entrepreneurs is that of Wennekers and Thurik (1999, p. 46-47):

*"the ability and willingness of individuals, on their own, in teams within and outside existing organizations, to perceive and create new economic opportunities (new products, new production methods, new organizational schemes and new product-market combinations) and to introduce their ideas in the market, in the face of uncertainty and other obstacles".*

Having summarized several prominent sources of research on entrepreneurs, Joseph F. Singer (1990) made a list of about 80 character traits of entrepreneurs. It demonstrates the impossibility of creating a universal portrait of an entrepreneur or defining entrepreneurship on the ground of personal traits of entrepreneurs only, as some of them are even in contradiction with each other, e.g.: Reserved - Open; Conservative – Innovative; Bold – Modest, Idealistic – Realistic, etc.

However, there are certain traits and behavioural and attitudinal orientations common for all entrepreneurs, and motivation, why the entrepreneurs decide to start a new venture, is thought to act as framework in different economic and social contexts according to Virtanen (1997).

### ***Process Approaches to Entrepreneurship Interpretation***

Bygrave & Hofer (1991) .W.offered that the focus should be shifted from the entrepreneur's personality onto the entrepreneurial process, which will support an a priori definition of entrepreneurship. So, what happens in the course of an entrepreneurial process will help to comprehend entrepreneurship.

Schumpeter (1934), who introduced the modern concept of entrepreneurship, defined "enterprise" as carrying out of new combinations,

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arguing that the innovation and technological change of a nation comes from the entrepreneurs, or wild spirits.

Drucker (1985) states that entrepreneurship is practice, which means that entrepreneurship is neither a state of being nor just making plans that are not acted upon:

*“Entrepreneurship begins with actions, the creation of a new organization. Innovation is the specific tool of entrepreneurs. It is the means by which they exploit change as an opportunity for a different service. Entrepreneurs need to search purposefully for the sources of innovation, the changes and their symptoms that indicate opportunities for successful innovation.”* (Drucker, 1985, p. 20).

Accordingly, without the creation of a new venture, entrepreneurship has not occurred. Most authors and researchers in the field of entrepreneurship, however, are somewhat in agreement with Drucker.

Curran & Stanworth (1989, p. 12) argue that:

*„Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something different – “a new economic entity centred on a novel product or service or, at the very least, one which differs significantly from products or services offered elsewhere in the market”.*

Gartner (1988) argues that “Who is an entrepreneur?” is the wrong question, as entrepreneurship is the creation of organization. What differentiates entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs is that entrepreneurs create organizations, while non-entrepreneurs do not. In behavioural approaches to the study of entrepreneurship an entrepreneur is seen as a set of activities involved in organisation creation, while in trait approaches an entrepreneur is a set of personality traits and characteristics. Gartner asserts that trait approaches have been unfruitful and the behavioural approaches will be more productive perspective for future research in the entrepreneurship.

Virtanen (1992, p. 6) offers the following multidimensional definition of entrepreneurship with specific emphasis on the entrepreneur as the main actor in the process:

*“Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process created and managed by an individual (the entrepreneur), who strives to exploit economic innovation to create new value in the market. An entrepreneur is a person, who has entrepreneurial mind with a strong need for achievement.”*

According to Audretsch (2002) entrepreneurship is about change, just as entrepreneurs are agents of change; entrepreneurship is thus about the process of change. However he warns that while the simplicity of defining entrepreneurship as activities fostering innovative change has its attraction, such simplicity also masks considerable complexity for at least two reasons: 1) the first reason emerges because entrepreneurship is an activity crossing multiple organizational forms; 2) the second source of complexity is that the concept of change is relative to some benchmark. What may be perceived as

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change to an individual or enterprise may not involve any new practice for the industry. Or, it may represent change for the domestic industry, but not for the global industry.

Shane & Venkataraman (2000) define entrepreneurship as a process through which opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated and exploited.

The summarization of the above stated approaches asserts that entrepreneurs may be individuals of entirely different combination of character traits and dispositions, having different behavioural and attitudinal orientation, but it's senseless to speak about entrepreneurship unless the individual acts and converts opportunities into marketable ideas and products.

In order to solve the contradiction between the personality and process approaches to entrepreneurship comprehension, the philosophical question asked by Gartner (1988, p. 28) "How do we know the dancer from the dance?" serves as a "uniting platform" between the two paradigms – we should not artificially separate dancer from dance – that is, entrepreneur from the entrepreneurial process. On the contrary, we ought to make them meet by defining entrepreneurship as an individual's complex capabilities necessary for participating in the entrepreneurial process in order to create a new product. Its final version is given in chapter 2.

### **Why Should Educationalists Actualize Students' "Enterprise" rather than "Entrepreneurship"?**

These two words – "entrepreneurship" and "enterprise" are sometimes considered to be the same, in some cases - to concern different contexts. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995, p. 385) offers:

*"enterprise is (1) a project or an activity, especially one that is difficult or requires effort; (2) the ability, imagination and desire to create or carry out new projects or activities; (3) business activity developed and managed by individuals rather than the state. It means enterprise may be both an individual's ability and activity."*

According to Kearney (1999, p. 36), *"Enterprise is the capacity and willingness to initiate and manage creative action in response to opportunities or changes, wherever they appear, in an attempt to achieve outcomes of value. These outcomes can be personal, social, cultural and of course economic. Typically enterprise involves facing degrees of difficulty or uncertainty"*. Kearney explains that *"in a commercial context or business setting it is called entrepreneurialism, but one also needs enterprise to run a club, to make a film, to run a household or to run a good classroom or to help oneself and others"*.

This means that enterprise is broader, comprising all spheres of life while entrepreneurship mainly concerns business and commerce. Though education policy makers broaden the scope of the outcomes of "entrepreneurship", the researchers distinctly narrow its outcome mainly to economic context only.

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Further confusion between enterprise and entrepreneurship can be avoided on the basis of Kearney's approach.

As ultimately the main pedagogical task is not only about educating economically versed people able to work business miracles, but as well about promoting students' self confidence and capability to cope with their own problems in all spheres of life in a knowledgeable and enterprising way, the thesis is to bring to the forefront the question of fostering students' enterprise capability instead of entrepreneurship only. It is just for emphasizing that from the pedagogical point of view the problem ought to be considered in a broader social context than within business framework only, as an individual is mainly involved in an entrepreneurial activity when he/she is grown up, but all the behaviours, attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary for that are acquired while studying in different educational institutions.

