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CONTACT

Adelajda Shima

Email: bjes@beder.edu.al

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Dr. Valbona Treska

Department of Psychological Studies
Mediterranean University of Albania
valbona.treska@uamsh.edu.al

Dr. Fleura Shkëmbi

Department of Psychological Studies
Mediterranean University of Albania
fleura.shkembi@uamsh.edu.al

NEUROTICISM SYMPTOMS AMONG POPULATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Abstract

The occurrence of neuroticism symptoms seems to have arisen in the population after the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the toxic positivity symptoms. Neuroticism is a general dimension of individual change. It is widely regarded as the single most important feature of the human personality. In this regard, this article will address this symptom of psychopathology and will argue on the basis of the literature and the theoretical framework in order to examine the basic characteristics of the trait and why it is important. In addition, the aim of this article is to better understand the occurrence over the period of the COVID-19 pandemic in the population. For the analysis, the article uses an exploratory methodology to further identify the phenomenon in question. As seen from the analysis, neuroticism has important implications for almost every aspect of human functioning. Neuroticism is highly correlated with other pathologies with depression, generalized anxiety disorder, and borderline personality disorder, which on the other hand have contributed to increased neuroticism occurrence in between the population post during and post-pandemic. Severe neuroticism is a feature that was somehow widespread in public health, following the COVID-19 pandemic, along with many other psychopathological implications. Therefore, neuroticism is an important factor that needs to be evaluated and analyzed more in-depth in health studies, especially over the last pandemic year.

Keywords: neuroticism, pandemic, population, symptoms, psychopathology.

1. Introduction

The occurrence of neuroticism symptoms seems to have risen in the population after the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the toxic positivity symptoms. As a psychopathology which has been lately identified frequently among the population, and for which the incidence appears to be increasing significantly, it is necessary to study and analyze it in more detail. Neuroticism is a very important trait of human personality, as it represents an indicator of individual's level of change. Neuroticism is important, as it represents one of the general traits that make up the highest level of the human personality hierarchy. In this regard, this article will address this symptom of psychopathology and will argue on the basis of the literature and the theoretical framework in order to examine the basic characteristics of the trait and why it is important. In addition, the aim of this article is to better understand the occurrence over the period of the COVID-19 pandemic in the population. For the analysis, the article uses an exploratory methodology to further identify the phenomenon in question.

2. Neuroticism and the symptoms of its occurrence

Neuroticism represents individual change, and how or how much an individual perceives the world surrounding him as threatening. People in this dimension experience different negative feelings or emotions and intensely higher. From the point of view of general characteristics, these individuals generally suffer from several types of problems (both mental and physical problems and not very disturbing ones). These individuals generally tend to blame themselves for their problems and tend to be largely inferior as nature. Individuals who exhibit neuroticism problems are self-critical and on the

other hand sensitive to the criticism of others, displaying feelings of weakness.

These individuals tend to see the world in a very negative light, and see threats, problems, and crises where others do not. Neuroticism is the tendency to experience negative emotional effects, including anger, anxiety, self-awareness, nervousness, emotional instability, and depression. Moreover, individuals with high levels of neuroticism does not have good coping mechanisms regarding stress, but instead they perceive everything as a threat even when they experience minor frustrations. Neuroticism is one of the most established and empirically proven fields of psychopathology, with a considerable variety of research. As such, the basis for argumentation is quite broad. Moreover, we must add that neuroticism symptoms show a variety of forms of mental as well as physical dysfunction. Neuroticism is evident and much linked with many prevailing patterns of personality, personality disorder, and psychopathology.

However, in parentheses and in relation to observations in the population, neuroticism has major implications for public health. It provides a temporary sensitivity to a wide range of different forms of psychopathology, which were evident in people in the post-COVID-19 period.

In addition to somatic symptoms, neuroticism is associated with a relatively wide range of physical ailments, such as heart problems, impaired immune function, asthma, atopic eczema, and in some cases there was found a correlation even between mortality and neuroticism. Numerous studies have shown that the relationship between neuroticism and human health, in fact, left both direct and indirect relationships, as neurotic symptoms make the individual more vulnerable, and give them the tendency to exaggerate current problems causing health consequences. (Widiger & Oltmanns,

2017). Therefore, neuroticism is also linked with lower quality of life and in many areas of life, including feelings of unwillingness, excessive anxiety, failure at work, and marital dissatisfaction. Neuroticism is also associated with low performance in the workplace due to emotional problem, which causes the individual both fatigue and distraction which in turn greatly affect his performance. Neuroticism has also been shown throughout studies to affect the marital relationship of different individuals, but also the subjective feelings of total dissatisfaction in marriage, often without a specific cause (Widiger, 2017). Neuroticism is treatable by both pharmacological and cognitive therapies.

As for the treatment of neuroticism, at least in the treatments that are available today. These treatments focus on the symptoms of neuroticism, however it should be noted that this requires early recognition of the problem and its symptoms, often by the patient himself in order to present to the psychologist. It should be emphasized that the implications of public health for direct treatment and even prevention of the development of neuroticism are essential. Neuroticism has long been known since the beginning of basic personality research and may even be the first field of personality to be identified within the field of psychology in general and psychopathology in particular.

From the point of view of the disorder classified according to DSM-5, it is clearly evidenced that neuroticism is linked to the general personality included area within the five-factor model. This trait model consists of five broad domains, including negative affectivity (along with detachment, psychoticism, antagonism, etc.). As stated in the DSM-5, *"these five broad domains are ill-adapted variants of the five widely validated and replicated personality model domains known as the Five Personality Factor model."* (APA, 2013). Neuroticism in particular by numerous researchers, is now

takin gaining lot of interest and a lot of back up research as data shows that neuroticisms is linked to general health conditions.

Therefore, in general terms we can summarize that neuroticism is a fundamental area of personality highly affecting human health, as well as a series of psychopathological and physical concerns for the individuals. It contributes to the appearance of many significant life-threatening outcomes as well as impairs the ability of persons to address them adequately. Lastly, it should be emphasized that neuroticism as one of the most important areas of personality, is increasingly recognized and should be more studied, especially in cases such Albania, where Covid-19, highly impacted a lot of individuals.

2.2. Analysis

2.2.1. The association of neuroticism with psychopathology, and its association with other psychopathologies

Neuroticism has long been closely linked as one of the most important personality traits in psychopathology, especially in relation to anxiety and depression. However, it is often argued this feature has historically been based solely on factor analysis of common settings used to describe common behaviors.

In numerous studies, it appears that neuroticism has been shown to have multiple and repetitive relationships with many psychopathologies, and this more than any other personality trait (Clark and Watson, 1999). It is associated with numerous clinical syndromes, such as anxiety, mood disorders, substance use, eating disorders, personality disorders, and has even been linked to schizophrenia. Of course, it is already known that psychological disorders are mainly associated with important correlational relationships in this regard. The quantity or quality of this relationship is not

entirely unknown, given that for example if we take the case of emotional disorders, they are one of the defining criteria of neuroticism and psychological disorder as a whole.

Frustration, anger, depression, stress and self-blame are just some of the main symptoms and personality symbol of people who typically have the features of neuroticism. This is, as we mentioned, an essential feature of the individual, who is closely associated with individuals with a very pessimistic approach to life and who react very severely to whatever problems they open up. These people are easily stressed and constantly feel hopeless and tend to feel bad about us emotionally, and do not have an accurate or calm reaction when other people address or express emotions towards them.

It should be noted that this trait or these individuals have a pronounced lack of emotional intelligence in general, and above all it should be noted that they are more likely to exhibit problems with other disorders or other psychopathologies, specifically and in particular with mental disorders and with depression. Because of such problems, these people suffer a lot in their careers and do not succeed, neither internally nor externally.

On the other hand, until today it has been a bit problematic to scientifically measure neuroticism and to identify this psychopathology, or specifically the etiology of psychopathology (Claridge and Davis, 2001). This has certainly happened because the main factors or biological mechanisms that influence the development of neuroticism are not yet known, and it must be said that in recent years the study of this issue has received a great impetus. Most studies in the field of psychology still link neuroticism with the stresses an individual goes through in life or with his or her emotional disorders. Other causes include substance abuse, substance abuse, etc. Of course, there are still unknown causes, mainly the health of the individual.

It is also worth noting that neuroticism exponentially increases the impact and degree of psychiatric problems. Therefore, it is a very important risk factor to consider in depressive episodes, which affects the degree of the episode. However, the episodes of the neuroticism problem itself are shorter and easier to administer by mental health experts.

At this point, we can argue that correlations are essentially non-informative because the results of neuroticism reflect the characteristic (or average) level of anxiety of a person over an extended period of time. It should be noted, however, that until recently, attempts to show the basis for neuroticism and the mechanisms involved have been somehow still limited (Claridge and Davis, 2001).

Clinical syndromes, on the other hand, are also closely related to neuroticism, which has been pointed out by the literature, as they contain at their core the subjective concern of the individual and his reaction to this concern. The trait that has shown the most correlational relationship with depression, generalized anxiety disorder, or even borderline personality disorder, is precisely neuroticism.

Recent studies have also shown that neuroticism, generalized anxiety disorder, and depression are not genetically distinct; as they can essentially be traced to a single genetic diathesis that reflects in turn a sensitivity to subjective concern and negative emotionality, thus essentially related to the very description of neuroticism. The relationships between these variables in the literature have been found to be quite strong, and syndromes such as generalized anxiety disorder and borderline personality disorder, may represent substantially high levels of neuroticism (Widiger et al., 1999). On the other hand, it has been observed from studies that neuroticism has not shown a strong relationship with disorders of the experience of emotional distress, a concrete example in this case may be an individual with a specific

phobia (such as fear of getting on the elevator or fear from heights), this as these phobias show no more than modest increase in traits (Mineka et al., 1998).

2.2.2. Life and work dissatisfaction and its relation with neuroticism

As mentioned earlier, people who exhibit symptoms of neuroticism report dissatisfaction with themselves and the world. This feeling affects every aspect of their lives and the quality of their lives as a whole. Various studies have shown that this category of disorder has greater dissatisfaction and instability in their intimate relationship or with their partner (Karney and Bradbury 1995). The results of these studies related to neuroticism, predict its subsequent course, and how aggravating the situation and how it affects individuals in their daily lives and functionality. The study of Kelly and Conley (1987) for example is quite interesting as it follows in dynamics several couples, over a period of time of not less than 50 years of their marriage. The results of the study showed that individuals who exhibited high levels of neuroticism were in fact more likely to divorce during the course of the study. Even in this study, neuroticism predicted later levels of marital dissatisfaction among the individuals participating in this study. Neuroticism among study participants showed considerable predictive power in more than 1 dimension or measured variable. On the other hand, other studies have shown that people with high neuroticism have greater dissatisfaction at work, even in social life. Staw et al. (1986) on the other hand, in their study, managed to discover that neuroticism in adolescence was an important predictor of job satisfaction even 50 years later (Fawknner, 2012).

2.2.3. Neuroticism and physical health

For a long period, the psychosomatic hypothesis - the idea that chronically elevated levels of negative emotions will eventually lead to disease - was a prevailing theoretical paradigm in the psychopathology of human behavior. Given that neurotic individuals reported more frequent episodes of negative emotions, this in turn tells us that neuroticism can be a vulnerability factor even for diseases of the physical health of the individual. The degree of neuroticism may indicate a significant correlation or relationship with the physical symptoms and health problems of individuals. Neurotic individuals may report increased levels of headache, chest pain, coughing, persistent physical fatigue, and many other physical and health problems. However, there have also been studies which have shown that neuroticism was not strongly or consistently associated with direct indicators related to health status. These studies have mostly related to behaviors such as the number of doctor visits for the disease or the direct function of the immune system, etc. In other words, neuroticism is a much better predictor of subjective health complaints than of an objective health status (Kitayama, 2018).