This thought is clearly expressed in Entrepreneurial Studies in Higher Education of UNESCO - CEPES European Centre for Higher Education by Kwiatkowski (2004), the Chair holder of the UNESCO - EOLSS Chair of Intellectual Entrepreneurship:

*"...important ingredients of success are the injection of social capital that will have to be have been accumulated over a long period, prior to any entrepreneurial moment and the capacity to perceive opportunities, no matter how significant they may appear at first glance. Most importantly, entrepreneurial qualities of mind and of personality do not depend on the availability of material resources but rather on the development of the appropriate attitude and behaviours – qualities that can be learned in many environments".*

Taking into consideration all the above stated and by the triangulation of the results of qualitative and quantitative researches, described in research methods, the following holistic definition of "enterprise" is suggested: *Enterprise is an individual's complex capability to identify, generate and realize new socially valuable opportunities. It concerns his/her: personal, professional, cultural, economic and other contexts of social life.*

This definition emphasises as well the moral aspect of enterprise - "socially valuable opportunities", which is to be developed in the course of pedagogical process to foster only that type of students' enterprise capability, which will work in favour but not to the damage of the society and which will hold in its core humanistic values.

### **The Gap between the Needs and the Reality**

Fullan (1993) considers that teacher education institutions themselves must take responsibility for their current reputation as laggards rather than leaders of educational reform. Teacher educators like other would-be change agents must take some initiative themselves.

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In the University of Toronto, using a hypothetical "best faculty of education in the country" metaphor, Fullan suggested that such a faculty would:

1. commit itself to producing teachers who are agents of educational and social improvement,
2. commit itself to continuous improvement through program innovation and evaluation,
3. value and practice exemplary teaching,
4. engage in constant inquiry,
5. model and develop lifelong learning among staff and students,
6. model and develop collaboration among staff and students,
7. be respected and engaged as a vital part of the university as a whole,
8. form partnerships with schools and other agencies,
9. be visible and valued internationally in a way that contributes locally and globally,
10. work collaboratively to build regional, national, and international networks.

These positions contain the idea that the best faculty of education should assure enterprising teachers able to create and realize new opportunities for themselves, schools and society in general.

***Teacher and Students' Reflection on Lifelong Learning Key Competences: Topicality of Enterprise Development***

The working group "Key Competences" of the "Education and Training 2010" Work Programme (2004) of the European Council and Commission worked out eight key competences for lifelong learning:

1. communication in mother tongue (CMT);
2. communication in a foreign language (CFL) ;
3. mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology (MLBCST);
4. digital competence (DC);
5. learning-to-learn (LTL);
6. interpersonal and civic competences (ICC);
7. entrepreneurship (E);
8. cultural expression (CE).

In the end of the first semester of 2006-2007 academic year, in the lectures on lifelong learning the first year students of pedagogy of the Faculty of education and psychology of the University of Latvia were delivered the essence of each lifelong learning key competence as they were interpreted in this European document. Then the students were offered to reflect on themselves, their course - mates and school teachers in the context of these key competences. The author's main purpose for organising this activity was to find out in what way students evaluated the state of their own entrepreneurship competence comparing to other lifelong learning key

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competences. One semester work with the students showed that some of them demonstrated stereotypic thinking, didn't deal with information and changes flexibly and what was even more important, they didn't want to take responsibility for their decisions – they declared that they didn't plan to go to work in school and that they had entered the pedagogical faculty because their parents insisted on their studying somewhere and, as they didn't have any better ideas, they had chosen this department. It was important to assure whether the reflection of the students would also reveal the need of developing their enterprise/entrepreneurship competence. Entrepreneurship competence in the “Key Competences” was interpreted fitting all social contexts. Its structure is given below:

*Knowledge*

Knowledge of available opportunities in order to identify those suited to one's own personal, professional and/or business activities;

*Skills*

- Skills for planning, organizing, analyzing, communicating, doing, debriefing, evaluating and recording.
- Skills for project development and implementation.
- Ability to work co-operatively and flexibly as part of a team.
- Being able to identify one's personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Ability to act proactively and respond positively to changes.
- Ability to assess and take risks as and when warranted.

*Attitudes*

- disposition to show initiative;
- positive attitude to change and innovation;
- willingness to identify areas where one can demonstrate the full range of the enterprise skills – for example at home, at work and in the community” (p. 20).

In order to avoid influencing the students' answers or directing their thoughts towards one or another key competence, none of the key competences was emphasized in the course of the lecture as to be more important than the others – they were just delivered in accordance with the document.

The students were asked to answer the following nine questions:

1. Which three key competences are the most vital for students of higher education institutions (HEI) for succeeding in lifelong learning?
  2. Which three competences are less crucial than the rest for HEI students for succeeding in lifelong learning?
  3. Which three competences were most developed in the staff of teachers of your secondary schools?
  4. Which three competences were the least developed in the staff of teachers of your school?
  5. Which three key competences are averagely most developed in your course - mates?
  6. Which three key competences do your course - mates need to develop most to succeed in lifelong learning?
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7. Which three key competences are most developed in you?
8. Which three key competences do you feel you need to develop most to succeed in lifelong learning?
9. To your mind which three competences are you able to develop most successfully in the University years due to the content and forms of organization of studies there?

The students were to write three competences in each answer in the order of importance starting with the weightiest one.

Questions 1, 3, 5, 7 were followed by questions 2, 4, 6, 8 making pairs of questions with opposite meaning, thus intending to judge whether the students answered the questions thoughtfully. The questions were aimed to 1) reveal which competences the students considered to be more and less important for succeeding in lifelong learning; 2) to get the evaluation of the students about themselves, their course - mates and school teachers for making the holistic picture of their vision on these competences and seeing whether there was any interconnection between the school teachers' and their pupils' competences; 3) to get their vision of the prospective outcome of the university education in the context of the eight key competences with the existing forms of organization of the study process.

The processing of the answers started with assigning points to competences - the competence, which was written in the first place in the answer, was assigned 3 points, in the second place – 2 points and in the third place – 1 point, as each of the eight competences could appear in the answers with equal probability. In case if the question was about least crucial, least developed competences or the competences needed to be developed, it got “-” sign. Then the share of each of the eight competences in the answers to each of the nine questions was calculated by summing up all the points assigned to each competence (see Table 1).