5. Conclusion

As seen from the analysis, neuroticism impacts directly or indirectly almost every aspect of human functioning and human health. However, we still know relatively little about how neuroticism is actually interlinked with somatic symptoms and with every aspect of human life, or how it deeply affects it. Severe neuroticism is a feature that was somehow widespread in public health, following the COVID-19 pandemic, along with many other psychopathological implications. Neuroticism is highly correlational with other pathologies with depression, generalized anxiety disorder, and

borderline personality disorder, which on the other hand have contributed in increased neuroticism occurrence between the population post during and post pandemic. Therefore, neuroticism is an important factor that needs to be evaluated and analyzed more in depth in health studies especially over the last pandemic year.

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Armine Vazgen Vahanyan

Department of Pedagogy and Psychology
Yerevan HAYBUSAK University
a.v.vahanyan@gmail.com

PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY IN THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Abstract

The psychological security of the educational environment is considered to be one of the most important preconditions, which allows to give a developing character to the system. Therefore, it is important to formulate its ensuring goals and principles. The concept of psychological security of the educational environment is a system of measures ensuring mental health of the subject's in the conditions of pedagogical cooperation. This system is formulated on the basis of theoretical analysis, as a result of which: a) "educational environment" (psychological aspect) and b) "psychological security" are being defined. Conclusion on considering one of the social institutions included in the provision of national security (social aspect) is being substantiated. Main threats that destabilize psychological security in the educational environment are being detected. The category of psychological security is defined by us in three aspects: 1) environment and ensuring mental health of the participants involved as a system of interpersonal relationships that gives participants a sense of belonging (environmental referentiality function); 2) absence of social-psychological threats. convince the person that he/she is out of danger; 3) improvement of a person's mental health. The modeling of psychological security in the educational environment should be based on the following principles: a) principle of relying on developing education; b) principle of psychological protection of the individual (support for the development of social-psychological skills of the individual).

Keywords: *psychological security, educational environment, mental*

Introduction

The modeling of psychological security in the educational environment should be based on the following principles: • Principle of reliance on developmental education, • Principle of psychological protection of the individual, • Principle of support for the development of a person's social-psychological skills. One of the most important mechanisms for the socialization of a person is education, which can be presented in terms of the level of achievement of goals. The priorities of youth education and professional training are reflected in the prism of breaking public interests.

In modern psycho-pedagogical science, education is considered in several aspects: as an educational system, as an educational process, as an educational activity, as an individual or cumulative result of a process, as an educational environment. The social quality of the educational environment is conditioned by the peculiarities of the relations in the system.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in studying the socio-psychological environment of individuals. K. Levin, in his field theory, clearly presents man's relationship with the environment. In his scheme, which determines the position of man in the world around him, three basic concepts are used: «the person» (the person, P), «psychological environment» (environment, E), and «physical world» or «non-psychological world» («physical world», PW). His main thesis is the recognition of the unity of a specific subject and a certain environment. The subject together with its internal individual systems and psychological field («living space») forms a unified continuity. K.L. believed, that events occurring in psychological environment could cause changes in physical world, and vice versa. Accordingly, there is an interaction between person and psychological environment.

In order to understand the motives of a person's activity, it is necessary to observe the organism in conditions of constant interaction with the environment. The environment plays a dual role. First of all, it acts as a source of information that allows a person to predict the consequences of possible alternative actions. Second, it is the reality where human activity is organized. A. Maslow divides the environment into geographical and psychological. Psychology arises when a person presents relevant psychological needs. (Maslow A. 2001 Motivation and personality; ST. P) The interdependence of a man with the environment is considered within the framework of existential psychology, which is reflected in the basic concept of being "in the world" (Dasein). This means that people do not exist separately from the world, and the world does not exist apart from humans (Лэнгле А., Person, 2008, 159 с.) Экзистенциально-аналитическая теория личности: Сборник статей: Пер. с немец. м. /Вступ.ст. С.В. Кривцовой. М., Генезис Франкл В., Человек в поисках смысла;. (1990, 368 с.) Сборник: Пер. с англ. и нем. /Общ. ред. Л. Я. Гозмана и Д. А. Леонтьева, Прогресс, М.,].

Humanistic psychology, which views education as a system that develops personality, the main source of human development discovers the driving force in the system of individual. The need for security is one of the foundations in the hierarchy of personal needs (Maslow A. 2001) Motivation and personality; ST. P), without which satisfaction is impossible to achieve self-realization (Maslow A. 2001) Motivation and personality; ST. P). It is difficult to maintain mental health if one does not understand the connection between self-preservation and developmental opportunities. According to A. Maslow, the conflict between these phenomena is existential, rooted in the depths of human nature.

The phenomenon of psychological security: The educational

environment would be incomplete if the conditions necessary for fully discovering the human potential were not defined. We believe that the whole of these conditions can be defined as "psychological security".

The term "psychological security" applies to all areas of human life, hence the educational environment is also involved. The concept of psychological security is used in various subject areas related to the professional activities of people. In the early stages of development, the social conditions of the participants' interaction in the educational environment occupy a leading place. We consider the psychological security of the educational environment to be the most important condition that provides an opportunity to give a developing nature to the educational environment.

Therefore, it is significant to formulate the conceptual provisions, goals and principles of its creation. The concept of psychological security of the educational environment is an existing system for ensuring the positive development of subjects and mental health in the conditions of pedagogical cooperation. The latter is formulated on the basis of theoretical analysis, as a result of which:

- "educational environment" (psychological aspect) and "psychological security" notions are defined
- The conclusion on the possibility of considering the high school as one of the social institutions included in the provision of national security (social side) is being substantiated.

The revealed functions and structure of the educational environment require analytical evaluation and comparison of two closely related concepts.

1. The social-psychological atmosphere of the professional group and the psychological characteristics of the educational environment;
2. The nature and ways of the interaction of the subjects (social or communication component).

Let us consider the main provisions and concepts of psychological security of the educational environment.

1. Education is a sphere of social "production". This means that the higher education institutions, as non-governmental organizations producing "super-complex products", must create stable conditions for "production" and use technologies that have the least risk of harming the development of the individual, as well as development opportunities.

In terms of psychology, we can say that if in an authoritarian system public institution (including the school) were created to control man, then in the humanistic paradigm man is given a "basic sense of satisfaction" (Маслоу А. 1982, pp. 1). In this regard, education and psychological support should be at the epicenter of the educational institution's activity.

1. Educational environment as part of the educational area.

The educational environment has a territorial allocation and other qualitative characteristics that allow to fully meet the needs of young people for development, socialization, and cultural identification while ensuring their safety.

The educational system, which includes separate educational institutions, the psychological essence of which is the creation of conditions and opportunities for maintaining the psychological security of the educational environment, act as an organizational structure ensuring the solution of these problems. Through the educational policy, a common educational area is created, aimed at maintaining and strengthening the physical, mental, and social health of the person.

In a psychological sense, this is the creation and introduction of technologies to support the psychological security of the educational environment.

2. Threats to the psychological security of the educational

environment. The main threat to the interaction of the beneficiaries of the educational environment is psychological trauma, which results in damage to positive development and mental health, the basic needs of the person are not met, i.e. there is a barrier to self-realization. The main source of psychological trauma is psychological violence in the joint process of interaction.

The analysis of the works on the problems of psychological violence gives grounds to distinguish the following manifestations: public humiliation, insult, ridicule, threat, insulting name, compulsion to act against one's own will, neglect, disrespectful attitude, unfriendly attitude. The criterion for the absence of this threat will be an adequate assessment of the psychological protection of all participants in the educational environment.

A factor threatening psychological security is that the group members do not recognize the referential significance of the educational environment, and as a result of the intention to leave it or the actual denial of its values and norms. (Баева И. А. Б., (2002. — 271 с.) Психологическая безопасность в образовании: Монография. — СПб.: Издательство «СОЮЗ»

Костина Л. М., Психологическая безопасность личности: подходы, компоненты/ Приемственность психологической науки в России: традиции и инновации: (2012.) материалов Международной научно-практической конференции, посвященной 215-летию РГПУ им. А. И. Герцена, /rustudent.com/psihologicheskaya-bezopasnostlichnosti-podhodyi-komp.../). Thus, another criterion of psychological security of the educational environment is its referentiality, fixed as a positive, neutral or negative attitude.

3. This criterion of psychological security of the educational environment is the level of satisfaction with the main characteristics of the interaction process.

A threat to psychological security is also the lack of satisfaction with the basic characteristics of the interaction process of all participants in the educational environment. The empirical manifestations here are the following: emotional comfort, opportunity to express an opinion, respect for oneself, preservation of personal dignity, ability to seek help, discussion of personal problems and difficulties, attention to requests and suggestions, mutual help.

Organizationally threatening to the health of the participants of the educational environment is the underdevelopment of the psychological support system, the inefficiency of the support service in the educational system. This implies a large-scale task of eliminating the threats listed in the educational environment, which will help to reduce psychological risks both in the educational space and, more broadly, through the spread of secure relationships between participants in social life.

Findings

Ensuring psychological security of the educational environment
In the educational system, the priority for the support service should be the provision of psychological security of the educational environment, as a consequence, the protection of the mental health of its participants.
In order to ensure psychological security in the educational environment, it is necessary to rely on a number of principles.

The principle of relying on developmental education, the main purpose of which is not education, but the harmonious development of the individual's consciousness, physical, emotional, intellectual, social and caring spheres [Вачков И.В. Смена (.2000.N4) Приоритетов//Школьный психолог; Панов В.И. (2000). Экопсихология.М.]. The basis of such an educational process is not the logic of influence, but the logic of interaction.

The second principle, based on which it is necessary to design a psychologically safe educational environment is the principle of psychological protection of a person from each subject of the educational process. The implementation of this principle in interaction is the elimination of psychological violence. Vulnerable people should receive resources, psychological support, and protection of the right to safe cooperation.

Support for the development of social-psychological skills.

Informative support - professional advice, situation analysis, feedback, information, that helps solve raised problems. Status support – acceptance, approval, respect, provision of positive social comparison, support for the growth of the subject's self-esteem, information necessary for the expression of self-esteem, recognition of the individual. Instrumental support - services, material and practical assistance for the achievement of a goal, solution of a problem, management of a crisis and etc.

Social-psychological skills enable a person to choose his / her way of life competently, to solve problems independently, to analyze the situation and to choose appropriate behavior, that does not violate the freedom and dignity of others, excludes psychological violence and triggers self-development of a person. It is crucial that the world is predictable, organized, as it creates a sense of security.

Today, in many studies and discussions on the issue of the new psychological-pedagogical quality of the educational process, two poles can be mentioned. The first is the persistent introduction of the ideas of humanism as a basic and mandatory condition. Relationships between subjects of education (often quite declaratively expressed as love for children, attention to emotions, pursuing of needs and etc.).

The second is to rely on ready-made learning technologies (usually

developing), where there is a clear regulation of interaction, as well as a step-by-step technological sequence. This structural model can be used as a basis for the development of psychological support programs and technologies for the subjects of the educational process in order to create psychological security in the educational environment of a high school. The horizontal direction can be related to the development task of the individual, and the vertical direction to its development. The provision of psychological resources in both directions, which allows for creating psychological security in the educational environment, is the primary issue of the support service.

It is proposed to create an operational structural model in the educational environment of the university, which allows to develop technologies in order to ensure the psychological security of subjects. The psychological service in a high school will allow to maintain and strengthen the level of mental health, and psychological well-being, improve the quality of life of both university students and teaching staff, ensure the existence of psychological culture and intergenerational tolerance, promote early detection of personal and social problems, as well as the formation of social and family values among young people.