*Table 1*

Vision on LLL Key Competences of Foreign Language Teacher Students of the University of Latvia (2004)

Nr. of question	The total points of the LLL key competences in the answers to each question							
	CMT	CFL	MLBCST	DC	LTL	ICC	E	CE
1.	54	95	5	22	35	22	120	7
2.	- 52	- 3	- 101	- 27	- 19	- 60	- 3	- 95
3.	146	20	18	24	27	74	23	28
4.	0	- 61	- 43	- 94	- 36	- 19	- 85	- 22
5.	102	95	5	69	30	22	29	8
6.	- 6	- 23	- 37	- 18	- 96	- 30	- 96	- 54
7.	108	81	6	36	6	78	28	17
8.	0	- 43	- 20	- 37	- 90	- 36	- 109	- 25
9.	10	156	11	24	72	45	21	21

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Each line of this table presents the answers given by the students to a certain question, thus it reflects the total points assigned to the lifelong learning key competences depending on the order the students sorted them out.

Answer to question 1. The students consider that the most important for HEI students for succeeding in lifelong learning are entrepreneurship (E; 120) and communication in a foreign language (CFL; 95).

Answer to question 2. In the students' opinion mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology (MLBCST; -101) and cultural expression (CE; -95) are less important than the rest of the key competences for HEI students for succeeding in lifelong learning.

Answer to question 3. The students think that their school teachers' most developed competences were communication in mother tongue (CMT; 146) and interpersonal and civic competences (ICC; 74).

Answer to question 4. The students suppose that the least developed competences of secondary school teachers were the digital competence (DC; -94); entrepreneurship (E; -85) and communication in a foreign language (CFL; -61).

Answer to question 5. To the students' mind their course mates' most developed competences are communication in mother tongue (CMT; 102), communication in a foreign language (CFL; 95) and digital competence (DC; 69).

Answer to question 6. According to the students in order to become more successful in lifelong learning, their course-mates need to develop their entrepreneurship (E; -96) and learning-to-learn (LTL; -96).

Answer to question 7. The students believe that their most developed key competences are communication in mother tongue (CMT; 109), interpersonal and civic competences (ICC; 78) and communication in a foreign language (CFL; 81).

Answer to question 8. The students feel they need to develop their entrepreneurship (E; -109) and learning-to-learn (LTL; -90) to become successful in lifelong learning.

Answer to question 9. Speaking of the competences which could be successfully developed with the existing study content and form of study organization, the students regard that these competences are communication in a foreign language (CFL; 156) and learning-to-learn (LTL; 72).

## Analysis of the Findings

Foreign language teacher students of the University of Latvia consider that in order to become successful lifelong learners, HEI students need to develop their entrepreneurship (E) and communication in a foreign language (CFL) (see answer to question 1), while in their opinion mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology (MLBCST) and cultural expression (CE) are less important than the rest of the key competences (see

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answer to question 2). The students think that the most developed competence in their course mates, school teachers and themselves is communication in mother tongue (CMT) (see answers to questions 3, 5, 7). In the second place for their school teachers and themselves are interpersonal and civic competences (ICC) (see answers to questions 3, 7). Communication in a foreign language (CFL) is also in the triad of their and their course mates' developed competences, which is logically expected as they are foreign language teacher students (see answers to questions 5, 7).

Speaking about the least developed competences of their school teachers, they mentioned digital competence (DC); entrepreneurship (E) and communication in a foreign language (CFL) (see answer to question 4). It's a rather precise average characteristic for the generation of their school teachers – no computers, no personal entrepreneurial behaviour within the system of socialism and no motivation or real opportunities for learning foreign languages, as in their youth, when people have the greatest potential for learning languages, there weren't any possibilities to go abroad and contact foreigners. It was mainly the priority of an elite group of citizens but not of ordinary school teachers.

Trying to answer the question if there is any interconnection between the most and least developed competences of the university students, on the one hand, and their ex-school teachers', on the other hand, some interesting "contradictions" can be noticed - though the teachers' least developed competences were digital competence (DC); entrepreneurship (E) and communication in a foreign language (CFL) (see figure 4), their ex – pupils – today's university students, on the contrary, consider their competence of communication in a foreign language (CFL) (see answers to questions 5, 7) and digital competence (see answer to question 5) to be developed. This phenomenon can be explained by the accessibility and availability of personal computers for today's school pupils and HEI students, so they acquire all the digital competence both formally while studying and informally at home. As for the possibilities of learning foreign languages, today there are a plenty of opportunities – first of all a new very positive and serious attitude to it, many lessons within school programmes, additional courses, TV programmes in foreign languages and tourism. Yet, there is something in common between the problems of the students and their ex - school teachers. It's entrepreneurship (see answers to questions 4, 6, 8).

The students think that both they and their course mates mostly need to develop their entrepreneurship (E) and learning-to-learn (LTL) to become successful in lifelong learning (see answers to questions 6, 8).

Speaking of the competences which could be successfully developed with the existing study content and forms of study organization in the University, the students stated that these competences are communication in a foreign language (CFL) and learning-to-learn (LTL) (see answer to question 9). Thus, the problem connected with competence of learning- to learn (LTL), to their mind, can be successfully solved within University study courses,

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meanwhile their entrepreneurship can't be developed successfully (see answer to question 9).

So, it reveals a certain gap between the students' need of becoming more enterprising and the reality, which can't provide it successfully.

In regard to the research question this finding first of all speaks of the topicality of the research on developing students' enterprise in study process.

Secondly, it suggests further exploration on why the existing content and forms of study organization in the university do not promote students' enterprise. Combining that with the definition of enterprise (see chapter 2), the enterprise – promoting – study model is to be elaborated to enable students to identify, generate and realize socially valuable opportunities in study process.

### Summary of the Workshop Discussion

In the course of the discussion the main ideas presented were accepted, though it was recommended to reduce the volume of the work, leaving only the first part of the goals of the thesis with the perspective of working on the second part after the defence. It was also advised not to become involved with very many research methods. Instead, three properly fitted methods were offered as to be sufficient for a good research. It was especially stressed that those students, who have certain difficulties with developing their enterprise capability, can give even more valuable material to the research than the successful ones. So, they should be observed with special care. Speaking about the number of students in the research base in the context of validity, it was stated that a deep qualitative research can have a high validity even for a small group of students. It depends on the way and length of the research. Thus, the main problem posed is "How should study be organized to foster HEI students' enterprise capability?" It will be the essence of the further parts of the research of the thesis.

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## Abbreviations

ALLBUS: *German General Social Survey (Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften)*

ALLF: *Life Course Archive*

AN: *opponents or antagonists*

AQUAD: *Computer-assisted Analysis of Qualitative Data*

AQUID: *Archive for Qualitative Interview Data*

AV: *avoiders*

BA: *bachelor studies*

CAQDAS: *computer assisted qualitative data analysis software*

CHEL: *Council of Higher Education of Latvia*

CE: *cultural expression*

CEPES: *European Centre for Higher Education (Centre Européen pour l'Enseignement Supérieur)*

CFL: *communication in a foreign language*

CENTROPE: *Central European Region*

CMMR: *Centre for Multilingual, Multicultural Research*

CMT: *communication in mother tongue*

CQP: *Center for Qualitative Psychology*

DA: *data analysis*

DC: *digital competence*

DFG: *German Research Foundation*

DGS: *German Society for Sociology*

E: *entrepreneurship*

EARLI: *European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction*

ECTS: *European Credit Transference System*

EERA: *European Educational Research Association*

EFA: *Education for All*

EFTI: *English for Tourism Industry*

EHEA: *European Higher Education Area*

ENQA: *European Network Quality Agency*

EOLSS: *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems*

ESDS: *Economic and Social Data Service*

ESF: *European Science Foundation*

ESP: *English for Special Purposes*

ETMM: *Extended – Term Mixed – Method*

EU: *European Union*

EUA: *European University Association*

FIT: *Faculty of International Tourism*

FO: *followers or traditional users*

FSD: *Finnish Social Science Data Archive*

GESIS: *German Social Science Infrastructure Services*

GSSS: *Graduate School of Social Sciences*

HEI: *higher education institutions*

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- ICC: *interpersonal and civic competences*  
ICE: *Institute of Educational Sciences (Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación)*  
ICT: *information and communication technologies*  
IN: *initiators or pathfinders*  
IQI: *Joint Quality Initiative*  
IT: *information technologies*  
KMO: *Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin*  
LAS: *Latvian Academy of Sciences*  
LCS: *Latvian Council of Science*  
LIIS: *Latvian educational information system*  
LLL: *lifelong learning*  
LLU: *Latvia University of Agriculture*  
LPLA: *students' knowledge of professional lexis (code)*  
LTC: *Training Centre of Lattelecom Ltd*  
LTL: *learning-to-learn*  
LU: *University of Latvia*  
MA: *Master studies*  
MDGs: *Millennium Development Goals*  
MLBCST: *mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology*  
MMIS: *the choice of teaching methods in the studies (metacode)*  
MS: *Microsoft*  
NGOs: *non-governmental organizations*  
NKLP: *students' listening skills (code)*  
NRUP: *students' speaking skills (code)*  
NSKT: *students' intercultural communicative abilities (code)*  
NSNN: *an interdisciplinary link (code)*  
NSPP: *the unity of the studies and practice (code)*  
OSEP: *Office of Special Education Projects*  
PhD: *Doctor of Philosophy and Educational Science*  
PKKTPAI: *Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument*  
PS: *pilot study*  
PSISR: *Psychological Skills Inventory for Sports*  
QUAL: *qualitative analysis*  
QUAN: *quantitative analysis*  
SA: *situation analysis*  
SD: *self-determination*  
SDSP: *Self-Determination Synthesis Project*  
SEP: *Spanish Society of Pedagogy*  
SKNT: *professional lexis necessary for work in the tourism business (metacode)*  
SME: *small and medium enterprise*  
SMEs: *small and medium-sized enterprises*  
SPSS: *The Statistical Package for Social Sciences*  
TIC: *technology innovation centre*
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UNED: *National Distance University in Madrid*

UNESCO: *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation*

VPLA: *analysis of students' language skills and language level (metacode)*

VS: *verification study*

ZA: *Central Archive for Empirical Social Research*

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## About the Authors

**Birzina, Rita**, Dr.paed., is a researcher of the Faculty of Biology of the University of Latvia. She is guest lecturer at Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music and coordinator and lecturer of Second-level professional higher education programme “Secondary School Teacher of Biology and Primary School Teacher of Chemistry” and professional bachelor study programme “The Teacher of Natural Sciences and Information Technology“. Her doctoral dissertation, defended in 2008, is titled “Humanistic approach within the study of adults’ computer literacy”. Her research interests are: adult pedagogy, didactic of biology, computer literacy and computer competency, professional development of teacher,

*University of Latvia*

*Faculty of Biology*

*Kronvalda boulevard 4*

*Riga, LV-1010*

*Latvia*

Tel.: (+371) 67034876

E-mail: [rita.birzina@lu.lv](mailto:rita.birzina@lu.lv)

**Cook, Leslie Susan**, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Middle, Secondary, and K-12 Education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where she teaches courses in the program of Middle School Education, her doctoral dissertation, defended in 2004, is titled “Authoring Self: framing identities of Young Women Diagnosed With Mood Disorders”.

*University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

*Department of Middle, Secondary, and K-12 Education*

*College of Education*

*Colvard Building, 9201*

*University City Blvd.*

*Charlotte, NC 28223-0001*

*USA*

Tel.: (+704) 6878712

E-mail: [lcook9@uncc.edu](mailto:lcook9@uncc.edu)

**Domínguez Garrido, María Concepción**, Dr., is a Professor of didactics in social sciences at the National University of Distance Education, Faculty of Education, Department of Didactics, Org. Esc y DD.EE. She published several books, among them “Investigation and teacher training in a intercultural society”, “Didactics of Social Sciences”, “How to globalise teaching”, “Teacher training in a technological society”, “Teaching and curriculum for adult education”. In addition, she published articles and contributions in various national and international journals on various topics. In the position of a Professor Jean Monet she is co-ordinator of the doctoral programme „Didactic models, inter-culturality and its use for new

---

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technologies in educational institutions” as well as coordinator and collaborator in national and international projects of investigation.

*UNED - Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia*

*Facultad de Educación*

*Departamento de Didáctica, Organización y Didácticas Especiales*

*C/ Senda del Rey nº 7.*

*Madrid 28040*

*España (Spain)*

Tel.: (+34) 913986970

E-mail: [cdominguez@edu.uned.es](mailto:cdominguez@edu.uned.es)

**Fernate, Andra**, Dr.paed., a researcher of the Institute of Pedagogical Science of the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the University of Latvia and assistant professor of the Department of Sport and Training Theory, Pedagogy, Psychology and Pedagogical Practices, Latvian Academy of Sport Education, Riga, Latvia. She is a founder and chairman of Latvian Sport Psychology Association. Her doctoral dissertation, defended in 2008, is titled “Transdisciplinary Approach to Physical Literacy Research”. Her research interests are: teaching and learning problems in education, directly in sport education, qualitative research methodology and methods.