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Assoc. prof. Marián Ambrozy

College of International Business ISM Slovakia in Prešov
ambrozy.marian@gmail.com

CAN SKILLS REPLACE COMPETENCIES

Abstract

The paper addresses the issue of whether competencies can replace knowledge in the preparation for a profession. Our claim is that knowledge takes precedence over competencies. In this context, we seek to falsify the misunderstanding of the concept of the knowledge society, which puts competencies above knowledge. In the paper, I partly use new literature on competencies and lifelong education, as well as literature related to the issue of scientific progress. The studied issue is the relationship of skills and knowledge to one's preparation for a future profession. The method of the work is theoretical argumentation; the paper is of a theoretical nature. We use the method of theoretical proof indirectly by dispute. We argue with the anti-cumulativist picture of the development of science, stating that such an image of science is not cumulativistic, though this does not mean that competencies are particularly important. We also argue that skills will help us apply ourselves outside our profession. Our claim is that lifelong learning is mainly vocational training, and serious knowledge is the basis for this training. Skills follow only after the need for serious knowledge. The result of the paper is that the superiority of skills over knowledge is not justified. The paper is important because of the current proliferation of views in this context, which misinterpret the notion of the knowledge society. These views sometimes appear in university management and politics.

Keywords: *skills, knowledge, knowledge society, anti-cumulativism, education*

Introduction

In some circles, an idea has become established that perceives, evaluates and misunderstands the knowledge society. It does not see it as a society based on real knowledge and understanding, but as a society based on having competencies and a desire to learn. But nothing new would happen in such a case, and in the end it would be a repetition of the old and well-known principle, which was already stated by Vladimir I. Lenin – to learn, to learn, to learn. The constant readiness to learn was declared expresses verbs by Lenin, and if the idea of a knowledge-based society were based solely on it, there would be no choice but a state of *déjà vu*. Competencies are not an invention of the last third of the 20th century; Plato spoke about what the guards are supposed to control; what skills they should have, and he also described the way to acquire these competencies. True, the constant world of ideas is different from the changing world of their reflection. Although this is changing dynamically, this change produces the need to create new knowledge and to learn it. New knowledge, which is created relatively quickly, creates the need for it to be adopted by scientists, practitioners and teachers. In the need to follow new knowledge and acquire it and not be satisfied with the state of knowledge at the time of graduation lies the feature of the knowledge society that speaks of the accumulation of new knowledge. However, this does not mean that the desire to learn and the acquisition of competencies, how to receive knowledge, how to use information resources, are more important than knowledge itself. After all, their goal is to acquire new knowledge.

Method

The research method is a theoretical argument. First, we turn to the problem of cumulative science in connection with the need to update knowledge. Later we try to object indirectly with a dispute. We seek to deduce the consequences that arise from the preference for competencies over knowledge. The reduction of knowledge to increase the level of competence is unacceptable. Thus, the initial assumption is that competencies cannot be formed at the expense of knowledge.

The issue of cumulativism and knowledge

The issue of scientific progress is clearly not resolved theoretically. Cumulativist theories are in opposition to anti-cumulative ideas. The classical packaging theory of science, which means increasing knowledge through its quantitative increase and assuming a linear dependence of the disciplines of knowledge, has already been introduced by the founders of positivism. Auguste Comte introduced the system in which mathematics is based. It was apparently inspired by the late Plato (wisdom is the knowledge of numbers) and Galileo (the book of nature is written in the language of mathematics). Mathematics is followed by celestial physics (astronomy), the knowledge of which is, in turn, a basic prerequisite for the knowledge of terrestrial physics. Comte does not find a place for chemistry in this classification, but terrestrial physics is followed by biology. Self-knowledge of biology is a condition sine qua non for knowledge of social physics – sociology – of which Comte was the founder. This concept is like a jigsaw puzzle; the higher level of science is obviously conditioned by the knowledge of the lower level. The idea of scientific development is essentially cumulativistic in the representative of the second phase of positivism, Henri Poincaré, who talks about supplementing the conditions in

theory. In a particular scientific theory, a new discovery is made that adds a new condition to the existing theory. An example is the special theory of relativity, by which Einstein's two postulates changed the classical perception of speed folding, introducing time dilation and length contraction.

Comte's now classical theory of science is opposed to anti cumulativist views on the creation of scientific knowledge. The theory of scientific revolutions developed by Thomas S. Kuhn is well known. This philosopher "distinguishes in the history of the development of science the period of the so-called 'normal science' and 'scientific revolution', these periods not only being quantitatively different stages of scientific development but representing different qualities" (Karaba, 2012a, p. 69). A period of a scientific revolution marks the advent of a new scientific paradigm that will change the basic approach to the original findings of a scientific discipline and to what has hitherto been considered to be scientifically proven. Kuhn tries to present the approach on the example of individual scientific disciplines. For example, chemistry replaced the subordinate stage of alchemy, the iatrochemical stage, as well as phlogiston theory - Smik (1988). In some areas of theory, the explanatory power that is growing in other areas is being lost. It is the crisis of normal science and the shift towards a new paradigm that is interesting for its development.

The anti-cumulative approach is also significant for Laudan's reticular model of scientific progress. Laudan follows Kuhn and Lakatos. He seeks to exclude cumulativism from the theoretical grasp of the development of science and considers problem solving to be the basic goal of science. There are empirical and conceptual problems. "Empirical problems are questions concerning the structure and interrelationships between individual objects of a particular scientific field" (Karaba, 2012b, p. 520). Laudan considers conceptual problems to be more serious. They are those that introduce

theories into science that are unacceptable or incompatible with others. There can also be a discrepancy between theory and methodological assumptions. At present, we can cite as an example string theory, which is not compatible with the standard model. “String theory in its current form is not definitive and we don’t really know what to imagine under it” (Dubnička, 2008, p. 700). Nevertheless, considerable funds are being spent on string theory research projects. The goal of this theory is to find a new consistent physical theory that should describe all levels of physical reality.

For these reasons, it is necessary to react flexibly in the field of knowledge acquisition. Some findings may become obsolete, and a change in paradigm may even necessitate a radical correction of some of the knowledge thus far gained. The change in approach to the sources of Gnostic literature after the discovery of the texts in Nag Hammadi makes the discovery of the iconic views of the performers Irenaeus and Hippolytus almost useless. New discoveries of context in the interpretation of the pre-Socratics also greatly falsify the approach of older interpreters, based on references from the Peripatetics. It is therefore extremely important to innovate knowledge, not only in terms of accepting new sets of information in context, but also in rewriting and updating them. Non-cumulative theories are relatively realistic in that they have brought the knowledge that not all theories and knowledge are permanent and sometimes need to be changed to new knowledge contexts. Therefore, lifelong learning is clearly needed in dynamically evolving theories, the better reflection of which is non-cumulative methodological theories, not only in the form of accumulating new knowledge, but also updating the theories and paradigms used. Laudan, Lakatos and Kuhn have contributed to a better understanding with their vision of the development of science. At the same time, this means in many

cases the need to reconstruct the knowledge system in some segments of science.

Knowledge and skills in the context of education

Perhaps there is no need to repeat the familiar context of the importance of knowledge as a factor in the production of the economy in terms of competitiveness and gaining a competitive advantage. The importance of knowledge for business security is crucial. Kassay (2014) considers learning and growth to be a company's investment in the future. He notes that many companies persist in traditional management methods, even though it is possible to measure exactly the achievement of strategic objectives. Kassay considers intellectual capital to be the starting point for value creation. An educated person not only accepts the information itself but absorbs the higher degree associated with cognition. The key indicator is the acceptance of knowledge and skills. Human capital is subordinated to the term intellectual capital, Kassay points out. Human intellectual abilities should also be used in the work process, primarily with the knowledge and skills at one's disposal. The importance of education is not exclusively in the labour market, says Kassay. Knowledge must not be reduced to computable human capital, says Drucker. Kassay draws attention to some specific facts, a parallel of which can be found, for example, in Heidegger's lecture *The Age of the World Picture* (1938). The authors Sedliačiková et al. (2020) also deal with this issue.

The anti-cumulativist view of the development of science seems to have defeated its cumulative counterpart. This means that science sometimes changes its paradigm, at least in selected segments. It is seemingly a shift of previous knowledge as invalid towards the history of science. Even previous, development-surpassed knowledge and paradigms, even in the non-

cumulative picture, are important for comparison, for a holistic notion of the development of knowledge. More importantly, however, lifelong learning does not keep the worker in the old paradigm with outdated interpretations and does not consider knowledge that is already supplemented by new conditions, or even replaced by new ones, to be still persistent. This can only be achieved by the fact that many years after graduation, his knowledge is several times greater than at the time of graduation. If this is not the case, or if there is even a detriment of knowledge several years after graduation, such a worker will find it very difficult to join the work process, which uses current knowledge, or will have problems staying in the process.

The modern picture of the development of science, together with the acceleration of human knowledge, forces a person whose path is intellectual activity to continue his education and lifelong learning. Being educated means not only knowing where to find information and knowledge. Searching for and using information sources is, of course, extremely important. Without a way to access information, it is impossible to use what does not directly contain the knowledge of a particular individual. Information in itself is not of great value unless we accept it in specific contexts. An understanding is needed to understand it. Hans Georg Gadamer in particular talks about information in his own way. Pre-understanding (Vorurteil) plays a key role in gaining knowledge. Preconception, or pre-understanding, is a basic condition for the possibility of any understanding. Understanding cannot be freed from assumptions. We must somehow understand each other before we want to begin to understand - Diez (2021). This preconception requires a certain amount of knowledge. Naturally, acquisition of knowledge is also conditioned by some skills, such as the classic search of information sources through libraries, an electronic search

of information sources, etc. Knowledge is the alpha and omega for preconceptions.

Pre-understanding is only the first prerequisite for grasping information in context, so that it becomes knowledge and, in use, know-how. Another prerequisite is a very solid overview in a context that is based on general knowledge. Excellent general knowledge of truth has not been able to produce a polymath for centuries. What they can still do is give a good overview. Drucker talks about understanding science in this regard. A general overview is therefore one of the basic conditions for perceiving information in context and thus for transforming it into knowledge and understanding. On the one hand, this is a general overview within the conglomerate of the sciences. On the other hand, this is an overview within an individual science. Ensuring a good overview and knowledge at the level of the overall system of sciences needs to be addressed from primary school onwards. At a higher level, this trend should continue, especially in secondary schools of a general educational nature, but also in part in vocationally oriented secondary schools. Colleges and universities can participate in general education only to a limited extent. A general overview within one dominant science, a scientific department, is provided in part by a secondary school of a general educational nature. To a greater extent, this is the role of the secondary vocational school. At the highest level, this type of knowledge acquisition is the task of the college and university.

Of course, competencies play a role in gaining an overview. Practical skills as well as social competencies belong, for example, to the competencies of an employee - Kurhajcová (2009). These will also help in the lifelong learning process. The competencies that future university-educated people acquire in the process of higher education are most necessary for the educational process, and it is primarily learning

competencies that are key in this process. Secondly, these are information competencies, as today it is very difficult to focus only on traditional sources of information. Information competencies provide us with: the ability to determine the nature and scope of necessary information, to access information effectively and efficiently, to critically evaluate the information obtained and the validity of its sources, to implement important information in the knowledge database, to purposefully use the information and to have a knowledge of ethics and the legality of the information acquisition (Hrdináková 2014). Today's world works on the principle of information, the basic goal of which is to first obtain important information and then gain the benefits from doing so (Mokrišová 2020, p. 30). A survey on the competencies of university students in the Slovak Republic revealed interesting results. "There are some limitations which could threaten the results: the higher proportion of female students in the sample, as well as the unequal representation of students as concerning their area of study specialization" (Mesárošová et al., 2012).