*Latvian Academy of Sport Education*

*Brīvības gatve 333*

*Rīga, LV-1006*

*Latvia*

Tel.: (+371) 67543439

Fax: (+371) 67543480

E-mail: [fernate@lanet.lv](mailto:fernate@lanet.lv)

**Flavian, Heidi** obtained her PhD in Educational Leadership from the University of Dayton, Ohio, USA, and specializes in self-awareness development among children, cognitive development, mediating theories and learning strategies for children with special needs. With 20 years of teaching experience with diverse populations of students, now Head of the Special-Education Teacher-Training Program at Achva Academic College in Israel. As a college Professor her main teaching topics include pedagogy, teaching and learning strategies, mediation toward thinking development and learning evaluation and assessment. Dr. Flavian’s current areas of research encompass the domains of pedagogy trainers and thinking process throughout teaching children with special needs.

*Achva Academic College of Education*

*Special Education Department*

*M.P. Shiknim – 79800, Israel*

Tel.: (+972) 523969169

E-mail: [heidif@macam.ac.il](mailto:heidif@macam.ac.il)

---

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**Gento Palacios, Samuel**, Dr., is a Professor at the Faculty of Education, UNED in Madrid, and member of the Department of "Didactics School Organization and Specific Didactics". He is author of a number of books in Spanish, and a number of articles in Spanish and English published by various journals specialised on education. He has been Inspector of Education at the Spanish Ministry of Education. He is member of several European and international research associations and is link convener of the EERA. His main areas of study, research and publication are: educational institutions quality profile, improving of quality in educational institutions; school organization; school autonomy.

*UNED - Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia*

*Facultad de Educación*

*Departamento de Didáctica, Organización y Didácticas Especiales*

*C/Senda del Rey nº 7.*

*Madrid 28040*

*España (Spain)*

Tel.: (+34) 923987647

Fax: (+34) 913986678

E-mail: [sgento@edu.uned.es](mailto:sgento@edu.uned.es)

**Herfort, Inge**, born in 1958, studied International Business as well as Urban and Regional Planning in Vienna, Austria, as well as in the United States, at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She is Research and Teaching Assistant at the Department of Management Science at the Vienna University of Technology. Her research areas are Intercultural Management, Organizational Theory and Behaviour, Project Management, Leadership, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), as well as Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

*Vienna University of Technology*

*Institut für Managementwissenschaften*

*Theresianumg. 27, A-1040 Wien, Austria*

Tel.: (+431) 58803-33022

Fax: (+431) 58803-33092

E-mail: [herfort@imw.tuwien.ac.at](mailto:herfort@imw.tuwien.ac.at)

**Huber, Günter L.**, Prof. i.R., Dr.phil., retired Chair of Educational Psychology at the Department of Educational Psychology (Abteilung Pädagogische Psychologie), Institut für Erziehungswissenschaft, University of Tübingen. Among his publications are books and training materials on cooperative learning and teaching/learning problems, on inter-individual differences, and software for the analysis of qualitative data.

*Universität Tübingen*

*Fakultät für Sozial- und Verhaltenswissenschaften*

*Institut für Erziehungswissenschaft*

*Münzgasse 22-30 72070 Tübingen Germany*

E-mail: [huber.paedpsy@uni-tuebingen.de](mailto:huber.paedpsy@uni-tuebingen.de)

---

---

**Kiegelmann, Mechthild**, Dr., is a Professor of Developmental Psychology of the University of Trier (Germany). In 1997, she obtained a doctoral degree in developmental psychology from Harvard University (USA). In 2006, she obtained her postdoctoral degree (Habilitation) in educational psychology at the University of Tübingen (Germany). Her research interests are: language development, empirical research methods, developmental psychology, trauma psychology, early childhood education, etc.

E-mail: [Mechthild.kiegelmann@uni-tuebingen.de](mailto:Mechthild.kiegelmann@uni-tuebingen.de)

**Koke, Tatjana**, Dr.habil.paed., is a professor of the University of Latvia. Since 2007 she is the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia. Her pedagogic activities encompass master and doctoral programmes – lecturing, supervising and reviewing master and PhD theses. She is a member of UNESCO International Education Bureau Council, Genève; of European Adult Education Association, Executive Board; of Doctoral Council in Pedagogy and of Latvian Adult Education Association, Board. Her research interests are focused on lifelong learning; adult education – social pedagogical basics of adult education and contemporary research of it; and on higher education - criteria of education quality and its assessment, study programme productivity, problems on developing learning society, etc.

*University of Latvia*

*Faculty of Education and Psychology*

*Department of Education*

*Jurmālas gatve 74/76*

*Rīga, LV-1083*

*Latvia*

Tel.: (+371) 67033860

E-mail: [tatjana.koke@lu.lv](mailto:tatjana.koke@lu.lv)

**Luka, Ineta**, Dr.paed., the Head of the Foreign Languages Department, an assistant professor in Applied Linguistics of the School of Business Administration Turība, Latvia. She is also a researcher of the Institute of Pedagogical Science of the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the University of Latvia. Her doctoral dissertation, defended in 2008, is titled “Development of Students’ ESP Competence in Tourism Studies at Tertiary Level”. In 2006 was nominated for the Annual Students’ Award of Latvia “Researcher of the Year”. Her research interests are: teaching and learning problems in education, directly in foreign languages; intercultural education; curricula development and quality; the research methodology and methods.

*School of Business Administration Turība*

*Foreign Languages Department*

*Graudu 68*

*Rīga, LV-1058 Latvia*

Tel.: (+371) 26370934

Fax: (+371) 67619152

E-mail: [ineta.luka@inbox.lv](mailto:ineta.luka@inbox.lv)

---

**Maslo, Irina**, Dr.habil.paed., is a professor of the University of Latvia. Since 2007 she is the head of the Institute of Pedagogical Science of the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the University of Latvia. Among her publications are articles, books and learning materials on individualization of school pedagogical process, bilingual education, plural language teaching, and critical social pedagogy. Her pedagogic activities encompass master and doctoral programmes chairing and internationalization, supervising and reviewing Master and PhD theses. Her research areas are: integration and inclusion, institutional bilingual education, multilingual education, educational treatment of cultural diversity, mix-method design of educational research, new instrumentation of self-research and monitoring.

*University of Latvia*

*Faculty of Education and Psychology*

*Institute of Pedagogical Science*

*Jurmalas gatve 74/76, A-13 room*

*Riga, LV-1083*

*Latvia*

Tel.: (+371) 67034042

E-mail: [irina.maslo@lu.lv](mailto:irina.maslo@lu.lv)

**Medina Rivilla, Antonio**, Dr., is a Professor of Didactics and Director of the Department of Didactics, Educational Organisation and DD.EE. at the National University of Distance Education. He published several books, among them “General Didactics”, “Design, development and innovation of the curriculum”, “Methodology for the realization of research projects and doctoral thesis”, “Design, development and innovation of the curriculum in educational institutions”. His lines of investigation are: “Design, development and Innovation of curriculum”, “Interculturality and teacher training”, “Research methodology for adult education”. In addition, he is director of national and international doctorate thesis and the director of national and international projects that have an I+D+I background. These projects are about investigation of the development of the bachelors' practicum, models of teacher training, and evaluation of dissent teachers' competencies in EEES.

*UNED - Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia*

*Facultad de Educación*

*Departamento de Didáctica, Organización y Didácticas Especiales*

*C/Senda del Rey n° 7.*

*Madrid 28040*

*España (Spain)*

Tel.: (+34) 913986969

E-mail: [amedina@edu.uned.es](mailto:amedina@edu.uned.es)

**Oganisjana, Karine** is a Master of pedagogy who is doing her PhD research in pedagogy in the University of Latvia. She has worked in different areas of pedagogy for 20 years – teaching physics, mathematics and English, writing

---

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problem books on Physics commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia. The theme of her doctoral research is “Students’ enterprise capability in study process.” The findings of the research were presented in different Latvian and international scientific conferences and summer schools and got published in scientific journals.

*University of Latvia*

*Faculty of Education and Psychology*

*Jūrmalas gatve 74/76*

*Rīga, LV-1083*

*Latvia*

Tel.: (+371) 67033860

E-mail: [karine.oganisjana@apollo.lv](mailto:karine.oganisjana@apollo.lv)

**Pigozne, Tamara** is a Master of pedagogy and a doctoral student of the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the University of Latvia. She has worked in the area of pedagogy for 30 years - teaching Latvian language and literature. She is also doing administrative work at Rezekne Basic Catholic school now and reads lectures at Latgale branch of Latvia Arts Academy. The theme of her doctoral research is concerned with the of youths' integration as a value formation process in multicultural environment. She has had several international publications on the research theme, which have been presented at the international conferences. Her research interests are: social education, social integration, qualitative research methodology and methods.

*Latgale branch of Latvia Arts Academy*

*Baznīcas street 34a*

*Rezekne, LV - 4601*

*Latvia*

Tel.: (+371) 28358063

E-mail: [tamara\\_pigozne@inbox.lv](mailto:tamara_pigozne@inbox.lv)

**Sánchez Romero, Cristina** is a Doctor of Philosophy and Educational Science at National University of Distance Education and Master Educative Technology, an Assistant Professor of General Didactics (Social Education) and Design, development and innovation of the curriculum (Psychopedagogy) at Faculty of Education; Academic Secretary and Professor of Interuniversity Academic Master “Educational Treatment of Diversity and Tutor- professor at Associate Center. She develops research activities with research international group (FORMAINTERMED (group of development professional formation and intercultural innovation educational with design of medial). She is a member of European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI) and Spanish Society of Pedagogy (SEP). Her research interests and publications are focused on the intercultural education, educational competences, diversity education, strategies of learning, EEES, ICT, design of medial (educational webs)

*UNED - Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia*

*Facultad de Educación*

---

---

*Departamento de Didáctica, Organización y Didácticas Especiales  
C/ Senda del Rey n° 7.  
Madrid 28040  
España (Spain)  
Tel.: (+34) 913987274  
Fax.: (+34) 913986972  
E-mail: [csanchez@edu.uned.es](mailto:csanchez@edu.uned.es)*

**Surikova, Svetlana**, Dr.paed., is a researcher of the Institute of Pedagogical Science of the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the University of Latvia. Her doctoral dissertation, defended in 2007, is titled "Organisation of microgroups' activity for promoting pupils' social competence". The findings of the research were presented in different Latvian and international scientific conferences and published in scientific journals. Her research interests are: problems on promoting pupils' social competence, new generation learning problems, etc.

*University of Latvia  
Faculty of Education and Psychology  
Institute of Pedagogical Science  
Jurmālas gatve 74/76, A-13 room  
Rīga, LV-1083  
Latvia  
Tel.: (+371) 67034042  
E-mail: [svetlana.surikova@lu.lv](mailto:svetlana.surikova@lu.lv)*

**Ullrich, Annette**, M.Ed., is a doctoral student in special education at UNC Charlotte and currently employed as Project Coordinator of an Evaluation Project for the Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument (PKKTPAI) funded by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Her research interests include positive behavior support, self-determination, and qualitative research methodologies.

*Department of Special Education  
University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
9201 University City Boulevard  
Charlotte, NC 28223  
USA  
Tel.: (+1) 704 687 8486  
E-mail: [aullrich@uncc.edu](mailto:aullrich@uncc.edu)*

**Weiss, Andreas**, born in 1929, is a Psychologist and Anthropologist. He was Professor of Ergonomics at the Vienna University of Technology from 1970 to 1993 and is retired.

*Vienna University of Technology  
Institut für Managementwissenschaften  
Theresianumg. 27, A-1040 Wien, Austria  
E-mail: [weiss22@gmx.net](mailto:weiss22@gmx.net)*

---

---

**Witzel, Andreas**, Dr., Dipl.-Psych., is the Head of the Life-Course-Archive on the Graduate School of Social Sciences (GSSS), University of Bremen. His major research interests include qualitative methodology and methods, occupational socialization, biography and the life course, especially the transition from school to work.