Despite their importance and significance, the role of acquired competencies are particularly supportive, even in the acquisition of additional knowledge. Skills would be useless in this case if they were not linked to the necessary knowledge allowance. As we have mentioned, this is knowledge that gives us an overview at a general level as well as at the level of a specific scientific field. Above all, a beginning or advanced university graduate should have a relatively high level of knowledge. These are the basis for further knowledge acquisition. If this knowledge is absent, despite the student's skills, it will not be possible to gain much, as there would be no foundation. The information that such an individual would have access would be useless to him, because he would not know the context for it.

The argument used by proponents that university and higher education should primarily impart competencies to the graduate and that knowledge plays a secondary role is based mainly on propositions about quantities of knowledge as well as on rapidly growing knowledge. The propositions are true, but the argument is false. We will try to attack it indirectly with a dispute.

What follows from the view that colleges and universities should first and foremost, transfer competencies, with knowledge being much less important? This means that a graduate, as well as an intelligent person, for a long time after graduation, should rely rather on different competencies and should ad hoc seek relevant information and turn it into knowledge. It would probably work in a dream reality, similar to the well-known film *Short Circuit* (1986), where an animated robot quickly searches for information that turns into knowledge. Skills would have to be extremely miraculous in nature and, in particular, they would have to orientate people quickly. The graduate of our experiment would find information about the necessary problem very quickly; he would have IT competencies. He would also know how to study based on his learning competencies. But without the necessary knowledge base, in our opinion, he would literally drown in the information network. He would not be able to discern the nature of information in terms of topicality, nor would he know how to distinguish the intertwining of different alternative scientific directions from mainstream science. Using only skills, he would not be able to transform information on a higher level into a form of knowledge and understanding. This puts us in a situation where the view that the primary goal of the university is to hand over competencies to the graduate leads us to an absurd conclusion. We have thus proved that the original assumption cannot be accepted.

The claim that higher education is to put skills first also has a higher

degree of development. Competencies are important, and more important than knowledge, so that the graduate can take up other professions than the ones he/she graduated from. Such development is possible in the event of a job emergency. However, it is usually either a lower-skilled job or a job for which retraining does not take a long time. These are deviations from normal; they are definitely not a desirable condition. The basic purpose is to provide a university graduate with the necessary knowledge foundation. This is the alpha and omega of university education. In any case, the graduate also needs competencies - Basilotta-Goméz-Pablos (2022). This is mainly about finding information. The university must teach a graduate how to learn. However, competencies must not take precedence over knowledge. With a lack of knowledge that is unworthy of a university graduate and not sufficient for a full-fledged profession, the graduate simply cannot cope with any skills.

Discussion

The claim that competencies should be the overriding goal, which is superior to knowledge, is linked to the idea that, in fact, it is not even important for the graduate to work in his field as a matter of priority. Of course, there are some graduates who have a passive source of income or other work, and their study is only for their own knowledge enrichment, and they do not intend to use it in practice. Likewise, the situation on the labour market does not allow everyone interested in a job to fill it quickly. Some graduates of various levels of education are forced to fill other positions on a temporary basis. However, it should not be a highly qualified job, nor a phenomenon that would be welcomed or even planned. The primary goal is to provide qualified jobs for graduates who, of course, have lifelong learning. This should cover the need to have those graduates who are needed by the state.

The objection may be based on the argument that it is not possible to predict the needs of the state. Perhaps this objection would stand up in countries that are governed by a pure market economy. A pure market economy has occurred in history, specifically in the 19th century in the United States and some South American countries. At present, however, there is no such market economy anywhere - Misaki (2018). In some socialist states there is a planned economy, or a mixed economy with a dominance of planned elements. In most countries, there is a mixed economy. Here it is possible to predict with a certain accuracy. These are not exact numbers, but it is possible to acquire approximate numbers. It is possible to predict the approximate number of doctors, IT specialists, mechanical engineers, and so on. who will be needed. It is necessary to take into account a certain reserve. These roughly expected numbers can guide us for some planning in education. The result should be an estimated number of graduates who would primarily have the necessary knowledge as well as competencies. In the case of graduates of the first, second, or even third degree of higher education, this is about genuine knowledge in the required amount and quality, to which competencies are associated.

Even if these arguments are accepted, another objection may arise. Every citizen has the right to an education and also to the free choice of profession, and the state must not deny it to a citizen. How to deal with this argument, which refers to the second generation of human rights? It is possible to present a proposal according to which, in the amount needed for the state's economy, including a certain reserve, students would be educated free of charge. Entrance examinations would decide who will be admitted under such conditions. Those applicants who, on the basis of the results, do not get into the planned number of admissions, would have to study in a paid

form. A solution in the form of a state loan would certainly be found for the insolvent.

The idea of a knowledge society in the sense that having a good knowledge base is not as important as having competencies is combined with another premise that higher education should produce universal scholars. Competencies and the desire to learn should essentially predetermine them for universal use. The university should teach them especially how to process information on knowledge and skills. Their degree and knowledge are much less important than their competencies. Such an interpretation of the knowledge society must be rejected as misguided and incorrect.

The knowledge society means the production of knowledge from information and knowledge, the basis of coexistence becomes individual and collective knowledge and the organization and management of this knowledge. Graduates of different levels of education, especially higher education, should be oriented in this way. Knowledge becomes the dominant mode of production. Associated with this is the need for lifelong learning, because the knowledge acquired during study is not enough for one's whole life - Gouthro (2022). Combining these principles is possible with the growing demands for education, knowledge and competencies. The production of knowledge thus becomes more systematized and organized. Combining these phenomena with a decrease in the orientation of graduates on information and knowledge basically means a decrease in the level of the graduate. If we accept that the focus on competencies is superior to the acquisition of information and knowledge, and that graduates may not have the knowledge they needed years ago, because it is more important to know how to learn, then this will be a tragic misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the concept of knowledge society. On the contrary, knowledge is increasingly valued, it is increasingly necessary for full-

fledged employment not only to be able to learn and search for knowledge quickly, but especially to be able to handle it and have its automated use. A knowledge society does not mean universal graduates, a kind of semi-finished product that can be modified regardless of their professional focus. Such a misinterpretation would in fact mean the birth of a pseudo-intellectual layer and a real underestimating of the level and importance of education, especially in the area of colleges and universities.

Conclusion

In our study, we addressed the misinterpretation of the term knowledge society. Its real concept means in-depth knowledge, grasping the essence, focusing on knowledge and converting it into knowledge, as well as organizing these processes at a scientific level. These contexts need to increase the quality of graduate education. This means, above all, the production of such a graduate who will have significantly higher knowledge than has been the case so far. John Amos Comenius's idea of teaching everyone everything is, of course, unattainable and naive. The idol of the tribe and the idol of the cave, described by Francis Bacon, determines man for a certain partial circular section from the slide of knowledge. Within this determination, there are reserves and untapped opportunities from which it is necessary to draw and increase the level of knowledge according to the respective type and level of education. In another sense, this means that graduation is essentially the beginning and not the end of lifelong learning. Unfortunately, some individuals, sometimes at the level of rectors of well-known universities, promote a misunderstanding of the knowledge society: that competencies are much more important than knowledge. According to this view, the school, including the university, has to mainly pass on skills to the graduate. Serious knowledge is much less important. This nonsense also

takes a higher form: the priority of skills is justified by the fact that the graduate is not primarily intended for only one profession but should be modifiable for a diverse range of professions. More important than serious knowledge is having to learn how to learn in this interpretation. At the same time, with these skills, the graduate can change professions, as they will learn quickly. Such a perception of the knowledge society would only bring chaos. The idea of a modifiable graduate is curious; it certainly does not mean a deepening of knowledge, but only increasing dilettantism, semi-education and superficiality in education. Such a distorted notion of the realization of the knowledge society would lead to a state in which, ultimately, the level of education would fall, not increase. We just have to believe that such an interpretation of the term knowledge society will disappear, or that it will have only a very marginalized group of adherents.

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Ph.D. Arti Omeri

Department of Computer Sciences
University College Beder
aomeri@beder.edu.al

Inelda Dervishi

Department of Education and English Language
University College Beder
Idervishi20@beder.edu.al

DISCIPLINE AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Abstract

Students are humans with real needs and aspirations. If their needs are not taken into account, significant improvement is unlikely. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the positive effects discipline rules can have when they are used by teachers in the learning environment. Discipline impacts the learning process by creating a stress-free environment, improves planning through observation, and helps teachers manage the class easier. There are also negative effects in the learning environment if discipline rules are not implemented by teachers. Another important issue is classroom management. Some key points in order to have successful classroom management in every school are: understanding your students, setting effective limits, keeping the schedule, engaging students, etc. Also, in this study, the behaviors of the teachers will be analyzed and in addition the methods they should use in order to maintain a successful learning environment. The focus of this research are on the students of the 10th and 12th grades of “Zihni Magani high school in Peqin. Part of the study are also all teachers in that high school including English and other teachers of foreign languages.

Keywords: *Discipline rules, Classroom Management, Learning environment, Teachers*

1. Introduction

Nowadays we know more about teaching than we have ever had before. This happens because teaching in our days has advanced a lot into the computer and television age and we get new information each day. Even for teachers, things have changed a lot and they are facing new methods or ways of teaching. Their job is to guide and train students to know how to continue the journey of learning alone but in a very capable way. While doing so, teachers have to be very careful in managing the classroom, because classroom management affects student's ability to learn and, what is more important, teachers' ability to teach

Classroom management is one of the most important aspects of teaching. A very important step of teaching is how to build the right 'architecture' through which we as teachers are going to give lessons. The way we teach, job strategies with students, and the implementation of personal knowledge in function to class is an enormous help for both sides, even for us as teachers, even for those whom we teach (students). It is very important for teachers to have a kind of natural instinct while presenting the lesson. According to Arnold B. Arons (2010),

Classroom management is a complex set of skills that includes more than being able to influence and control students' behavior. Classroom management is primarily about discipline. Discipline is a kind of action to regulate student behaviors. It refers to some rules or strategies which are applied in school to manage student behavior. Somehow students have to obey some rules or standards of behavior in order to maintain a successful learning environment in school. If students are not disciplined, then they will

be able to be free and plan whatever they wish. This means bunking the classes. That is why discipline in the classroom is really important, to avoid students breaking the rules.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

Many teachers admit that managing a class and trying to maintain students' discipline is really tough. They have to deal with a lot of difficulties during classes. According to the research made at the "Zihni Magani" high school in Peqin, most of the teachers there admit that discipline rules are difficult to be followed by their students. This brings some problems while managing the class. Those students, who have problems following discipline rules, also distract other students and create an unpleasant learning environment.

The purpose of this study is to find out the reasons why students who have problems with discipline rules behave in such a way and what teachers can do or what methods they can use to avoid these behaviors and maintain a successful learning environment. The focus will be applied to the students of the 10th and 12th grades of "Zihni Magani" high school in Peqin.

2. Literature review

2.1. Classroom management and its significance

"Self-respect, respect others, respect learning, and respect property" (Harry Wong), and that means successful classroom management. If respect exists, classroom management functions. Classroom management is a term used by teachers to describe the process of teaching a class without facing problems like noisy students or undisciplined ones. It can be considered a magical element that permits teachers to succeed or even 'survive' in a class. For some teachers, it might be difficult to control the class and to have all

the student's attention (it does not mean that this experience cannot be gained through the passing of the years), while for others it is like a gift because they have the ability to control the class or to easily assume their authority role. According to Elizabeth Mulvahill (2018), - "Classroom management refers to the wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to ensure that their classroom runs smoothly, without disruptive behavior from students. Classroom management and effective instruction are the keys to ensuring students' success in learning. To manage a class means to plan, to organize procedures and recourses, to monitor student's progress, to minimize disruption and also discipline problems." If teachers go to school unprepared, they will lose control of the class, and if they lose it, they will never have successful classroom management. Teachers should have a lot of materials before entering the class and also a plan B, in order not to create pauses during lessons. If these pauses happen, students will lose their attention, and classroom management will not function. Also, if teachers work really hard, there are some students who do not obey and create difficulties in the learning environment. It causes problems to other students too because they lose their attention, so not everything depends on teachers, but also on students' efforts to get involved in the class. As mentioned above "unpleasant memories "affect students.

2.2.Successful classroom management and discipline/teaching self-control and responsibility

According to Tom V Savage and Marsha K. Savage, - "Management refers to the ability teachers have to create a classroom environment where success is possible. It refers to how the order is maintained in the classroom, while discipline is about stopping misbehavior really quickly and helping students learn to accept responsibilities for their own actions. When bringing

order to complex classrooms, teachers have to arrange a physical environment, organize lessons with a logical flow, motivate students to reach their goals, and the most important thing establish their own authority.” (Sage 2009) It is really important to stress that classroom management is not a discipline; they differ in terms and techniques. Discipline plans have rules while classroom management plans have procedures, which means that classroom management is a method or process for getting things done.

One important aspect of classroom management is self-control. Learning self-control, for students, means being allowed to make your own choices and reflect on the consequences of the choices you made. And for teachers is important to treat equally all students, understand their needs, and avoid shouting at them. Literature suggests that it is very important for students to start learning about obligations, duties, and consequences from a young age. These qualities will help students become better constructive members of society. First of all, teachers should talk to students about responsibility and should be clear with their intentions and what they are trying to achieve by teaching it to the students. This will make it easier for everyone to follow their obligations. Secondly, they should help students with their tasks. Rather than getting angry when students do something wrong, teachers need to be patient and give them positive feedback in order to do it right next time and help them as much as they can. Another important thing to do as a teacher in order to teach responsibility to students is to establish consequences. If students fail to execute a certain task or are not following the procedures, let them know they will miss out on the playtime. On the other hand, if they have completed all the tasks, praise them for doing it, it is not necessary to reward them with material things. (Maria Gonzalez, 2020).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sampling and Procedure

In this study, 12 teachers and 60 students participated in total. 29 of them are in 10th grade and 31 others are in 12th grade. They were considered as the appropriate group level of English B2. Students attended English classes 4 times a week throughout the year. The main reason for this study is to know how classroom management and discipline rules function in high school. This research was conducted at “Zihni Magani “high- school in Peqin. Students were between 16 18 years old. There were 18 female and 11 male students in the 10th grade and 22 female and 9 male students in the 12th grade. The mother tongue of students was Albanian and the level of English was upper-intermediate.

3.2. Measurement tool

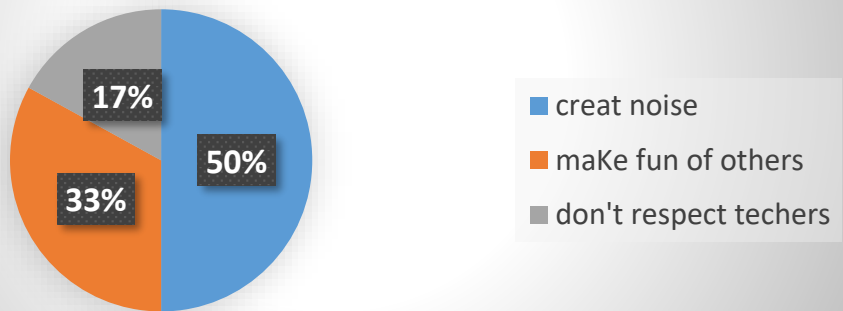
For the purpose of this study, qualitative questionnaires have been used. The questionnaires were given to the students of both classes, and to all teachers at school in order to complete them and give their sincere answers, of course without revealing their names. There were two questionnaires, one for students of 10th & 12th in “Zihni Magani “high school and another 25 for all of their teachers. The participants were chosen randomly, because they may give better and more reliable information for the survey. Only teachers knew before about the observation and questionnaires, but not the questions on them.

3. RESULTS

The questionnaires were completed by students of 10th and 12th grades and 12 teachers of all subjects, not only those of English language.

The age of the students in the survey was 16 and 18 years old. The survey was made of 12 questions. 6 questions were directed to teachers and 6 others to students and the purpose of the survey was to find out how classroom management and discipline rules function in high school.

Indiscipline student's behavior graphic



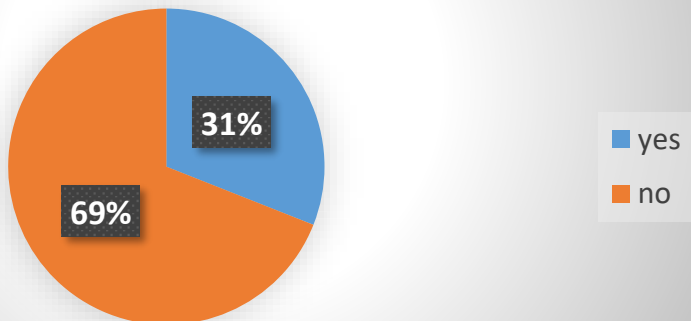
Creating successful learning environment graphic



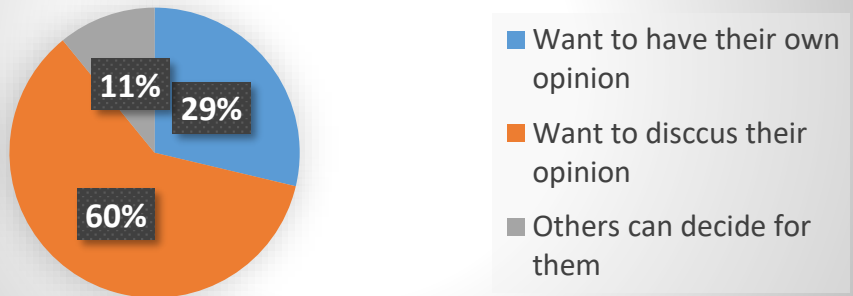
Student's difficulties to follow discipline rules



Teacher and student's cooperation graphic



Student's opinion about discipline rules



According to the student's and teachers' responses and the purpose of the study, resulted that most of the students have difficulties in following discipline rules. The majority of teachers who answered the questionnaire admit that discipline rules are very difficult to be followed by their students and because of this they have problems managing the class. Most of them confirm the difficulties students have when following these rules, but there was also a small number of teachers who admit that students cope pretty well with them and the rules they have decided.

Based on teachers' experience in their classrooms, they declare that students are able to think critically about discipline rules even though some of them refuse to respect them. This problem mostly happens with 12th-grade students, where for 22 of them is very difficult to follow discipline rules. So, students who have these difficulties also have a negative effect on other classmates.

Teachers' opinions about using different methods to create a better

learning environment had a positive effect. They state that by using those methods, things changed a lot in their classrooms and students started to cope with them and follow their rules and directions. Most importantly when students are exposed to activities, it means they interact more with other classmates, and by interacting they have the possibility to stay focused on the goals teachers have to decide in order to make it easier for them to manage the class. Teachers also assume that managing a class needs a lot of effort and also it does not only depend on their performance as teachers, but also on the ability of students to show them.

According to students' responses, they admit that it is very difficult for most of them to follow discipline rules. They state that this happens because of teachers' lack of attention or even because of problems they have at home.

4. Conclusion

According to the results of the survey, the importance of discipline rules is emphasized in the learning environment. By analyzing the data of this survey, it can be concluded that teachers need to be good "managers".

The Research Finding Based on the data analysis, can be listed as the followings:

- Deciding discipline rules together with students makes class a better learning environment;
- Staying close to students, asking what problems do they have, include them in different class activities, can make them better students and you as a teacher a better classroom manager;
- Talking with students is always effective and will make them cope with teachers;
- A successful classroom management means a successful teacher-student relationship.

5. Recommendations

According to the conclusions drawn from the research when reading and analyzing different information in the literature section and based on the data gathered through the questionnaire on teachers and students about the research questions raised in the introduction, some recommendations to be considered for teachers are as the following:

- It is important for every teacher to know how to decide discipline rules in the learning environment so they won't affect negatively their students.
- It is crucial for teachers to decide on these rules with their students, by asking for their opinion and feedback. In this way, teachers will create a more positive classroom environment, and this will allow them to dedicate more time to teaching, rather than warning students every moment. This makes students lose interest in the subject.
- It is very important for teachers to understand students' social, emotional, and cultural backgrounds. This category of teachers can be considered better classroom managers.
- Teachers should be able to manage the physical environment. They must see every student, manage traffic flow during transitions, and strategically group students.

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MA. Shpresa Hasani

Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication
South East European University
sh.mustafai@seeu.edu.mk

MA. Merita Ismaili

Language Centre
South East European University
merita.ismaili@seeu.edu.mk

**STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME FOREIGN LANGUAGE
SPEAKING ANXIETY, A STUDY CONDUCTED AT THE
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES, CULTURES AND
COMMUNICATION, SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY**

Abstract

Considering that speaking is a productive skill, the target of each language learner is to develop and enhance it. Very often language learners struggle to improve their speaking abilities due to the speaking anxiety (SA). According to many researchers speaking anxiety is a very complex and multidimensional phenomenon which occurs in different learning settings. If not approached and directed accordingly SA might hinder student's ability to use the target language, being reluctant to participate in classroom activities. In this context, language teachers rarely manage to identify the anxious students and the reasons for their lack of motivation and low speaking performance. This study aims to identify the strategies for reducing students SA and provide teachers with tools that can be used with language learners to overcome it. It also examined the characteristics of anxious students and in which way the SA can be identified and managed. The study included a mixed method design using qualitative and quantitative data. The data were obtained through an adapted questionnaire based on Horwitz's "Foreign Language Anxiety Scale" (FLCAS, 1986) and semi-structured interviews done at the end of the semester. The findings of the research will help EFL teachers to use strategies that reduce the SA in foreign language classes. By utilizing these techniques, they can help learners to navigate their learning progress and increase their self-confidence.

Keywords: *Speaking anxiety, overcoming fear, language progress*

1. Introduction

Foreign language anxiety and its impact on learner's language performance have been discussed by many researchers. As Horwitz (2001) has pointed, anxiety affects language learner's oral proficiency. Considering that learners are at the core of the learning process, their psychological state is very important. Affective variables like motivation and attitude play a crucial role in their language learning process. Anxiety is one of the most prevalent and complex emotions, and it has been studied extensively over the last three decades. Anxious language learners identify speaking as the most stressful skill. This study will concentrate on the impact of speaking anxiety in language learning in an oral communications course with fourth year university students. Anxiety, according to many researchers, is a sensation that might lead to decrease in students' language performance. Anxiety, if it is excessive, might be an obstacle in attaining students' language goals. As a result, anxiety is considered as one of the most influential barriers that has an impact on students' language proficiency (Bailey & Daley, 2000). Learners who feel anxious may have lower achievement levels and may lack motivation to progress in their language learning performance. The goal of the study was to investigate which speaking activities used in Conversational English class helped students to decrease their speaking anxiety.

1. Review of literature

1.1 What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a common feeling that occurs in a variety of settings. It is the feeling that occurs when students are unable to cope with a certain situation. This state is very common when students have to do a public

presentation for the first time, or while speaking in front of other students. Anxiety is defined as a feeling of unease, worry, or fear brought on by the prospect of something dangerous. Anxiety, according to Khan and Zafar (2010), is a broad, unpleasant, and vague feeling of apprehension. As Barlow (2002) defines it is "a future-oriented mood state in which one feels ready or prepared to attempt to cope with anticipated unfavorable occurrences" (p.64). Almost all of these definitions of anxiety have one thing in common: they all involve the fear of being threatened by a real or imagined scenario or situation. When students are worried, it can be difficult to pinpoint the source of their struggle or the nature of the upcoming event or situation. Anxiety is characterized by uncertainty about the possibility of a threat. In some situations, anxiety is considered to be normal because it serves as a 'productive alarm system,' activating when we anticipate a danger or threat (Cowie et al., 2011). This warning, according to researchers, aids us in responding to and coping with a potential risk or threat. Furthermore, anxiety is transient, meaning it lasts just a brief time before dissipating or becoming tolerable once the expected threat has passed (Daubney, 2002).