*Universität Bremen*

*Graduate School of Social Sciences (GSSS)*

*Archiv für Lebenslaufforschung*

*FVG-West, Wiener Straße/Ecke Celsiusstraße*

*Postfach 330 440*

*28334 Bremen*

*Germany*

Tel.: +49 421 218 4141

E-mail: [awitzel@gsss.uni-bremen.de](mailto:awitzel@gsss.uni-bremen.de)

**Wood, Wendy M.**, PhD, is an Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in Charlotte, North Carolina. Dr. Wood teaches coursework in special education at the master's and doctoral level. Dr. Wood's research interests and activities are in the areas of transition from school to adult life, self-determination, and supported employment. She has received federal grant funding from the U.S. Department of Education to conduct research in these areas and for personnel preparation.

*Department of Special Education*

*University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

*9201 University City Boulevard*

*Charlotte, NC 28223*

*USA*

Tel.: (+1) 704 687 8854

E-mail: [wmwood@ctc.net](mailto:wmwood@ctc.net)

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## Annexes

### Annex 1

#### **CQP workshop “Qualitative Psychology in the Changing Academic Context” schedule (October 20-22, 2006, Medzabaki, Latvia)**

##### **FRIDAY – October 20, 2006**

**4 pm** Arrival

**6 pm** Dinner

**7 pm** Plenum: Introduction of participants & projects

##### **SATURDAY – October 21, 2006**

#### **9 am - 12:30 pm Plenum: Qualitative Psychology in the Changing Academic Context**

- *Mechthild Kiegelmann, Irina Maslo, & Günter L. Huber*: Opening remarks
- *Liesma Ose, Aida Kruze, Irina Maslo, & Zanda Rubene*: From Quasi-Experimental to Qualitative Approach: Within use of Mixed Methods in the International Collaboration of Researchers
- *Doerte Resch & Pascal Dey*: Probing the Opportunity of Qualitative Research as "Disturbing Practice"
- *Samuel Gento, Antonio Medina, & Concepción Domínguez*: Interuniversity joint Master Degree on educational treatment of diversity
- *Tiberio Feliz Murias & Mari Carmen Ricoy Lorenzo*: The practical training in the professional contexts. A competence approach for the implementation of the Bologna process

**12:30 pm** Lunch Break

**2:30 - 4:30 pm** Parallel Workgroups 1 & 2

#### **Workgroup 1:**

- *Heidi Flavian*: The Role of Teachers - or - What Do Teachers Really Need to Teach?
  - *Cristina Sánchez Romero*: Qualitative Methods: Analysis of interviews and focus group about strategies of learning in primary school for attention of students foreign origin
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- *Rita Birzina*: The Implementation of Humanistic Principles of Learning of ICT for Adult Students
  - *Andra Fernate*: Potential of Transdisciplinary Approach in Learning Process

**Workgroup 2:**

- *Tiberio Feliz Murias & Mari Carmen Rico Lorenz*: The research to support the Bologna Process
- *Andreas Witzel*: Basic considerations about an Archive Concept for Qualitative Interview-Data
- *Karin Jeschke & Klaus Jansen*: Triangulation of qualitative Methods in Teaching methods in Psychology
- *Christine Moritz*: Dialogical Processes in Music Teaching

**4:30 - 6:30 pm Parallel Workgroups 3 & 4****Workgroup 3:**

- *Tamara Pigozne*: Qualitative Approach to Research of Integration as Value Orientation of Youth in Rezekne (region of Latgale, Latvia) in Multicultural Media Environment as Learning Place
- *Annette Ullrich*: Parents' Perspectives on Fostering Self-Determinations Skills in their Children with Disabilities
- *Antonio Medina Rivilla, María C. Dminguez Garrido, & Samuel Gento Palacio*: Design of the Didactic Means and the Cognitive Development for an Intercultural Education
- *Inge Herfort, & Andreas Weiss*: Improving Global Cultural Competencies of Engineering Students at the University Level

**Workgroup 4: Research Consulting**

- *Anna Tapola*: Science education and ideology
  - *Ineta Luka*: Development of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) Competence in the Studies of a Higher Educational Establishment
  - *Daiga Kalnina*: Development of pupils' inquiry skill in science teaching-learning process
  - *Karine Oganisjana*: Development of students' enterprise capability in study process
  - *Svetlana Surikova*: Organization of microgroups' activity for promoting pupils' social competence
  - *Ineta Robina*: Integration of elderly people in social house
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- *Linda Daniela*: Teenagers' classroom discipline as an expression of their positive attitudes to study process

**7 pm**     **Dinner**

**8 pm**     **Time for networking and initializing joint projects**

**SUNDAY – October 22, 2006**

**9 am**     **Plenum: Plans for creating a non profit organization**

**11 am**   **Plenum: reports on joint projects & planning the next workshop**

**1 pm**     **Lunch**

**Departure**

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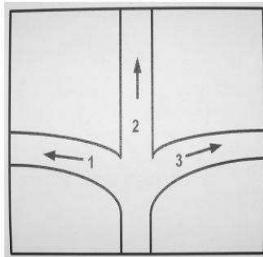
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**Annex 2**
**Philosophical fairy tale by Karine Oganisjana**  
**“Once upon a time there lived three doctoral students...”**

We are living in a dynamically changing time of non standard innovative solutions. In the context of CQP workshop “Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Learning and Instruction” (Riga, 21 October, 2006) it must be mentioned that not only the ways how to conduct researches are very important but also the ways how they shouldn’t be realized. It’s essential not only to perceive science as something very serious and heavy but also to see the opportunities of getting fun of it and treating it with a sound sense of humour. And jokes sometimes may put forward even more crucial problems than serious talks.

Once upon a time there lived three doctoral students...

One night they saw the same dream – an old wise man appeared holding a strange scheme and said:



“Beware! This is the key for achieving your sacred goal. Choose the correct way and move along it. In the end your efforts will be rewarded.” Waking up, the excited doctoral students feverishly started to make guesses what the dream could mean.