1.2 Anxiety and fear

The term 'anxiety' is frequently used interchangeably with various phenomena such as fear, concern, panic, tension, stress, and phobia, causing confusion. Anxiety can have a variety of meanings and can apply to a variety of different experiences and behaviors (Kim,2000). For some authors, fear and anxiety are indistinguishable, whereas others believe they are distinct phenomena. For example, Khan and Zafar (2010) believe that distinguishing between fear and anxiety is vital because both emotions are common and activated interchangeably. Furthermore, both sensations have stimulating activators and traits in common. Pekrun and Linnenbink-Garcia (2012) in

their study present two samples of both anxiety and fear to elucidate the difference among these two emotions. As they define, feeling anxious means to feel nervous and this feeling of anxiety is created by individual's imagination. This kind of state creates visions in their minds that usually are not realistic but still makes them believe that they are in danger. Fear, on the other hand, is an emotional response to an exact, recognized or apparent threat. The sensation of fear in this case is more realistic and vivid and it is not coming as a result of imagination, rather it shows as a natural response. To summarize the differences between anxiety and fear see Table 1 below adopted from Rachman (2004, p.5)

Fear	Anxiety
Present threat	Expected threat
Emphasis on threat	Indefinable source of threat
Distinction among fear and threat	Vague relation among anxiety and threat
Appears occasionally	Appears often
The tension is defined	The tension is not defined
Threat is recognizable	Threat is undefined
Relied on threat prompts	Unpredictable start
Disappears after the threat	Consistent
Limited threat	Unlimited threat

Table 1. Differences Between Fear and Anxiety, from Rachman (2004, p.5)

According to Shang (2013) anxiety is manifested by two distinct systems that are intimately linked to function together. The first one is the rational system, which is related to the thoughts that indicate that something going

wrong. The second one is functional system that relates to the physical changes or symptoms that may arise in the body when one is nervous (stomach discomfort, rapid heartbeats, shortness of breath, and changes in face muscles).

1.3 Speaking anxiety

Among the four language skills, speaking is considered to one of the skills that needs more attention. Students in today's language classrooms aim to strengthen their speaking skills by using a variety of methods. According to Shang (2013) one of the most influential variables that affect foreign language learning is speaking anxiety. It has a direct negative impact on students' adaption to the learning environment and their achievement (Horwitz, 2001). Aydin (2008) divided the causes of speaking fear into four categories: personal reasons, classroom teacher behavior, learners' views, and testing and teaching techniques. Speaking anxiety must be addressed in order to achieve an effective language learning (Golchi, 2012).

Barlow (2004) used the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) to collect data from 502 EFL students in order to examine the relationship between foreign language speaking anxiety and gender correlation, the period of exposing to foreign language, and students' enthusiasm to acquire the language. Females were found to be more worried than males, and those who began learning English in kindergarten experienced less worry than those who began later.

Woodrow (2006) used a self-designed questionnaire to investigate the association between foreign language anxiety and speaking performance, as well as the key causes of worry, with 275 advanced English for academic purposes students. Speaking anxiety in a foreign language was found to have

a substantial negative link with oral performance. Interacting with native speakers was the main source of worry. Speaking anxiety was found to have a detrimental influence on certain students' ability to communicate in English.

As previously said, while there are many studies in the research that demonstrate the amount of EFL speaking anxiety experienced by learners, few of them provide insight into the distinctive nature of it, and there is a lack of a comprehensive knowledge of this phenomenon in the literature. As a result, the current research attempts to provide a comprehensive explanation of EFL speaking anxiety. This study was directed by the following research questions in light of this theoretical framework and the objectives:

1. Do students enrolled in Conversational English experience speaking anxiety?
2. How do students view EFL speaking anxiety, and what are the most common causes?

2. Methodology

2.1. Design and setting of the study

This study examines the anxiety of speaking in conversational English class. The qualitative and quantitative instruments were used for data gathering. Face-to-face interviews were used to acquire qualitative data, while a questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data.

This research was carried out during winter semester 2022, with students taking the Conversational English course, taken as a required course of their 4th year study curricula.

2.2 Participants

The participants of the study were 28 students, their ages ranged between 22 and 27. They were four year students, coming from three different departments: English Language and Literature, International Communication and Legal Studies.

2.3. Data collection instruments

2.3.1. Foreign language speaking anxiety questionnaire

Horwitz et al. (1986) developed the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Questionnaire (FLCAS), which consisted of 33 items. Only 25 items were determined to be directly connected to foreign language speaking anxiety. As a result, these items were selected in a foreign language speaking anxiety questionnaire (see Appendix) to evaluate if students had speaking anxiety and which was its impact in their speaking performance.

2.3.2 Interview questions

Following a thorough review of the literature, the researchers devised an interview strategy to gather in-depth information about EFL speaking anxiety among language students. The interview methodology comprised of five open-ended questions that aimed to provide useful information for this study because the questions allowed students to express themselves freely. Furthermore, the researchers expected these interview questions to provide qualitative support for the statistical analyses. The interviews were semi-structured, and participants were given prompts to urge them to elaborate on their ideas. The questions were piloted with 28 students, and their feedback was used to improve the clarity and understandability of the questions.

3. Findings and discussion

3.1. The level of EFL speaking anxiety

The first research question of the study examined whether the students were anxious in Conversational English class and which was the level of SA that the students experienced. To measure the level of speaking anxiety, a questionnaire having 25 items was used. From the collected responses 14 students demonstrated a high level of speaking anxiety; 8 presented a moderate level of speaking anxiety, and only 6 participants showed a low level of foreign language speaking anxiety.

3.2. Students' perceptions of EFL speaking anxiety

Question 1: Do you consider speaking an anxiety provoking factor in language learning process?

The first question analyzed the students' perceptions related to speaking anxiety and its influence on their language performance. During the interviews, the students were asked whether speaking was an anxiety provoking factor for them in Conversational English class. The majority of students stated that speaking is an anxiety provoking factor in language classrooms. Interviewee 18, who regarded speaking as an anxiety provoking factor, indicated that:

In my opinion anxiety is a provoking factor in language learning. Whenever I want to speak in the lesson, my heart starts to beat very fast and I feel as if I am going to faint. Because of this, I can't finish my sentences most of the time and I feel uncomfortable.

Another student, Interviewee 15, told that:

I think speaking is the most anxiety provoking activity in the lessons. While I am speaking, I get anxious and make a lot of mistakes. As I make mistakes, I lose my enthusiasm and do not want speak again.

Most students in the language acquisition process see speaking as an anxiety-provoking activity; therefore, the findings suggest that speaking is a source of anxiety. The samples of participants' interviews prove that the majority of students feel anxious when speaking. The main factors that make them feel anxious are fear of making mistakes, being laugh at and fear of negative evaluation.

Question 2: While speaking English which situations cause anxiety?

The goal of this item was to identify the scenarios in which students feel stressed or anxious while speaking English. The students mentioned a variety of scenarios and reasons, and the majority of them mentioned that there are many reasons that lead to anxiety while speaking English. Students described the following situations: forgetting or not remembering appropriate words, not being prepared in advance for speaking, incorrectly pronouncing the words, being exposed to immediate questions, speaking in front of the class, knowing the turn is coming, and not being able to make sentences. Table 1 shows the frequency of each of these circumstances.

Table 1. Situations causing anxiety for students while they are speaking English

<u>Codes</u>	<u>Frequen</u>
cy	
When I forget or cannot remember appropriate words	18

When I cannot link sentences	8
When my turn to speak is approaching	12
When I have to speak in front of the class	11
When I'm asked questions that require immediate response	15
When I'm not prepared for the topic discussed	16

Based on this finding, students taking Conversational English class stated that forgetting certain words in English is the key cause of their speaking fear. Students also listed that they feel very uncomfortable when asked immediate questions, forcing them to respond without preparation. They pointed that they need time to prepare their responses and need to familiarize themselves with the topic discussed, in order to feel more at ease and relaxed when speaking English.

Question 3: Can you identify the reasons why you feel anxious?

Based on the results of this question, it is clearly seen that the reasons for foreign language speaking anxiety mainly result from individual factors. Among these individual factors, the code "I lack vocabulary to express myself" has the highest frequency. Regarding this issue, Interviewee 6 stated that:

We need to speak in a language that we do not use outside of classroom. I mean, it is very difficult to express myself in this language. I know many words in English, but when it comes to using them, I feel stacked. For this reason, I get anxious when I speak and I think that is quite normal.

In addition to this, it is found out that "being afraid of making mistakes" and "lack of self-confidence" are other individual factors which are stated by students as basic reasons for speaking anxiety.

Question 4: Are you worried when you make mistakes while speaking?

The answers for this question indicated that more than half of the students were concerned about making mistakes while speaking English. Seventy percent of these students reported that they are mostly anxious about making pronunciation errors, while thirty percent are concerned about making vocabulary errors. Based on this, it may be inferred that accurately pronouncing vocabulary items in the classroom can be a source of EFL speaking anxiety for language learners. Students try to pronounce things correctly while speaking in a classroom setting, and they are aware that mispronouncing a vocabulary item is rather likely.

Question 5: Do you hesitate to speak considering the reaction of your peers on your speaking performance? Why? Why not?

The fifth question aimed to investigate whether students worried about the reactions or evaluation of their friends while speaking English. The students' answers indicated that one of the factors causing speaking anxiety is the reaction or evaluation of their classmates. The results depending on the answers of students to this question are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' concern related to making mistakes during speaking task

Frequency

<u>Yes, I worry a lot about making mistakes</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>I sometimes worry about making mistakes</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>I do not worry about making mistakes</u>	<u>2</u>

The results demonstrated that the majority of the students' worry about the reactions of their friends, especially when they have to speak in front of others. They reported that they care what their friends do or say, are they going to tease them if they make mistakes, therefore they cannot focus on speaking and hesitate to participate in speaking tasks. The perception of students and their evaluation on student's speaking performance causes anxiety provoking situations, and this negative effect should be minimized in the classroom setting.

4. Conclusions

The present study was carried out to investigate English language SA among fourth year university students. The results revealed that among the factors that made the students feel anxious are speaking without preparation and asking immediate questions. The indicators that identified the students' anxiousness are the lack of language proficiency, fear of being teased by their peers and fear of making mistakes. The study suggest that teachers should allow their students time to prepare for speaking rather than asking them questions and waiting for an answer right away. Furthermore, teachers should have more information about their students' personal and educational backgrounds in order to provide better anxiety prevention. Students should be reminded in the classroom that making mistakes while speaking is natural, and that these mistakes should be viewed as learning opportunities. In addition, the teacher should reduce the evaluation and negative reactions of other students in the classroom in order to create a more genuine atmosphere. When students feel anxious the teachers can be of great help in assisting them to overcome it. They need to identify the anxious students, diagnose the major causes and prepare activities that will decrease their level of

anxiousness. Teachers can consider designing practice-based and collaborative activities, placing students in smaller groups and creating a positive classroom environment. Speaking is a language skill that develops gradually and it requires a lot of practice. The way speaking is assessed is also another factor that prevents its development. Teachers should not concentrate on corrective feedback, but rather create opportunities where students will express themselves freely and without hesitation. Therefore, regarding teaching speaking, language teachers might consider the following suggestions:

- lower level students are more inclined to experience anxiety while speaking due to the lack of vocabulary retention.
- giving constructive feedback and designing structured assessment practices play a critical role in decreasing the level of students' speaking anxiety.
- long exposure to anxiety-generating teaching practices are considered as a disadvantage when it comes to overcoming student's speaking anxiety.

Teachers need to be aware of their mentoring role in the classroom and adjust their interaction with students and teaching practices accordingly. Teacher-oriented student anxiety can be prevented through carefully designed training sessions where teachers are encouraged to understand and reflect on students' emotional states by implementing variety of methods that lead toward successful and productive learning.

Appendix 1

Table 1. Preliminary 25-Item PSCAS

Item No	Statements adopted with minor adaptation in wordings	Opinion				
		(5) Strongly Agree	(4) Agree	(3) Undecided	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly Disagree
1	I never feel quite sure of myself while I am speaking English.					
2	I tremble when knowing that I am going to be called on to speak English.					
3	I start to panic when I have to speak English without a preparation in advance.					
4	In a speaking class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.					
5	I feel confident while I am speaking English.					
6	I feel very self-conscious while speaking English in front of other students.					
7	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English.					
8	I am afraid that other students will laugh at me while I am speaking English.					
9	I get so nervous when the language teacher asks me to speak English which I have prepared in advance.					
10	I have no fear of speaking English.					
11	I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on.					
12	I feel relaxed while speaking English.					
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer to go out first to speak English.					
14	I face the prospect of speaking English with confidence.					
15	I enjoy the experience of speaking English.					
16	The more speaking tests I have, the more confused I get.					
17	Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while speaking English.					
18	I feel anxious while waiting to speak English.					
19	I want to speak less because I feel shy while speaking English.					
20	I dislike using my voice and body expressively while speaking English.					
21	I have trouble to coordinate my movements while speaking English.					
22	I find it hard to look the audience in my eyes while speaking English.					
23	Even if I am very well-prepared I feel anxious about speaking English.					
24	I keep thinking that other students are better at speaking English than I.					
25	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.					

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Ph.D. Greg HomanWright State University Lake Campus
greg.homan@wright.edu**MSW. Jason Hedrick**Ohio State University Extension
hedrick.10@osu.edu**Ed.D. Jason Horstman**Wright State University Lake Campus
jason.horstman@wright.edu

IS THERE TOO MUCH PRESSURE TO ATTEND UNIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES? A CASE STUDY IN WESTERN OHIO

Abstract

Researchers sampled 431 graduating seniors from nine high schools within three counties in western Ohio evaluating workforce competencies of high school graduates, post-high school career and educational goals, and perceptions of various career and work paths (college, trade school, military, or entering the workforce directly. Based on the Ohio Means Jobs Readiness Seal, respondents reported relative higher skills in self-management categories such as work ethic, professionalism, and reliability. The lowest ratings were found in more technical areas of quantitative skills, use of digital technology, and written/oral communication. High school seniors report college as the preferred path to reach their future goals with significantly stronger encouragement from parents, community for college as compared to attending trade school, the military, or entering the workforce directly. With the growing skilled trades gap (Johnson, 2018) should the college degree continue to be pressured (Horn & Moesta, 2020)? The research found here can assist in the development of career programs that may enhance or broaden acceptable career options for our students and assist our countries economic needs. Moreover, as parents are continued to be identified as key influencers or potential drivers for student choices, the applications of this research needs to include more direct information to parents regarding the growing opportunity that lies within the skilled trades. As the baby-boomers continue to retire, and the work force continues to require more diversity of skills the implications of this snap shot into the current trends of students choosing college over what the State of Ohio continues to list as job demands, it is evident we have yet to solve the problem and meet the needs of the current work force.

Keywords: workforce, training, education, employment

Theoretical Base

Career Planning

Educational systems and communities impact the career trajectory of young people. Youth begin to explore their career choices around the age of twelve. Schools are a contributing factor in the career planning process. Parents are the strongest influence as youth make their decisions based on their personal evaluation of interests and perceptions of their academic ability. (Moore, et. al, 2021). Relationships with mentors and adult coaches or supervisors has been found to have a strong relationship with a young person's beliefs about seeking the training or education necessary to achieve particular career goals (Bennett, 2007). Kazi & Akhlaq (2017) found peers of young people to have a significant impact on the youth career decision choice.

College Pressure

In 1980, 32% of counselors and teachers advised all students to go to college. Just ten years later, in 1990, that percentage had doubled with roughly two-thirds of educators recommending college for all. Despite a recent increase in the popularity for career and technical education, the college recommendation trend has increased over the last generation (Horn & Moesta, 2020). Many young adults across the United States enroll in college to do "what's expected of them." These students go to college not because they want the college experience or because of the career goals they perceive college will help them obtain. They choose college because it is a socially acceptable answer to what they are doing next.

According to the research of Horn & Moesta (2020), 74 percent of those who attended college to "do what was expected of them" dropped out

or transferred. According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2019), 58% of college students beginning their education in the Fall of 2012 had not earned a college degree six years later. In some communities the parental and community expectation to attend college is so extreme, that parents feel they have to defend or justify their children taking other paths (military, trade school, or entering the workforce directly). College is increasingly unaffordable, with college debt a significant factor. According to Education Data.Org (2020), Ohio has the highest number of indebted borrowers per capita with an average student loan debt of \$34,600. Attending an expensive four-year college program without the right motivation and mindset could be an expensive mistake for many students.

Are Skilled Trades the Answer?

The skilled trades industry is an alternate path that currently has significant shortage of trained and willing workers to pursue openings. This unavailability of skilled trade labor, in the U.S. is having a negative impact on the economy. Many high school seniors are unaware of the careers and job opportunities in the skilled trades.

According to a 2018 Deloitte study, the skilled trades gap could leave an estimated 2.4 million skilled trade positions unfilled between 2018 and 2028, which could have a potential economic impact of \$2.5 trillion in the U.S. A study of young adults conducted by the National Center for Education (2020), found only 11% of young adults think trade schools lead to high paying jobs. The study also found that 54% think the trade school pay gap (as compared to a traditional 4-year college degree) was higher than it really is (\$47,000 starting average pay for a BS Degree versus \$35,000 for technical and trade school jobs) (NCE, 2020). Many are starting to question

the predominant pressure that most high school graduates attend traditional college programs. The wage gap (or the difference in salary) between high school and college graduates has changed significantly, since 2000. Now, 25 percent of college graduates now earn no more than does the average high school graduate (Ruppel-Shell, 2018). In addition, Ruppel-Shell (2018) found in a review of the Bureau of Labor Statistics that, “fewer than 20 percent of American jobs actually require a bachelor’s degree. By 2026, the bureau estimates that this proportion will rise, but only to 25 percent.”

Changing Workforce Needs

The World Economic Forum (2018), found only 27 percent of small companies and 29 percent of large companies believe they have the digital talent they require. Over the past decade, most jobs have rapidly increased the level of technology used in production, communication, finance, logistics. Today’s business platforms are more complex, requiring enhanced skills and training.

Advanced manufacturing can be described as technologically oriented and advanced processing to make high-value products. There is a growing need for skilled workers in the areas of advanced manufacturing. There is a general shortage of skilled workers in the US Manufacturing sector (Johnson, 2018). Locally, when analyzing employment projections in the Western Region of Ohio, the careers expected to see the highest percent growth in demand are in health care, digital technology, and quantitative data. Specific in-demand positions include Home Health and Personal Care Aides, Nurses and Nursing Assistants, Actuaries and Statisticians, and Software Developers and Information Security Professionals. (Ohio Means Jobs Employment Projections).

Throughout Ohio and across the United States, employers and community leaders frequently identify a skills gap, the current pool of available applicants for positions not matching the skills and training that are needed for today's jobs. According to "Bridging Ohio Workforce Gap," a consortium of education and employment organizations, 65% of employers looking to fill positions have concerns about finding qualified applicants with the skills to fill today's jobs. They focus on "attainment rate", or the percent of adults aged 25-64 that have high-value credentials (e.g., certificates and certifications) or postsecondary degrees (e.g., bachelors, associates, etc.). According to this consortium, Ohio currently has an attainment rate of 49.2% of adults with the necessary skills and credentials for today's jobs. They suggest that Ohio will need to reach 65% attainment rate to remain competitive in the current economy, with a current deficit of one million Ohioans with the necessary skills.

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2020), the top five skills employers are looking for include: problem solving, team working skills, work ethic, analytical/quantitative skills, and communication skills. A study of Western Ohio Graduating Seniors conducted in 2017, found the strongest ratings on workforce skills were found on the social-dynamics related questions. The top five rated components included: making ethical decisions, working cooperatively with others, personal relations, managing time/following directions, and goal setting/self-control. The lowest skills being self-evaluated by respondents tended to be on components assessing technology use, mathematical skills, and the development of reports/writing skills (Homan, Hedrick, Light, 2019). The skills graduating high school seniors report as their weakest, relative, skills are those commonly identified as those most in-demand by current employers.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research study were to 1) analyze the workforce skills of high school graduates in West-central Ohio, based on the Ohio Department of Education Career and Workforce Readiness Criteria, 2) determine the post-high school plans of area high school graduates, 3) evaluate the influence factors on the post-high school plans of high school graduates, and 4) evaluate the perceptions and viability of post-high school plans (including direct to workforce, military, trade school, or college).

Methods

This descriptive and correlation study was conducted in spring of 2020 to assess workforce competencies, post high-school plans, and influence factors on career/workforce goals of graduating high school youth in West-Central Ohio. Nine high schools were identified in three study counties in Western Ohio (Mercer, Auglaize, and Shelby Counties). An online survey instrument was distributed to high school graduating seniors with 431 completed surveys.

Descriptive statistics analyzed overall youth ratings of workforce skill developments and contributing factors to skill development.

Results

Demographic Data

Of 431 sampled students in nine school districts within Mercer, Auglaize, and Shelby County, in Ohio, 56% were female, 44% male. A large percentage of their parents were employed in the management/professional, manufacturing, and skilled trades as professions. A relatively low percentage of the parents of these high school seniors had completed

Bachelors or Graduate Degrees (approximately 42% of mothers and 30% of fathers). 23.4% of the survey respondents participated in a vocational training program during high school. Large numbers of these students were regularly volunteering, with 63.8% donating over one hour per week. 91% of sampled students were employed at-least part-time in the past year.

Survey respondents self-evaluated their relative ratings on sixteen Career and Workforce Competencies identified in the Ohio Department of Education Career and Workforce Readiness Seal. Using a standardized five-point Likert-Based scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 1=Strongly Disagree), the strongest ratings on workforce skills were found in Professionalism (4.69), Work Ethic (4.69), Reliability (4.68), Career Management (4.64), and Diversity (4.62). The lowest self-ratings from high school graduating seniors in this sample were in Oral Communications (4.16), Written Communications (4.19), Digital Technology (4.24), Quantitative Skills (4.32), and Creativity (4.38). (Table 1). These findings are consistent with earlier research of Homan, Hedrick & Light (2019), which found similar ranking of workforce skill traits.

Table 1. Career and Workforce Readiness Skills

Career and Workforce Readiness Skill	Self-Rating
Work Ethic	4.69
Professionalism	4.69

Reliability	4.68
Career Management	4.64
Diversity	4.62
Critical Thinking	4.53
Punctuality	4.53
Discipline	4.50
Teamwork	4.50
Learning Ability	4.46
Creativity	4.38
Quantitative Skills	4.32
Digital Technology	4.24
Written Communication	4.19
Oral Communication	4.16

Likert-Based Scale (5=Strongly Agree, 1=Strongly Disagree) n=431

Students in the sample were asked what their post-high school plans were. The majority of students (75.5%) responded college was their next step. Approximately 13.9% were planning to enter the workforce directly, 4.2% pursuing trade school and 3.7% a military path. 2.8% of respondents were unsure of their path (Table 2).