The first student at once understood the allegoric meaning of the scheme – these, no doubt, were three approaches for achieving one’s goals. As doctoral students should mainly apply philosophical approaches, she did her best to remember something from philosophy, which not long ago she had read through and through started from the ancient Greeks till “postmodernism”. Alas, her brain could hardly squeeze out much of value – just a thought from pragmatism: “Pragmatists do not hold that anything that is practical or useful, or that anything that helps to survive merely in the short-term, should be regarded as true. Instead, most of them argue that what should be taken as true is that which contributes the most good over the longest course.” Hmm... And what of it? Having thought it over and over again for a long time she concluded that the old wise man from her dream was hinting at the correct concept of her doctoral research, as it was to be a real contribution

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for all her life. If she only could guess which way to go! But how? The thought expressed by John Dewey, that the means of instrumentalism enable to solve any problems in the democratic society, inspired her to invent her own instrument which would lead her along the right path. Instrument? Her only instrument in difficult life situations had always been tossing a coin: in childhood her sister and she used to toss a coin to decide who had to wash up the dishes; in school years her classmate Edna and she did so to decide which of them would dance with David at class parties. Now she does the same with her husband to decide... Stop! How could she toss a coin in this concrete situation if a coin had two sides only but in the scheme there were three roads to choose from? Having realized the restrictions and disadvantages of the traditional instrument and consulting several designers and stereometrists, she came to a unique solution of the problem - a more perfect innovative instrument was created. It was called a "Pragmaorientometer". It was a trihedral prism with numbered faces 1, 2, 3.

Thus, the first doctoral student got down to work. She kept on spinning and tossing it and registering accurately the number of the side on which it landed until she carried out 10000 measurements. The processing of the quantitative data revealed that the pragmaorientometer had landed on its 1st side 0.89 % more often than on the other two sides. So, the first student concluded that the empirical part of her research proved that she had to go on along way No 1 and she did so.

The second doctoral student was not on friendly terms with numbers, so she couldn't even think of any quantitative research. Looking at the scheme, all of a sudden she remembered Alice in wonderland. One day Alice came to a fork in the road and saw Cheshire cat in a tree. "Which road do I take?" she asked. "Where do you want to go?" was his response. "I don't know," Alice answered. "Then," said the cat, "it doesn't matter."

The second doctoral student sighed thinking "Lucky Alice! For me it does matter which road to take."

As she was fond of hermeneutics, the first thing she did was to write down the old man's words in order not to miss any details: "Beware! This is the key for achieving your sacred goal. Choose the correct way and move along it. In the end your efforts will be rewarded."

Remembering Gadamer's thought that the understanding of a text can be achieved by merging the horizon of the text with the man, she tried to do so, though it made no sense to her. She definitely didn't like even the theoretical idea and couldn't realize the merging of the horizon of that text with herself or with the old man from her dream. She left that useless activity regarding that it was one of those recommendations, which philosophers willingly give and which no human being, including themselves, could carry out.

She couldn't find any hint in the text even reading it at different speeds as proposed by Vygotsky. What was to be done? Somewhere she had read that the content of a text might have a lot of degrees of freedom. She started to seek new hidden degrees of freedom, but in vain. Then she calmed down. At least, it wasn't so bad to know that she would have to choose from only the

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three ways. It was already some achievement. Then somewhere she read that understanding of a text is the process of transformation of its content into other forms. Therefore she rewrote the text said by the old man in various ways using all possible synonyms for each word. For “the correct way” she tried the following substitutes: “the right way”, “the appropriate way”, “the proper way”, “the valid way”, “the true way”...

Reading them over and over, suddenly she stopped shocked. “The right way!!!” “How could I be so blind before? I must choose neither the left, nor the straight road. I should turn right!” Blessing qualitative research methods she chose the right way – way No 3.

The third doctoral student was crazy about detective stories. At once he built the psychological portrait of the old man from the dream. “What do I know about him? No doubt he must be an extravert that manages to come in contact so easily even in dream. Hobbies: crosswords, puzzles, riddles and games like “Want to be a millionaire.” Occupation: most likely a teacher, as he is so worried about other people’s success. The type of the teacher? Certainly, constructivist, as he doesn’t give ready answers! My actions? To play his game according to the rules of constructivism! Being a man of imagination, the third doctoral student started to construct new knowledge on the basis of the old cognitive structure. He was an optimist; therefore he wasn’t upset by Piaget’s idea stating that scientific knowledge was not a static phenomenon and that it was a process of continuous construction and reorganization. He didn’t intend to construct knowledge for all his life. Deep in his heart he was sure that he would cope with it rather effectively. In order to act like constructivists do, he needed somebody who would ask him or whom he would ask questions, but his wife and children were in the summer house and there wasn’t anybody else at home but the cat. He didn’t get lost and decided that he would be both the inquirer and the answerer. The entire scene looked rather funny.

Question: *What was drawn in the old man’s scheme?*

Answer: *Roads.*

Question: *How do you classify roads?*

Answer: *Straight or curved, paved or unpaved; with or without policemen, with or without surprises...*

Question: *What kind of roads do people prefer?*

Answer: *I think straight paved roads preferably without policemen and with minimum of surprises and maximum of pleasure.*

Question: *And what about you?*

Answer: *I am not an exception, though I wouldn’t mind some unforgettable adventures as well.*

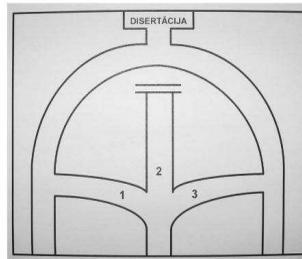
His monologic dialogue went on longer but he, as you may already have guessed, was disposed to go straight ahead.

But having a critical mind he couldn’t take an unweighed hasty decision, especially without confirming his qualitative discourse with some quantitative data. He didn’t want to lag behind the contemporary demands of science; he had to use mixed methods of research. That is why for his students he

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prepared a questionnaire, where he described the situation and in different ways asked them which way they personally would go or wouldn't, which way they would recommend their neighbours and relatives, competitors and friends to go or avoid. Having processed all the data, to his great pleasure he concluded that the most favourable for the majority (59%) was straight roads, which coincided with his own opinion. So, he followed road No 2.

Three months passed. Meanwhile the three doctoral students were acting in the chosen directions. They were anticipating the joy of success when one night the same old man again appeared to them in dream but with another scheme in his hand:



“You have passed a long way. Look where you are at the moment!” Then he disappeared like morning dew in the sun rays leaving the doctoral students a bit puzzled and shocked. Look at the two schemes once more and make your own conclusions.

Dear readers, here the fairy tale ends. As it's a philosophical fairy tale, it mustn't have a traditional American “Happy End” but some moral - by all means.

### **The moral of the fairy tale**

1. Never invent correlation between absolutely independent things or phenomena.
2. Never make fundamental conclusions based on an episode only, but take into consideration the holistic picture of the reality.
3. Doctoral students shouldn't believe in fairy tales but attend methodological seminars and tutorials.
4. In order to avoid seeing nonsense in dream, don't take heavy food before going to bed.

May worthwhile ideas light up our ways!

The end