Table 2. Post-High School Path Choice

Post High School Path	N	Percent of Respondent
College	326	75.5%
Workforce Directly	60	13.9%
Trade School	18	4.2%
Military	16	3.7%
Don't Know	12	2.8%

Utilizing a Standardized Likert-Based Scale with 5= Strongly Agree and 1=Strongly Disagree, graduating seniors were asked to evaluate multiple potential factors on their post-high school (college, trade school, workforce, or military). Questions with “Job opportunities” and the “potential for higher earnings” were the strongest factors of those evaluated.

Table 3. Impacts on the Post-High School Choice

Factor	Mean Rating
Job Opportunities	3.18
Potential for Higher Earnings	3.02
Need Skills before Working	2.75
Family Influence	2.75
Friend Influence	2.14

Likert Based Scale (5=Strongly Agree, 1=Strongly Disagree, n=386)

The decision to pursue various paths post-high school (college, workforce-directly, trade school, or the military) is an important decision for graduating seniors. The researchers found significant differences in personal assessment of viable options as well as significant differences in the encouragement of various choices. Ranking on a standardized Likert-based scale of 5=Strongly Agree and 1=Strongly Disagree, “attending college” is rated as the path most seriously considered by high school graduates at 4.37, with entering the workforce at 2.57, trade school at 2.21, and military at 2.24. High school seniors report significantly higher levels of encouragement to pursue college from their families, high school, and community than other paths of workforce-directly, trade school, and military. ANOVA of variance found significant differences on responses for seriously considering, the encouragement to consider various post-high school paths, and their likelihood of success at p.0000 level. Responses indicate higher self-assessment of likely success in college (versus other paths) and higher levels of encouragement and even higher levels of pressure to attend college (than other paths). (Table 4).

Table 4. Perceived Viability, Support, Pressure of Post-High School Paths

Question	College (Mean)	Workforce (Mean)	Trade School	Military (Mean)	d f	SS	F	Sign.

			(Me an)					
I serious ly consid ered:	4.37	2.57	2.21	2.24	3	122 3.8	20 9.6	.00 00
I was encour aged by my family to pursue:	4.21	2.20	2.17	1.91	3	131 6.7	27 9.9	.00 00
I was encour aged by my High School to pursue:	4.23	2.26	2.36	2.43	3	102 8.8	22 1.1	.00 00
I was encour aged by my	3.66	2.21	2.21	1.96	3	696 .7	15 0.2	.00 00

comm unity to pursue:								
A person like me can find succes s in:	4.27	3.05	2.94	2.81	3	528 .4	90. 0	.00 00
I felt pressur ed this was my only path:	2.61	1.89	1.75	1.58	3	237 .7	45. 9	.00 00

Likert Based Scale (5=Strongly Agree, 1=Strongly Disagree, n=386)

Students selecting to attend post-high school training at either a college or trade school setting were asked to evaluate the influence on their choice. The majors or programs offered by a particular college or trade school was the strongest factor. Location, Cost/Scholarships and Family Influence were moderate factors in the decision. The extracurricular options and influence of friends were not ranked as strong in their decision. Responses seem to suggest that young adults have multiple options as most

indicated that they strongly disagreed with their college/trade school choice being their “only option.” (Table 5).

Table 5. Influence Factors on the College/Trade School Choice

Factor	Mean Rating
Majors/Program Offered	3.30
Location	2.98
Cost/Scholarships	2.95
Family Influence	2.39
Extracurricular Activities	1.99
Friend Influence	1.87
Only Option	1.42

Likert-Based Scale (5=Strongly Agree, 1 = Strongly Disagree, n=370)

Students that were pursuing workforce directly (n=94) were asked to select all factors that applied in their decision. Having immediate income/wages and local job opportunities were the top reasons identified. Lower-ranked reasons for immediate entry into the workforce were “costs were too high for college/trade school,” family influence, and friend influence (Table 6).

Table 6. Factors on the Decision to Enter Workforce Directly

Factor	Percent Respondents Selected
Immediate Income/Wages	28.7%
Job Opportunities	26.6%
College/Trade School Costs Too High	16.0%
Family Influence	10.6%
Friend Influence	2.1%
Other	16%

N=60 (select all that apply)

Military-bound students (n=41) were asked to identify the factors that impacted their decision to pursue military service upon graduation. The strongest factors included the “Desire to Serve” and the “Influence Family.” Lower-rated influences included “Money” and “Friend Influence” (Table 7.)

Table 7. Factor on the Decision to Enter the Military

Factor	Percent Respondents
Desire to Serve	31.7%
Family Influence	22.0%
Money	14.6%
Friend Influence	7.32%
Other	17.1%

N=16 (select all that apply)

Graduating High School Seniors were asked to evaluate their confidence in their Post-High School Career/Workforce Path, as well as the level of guidance and information they were given to make their choice. 86.8% of graduating seniors agree that they feel confident in their post-high school path and 83.16% indicate they are aware of the steps they need to take to be successful in that path. Most, 79.3%, of seniors agree they were given enough guidance and 78.4% agreed they were given enough information as they selected their future path. Lower percentages of respondents agreed that they were provided enough opportunity to mentor people in their career/workforce path (64.9%) (Table 8).

Table 8. Guiding the Post-High School Career/Workforce Path Decision

Question	Percent Respondents Agree or Strongly Agree
I am confident in my Career/Workforce Path	86.8%
I know the steps that I need to take to be successful in my Career/Workforce Path	83.16%
I had sufficient guidance from adults to help me evaluate my Career/Workforce Path	79.3%
I was provided enough information to select the path that is right for me	78.4%

I was provided enough opportunity to mentor people in my Career/Workforce Path	64.9%
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N=393

Discussion/Conclusions

This research presents some interesting challenges and issues in education and workforce preparation. With rising college costs and high percentages of college students not successfully completing degree programs, maybe it's time to reevaluate the push for a traditional college education as the only path towards success. The demand for skilled trades and technical skills has created challenging and viable pathways to success for young adults through trade schools, military, and the workforce-directly.

When evaluating workforce competencies, based on the Ohio Workforce and Career Readiness Seal Criteria, high school seniors identify personal skills such as work ethic, reliability, and professionalism as their strongest traits. Although the list of skills analyzed are "soft skills," (as a group), they ranked their skills in the more applied areas such as digital technology, quantitative skills, and written/oral communication as their weakest. It is these same applied skills and other more technical skills that recent surveys of employers have identified as being most in-demand.

By law, in the State of Ohio, each school district is required to have a "Business Advisory Council." These local groups are designed to involve and engage business leaders to improve student learning experiences in their local school districts. Not only can this group provide curricular input, helping schools align educational offerings to local demands for current and emerging careers, but they can also assist with career education opportunities such as guest speakers, career fairs, and career mentoring programs.

In addition to Business Advisory Councils, the State of Ohio has a “Career Connections Initiative” designed to help students develop career readiness plans for their future. A collaborative of Ohio Workforce Transition, Higher Ed, Ohio Means Jobs, and Ohio Department of Education, they have imbedded career awareness components into existing contents standards in the State of Ohio. In addition, they encourage local school districts to develop initiatives and activities to further engage students to explore career options (internships, mentorships, job shadowing).

College curriculum and training should also be cognizant that the programs and degree options match local demand for potential students. Program content should continue to be evaluated to ensure they align with the skills today’s employers are seeking.

Western Ohio Graduating Seniors indicate a number of factors are impacting their post-high school path (college, trade school, workforce, or military). Job opportunities and earning potential were identified as strong factors in the participant’s decision. Family members also play an important role in the career and workforce planning process for young adults as they evaluate the viability and their “fit” for that particular path/option. College is the predominant path for local high school graduates, with approximately 75 to 80% of high school students selected that path. This study reveals that the choice is based primarily on the programs offered, the location, and cost as factors. Only 4.2% of western Ohio High School graduates are pursuing training at trade schools after graduation. Based on the current employment demand and projected growth in future job openings, more should be done to promote and encourage trade school training as a viable option for area young adults.

Graduating High School Seniors report relatively high confidence in their post-high school career/workforce path chosen and most indicate they

were given ample information and guidance to make their decision. However, approximately 20% of respondents did not indicate adequate guidance and support. When asked if they were given enough opportunity to mentor individuals in their chosen workforce path, less than 65% agreed. Community organizations, schools, and local employers can support school districts and parents in these roles to help ensure all children leave high school confident in their decision and with enough guidance, information, and mentoring opportunities.

“Where are you going to college?”

At holiday gatherings, community events, and general interactions with high school students, how many times do we hear the question posed to every high school senior: “Where are you going to college?” There is tremendous pressure in some communities that all children should attend a four-year university. It can be so extreme that parents feel obligated to justify why their son/daughter isn’t going away to a prestigious college, possibly feeling like they either failed their child or their child isn’t living up to community or family expectations.

Some young people find success attending the four-year college of their choice. Some find success in the world of work, farming, military, or learning a trade. Some start a business, enter the military, and some defer college until later in life. Roughly half of those choosing to enroll in college, right after high school, do not complete their degree in six years. Maybe, there is too much pressure to attend college and every high school graduate shouldn’t be expected to attend college?

Our high schools all take great pride in the percentage of high school students going to college. Watch how high school seniors are recognized at community events and graduation ceremonies:

- “John was High Honor Roll all 4 years in High School, is attending Prestigious University majoring in Engineering and was awarded Scholarships from X, Y, and Z.”

- “Beth was Academic-All Ohio in Basketball, has a full-scholarship to attend Outstanding University. She plans to major in Health and then go onto Med School.”

- “Mark is entering the workforce.”

- “Sarah is entering the military.”

What if we equally celebrated all paths to success?

- “Mark completed a vocational training program through Local Vocational School and has an accepted a position with Respected Company. He will continue his training, on-the- job, to become a certified welder.”

- “Sarah volunteered for two years with the local hospital through high school. She will be serving in the Marines, getting trained as a medic and first-responder and eventually pursue nursing as a long-term goal.”

What if, instead of asking, “Where are you going to college?”... we asked, “What are you thinking about doing after high school?” We can send a totally different message to that high school senior. Attending a Four-Year University is still an excellent option for many students to further their education and prepare for future careers. But...there are also other excellent opportunities for young people down other paths. Let’s send a message to our young people that we support and encourage those taking different routes to their goals.

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Lumturie BajramiSouth East European University
l.bajrami@seeu.edu.mk**MA. Merita Ismaili**Language Centre
South East European University
merita.ismaili@seeu.edu.mk**MA. Shpresa Hasani**Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication
South East European University
sh.mustafai@seeu.edu.mk

ESP COURSES AND MATERIAL SELECTION FOR STUDENTS IN THEIR SECOND YEAR OF STUDIES AT SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

Abstract

This study discusses the various activities, formats, and teaching strategies that have been applied in recent years in teaching English for Specific Purposes, or in this case, English for Social Sciences to students in their second year of studies at South East European University. The classes of ESP have constantly had changes whether in the material content or the way which they are implemented. This paper will analyze the needs analysis and the materials and activities which are used in this course which are including Blended Learning, Flipped Classroom and at the end the Project Based Learning. It is comprehensive that the issues and topics are changing and that brings to a result that syllabuses change also annually. The paper will show that all the selected activities have shown results, but as well the effective approaches which are contemporary based on methods and technological advancements have been really showing a high fulfillment marker and a connection with a proper material and the level of students' achievement and satisfaction on each of the ESP courses. Students completed an online survey that evaluated three aspects: advisor perceived quality, skill development, and infrastructure and support. A number of satisfiers were also evaluated: satisfaction with the program, peer recommendation of the lecturer, and fulfilment of student expectations. The article also considers the application of innovative approaches and their implementation by using the materials, topics, journals, lesson plans which are more trending and sophisticated as the interest and the student's needs have been changing drastically in the last decade. The materials are of topics which are globally known and of course have resulted in student satisfaction at the end of each semester.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, innovative approaches, lesson plans, materials, student satisfaction

Introduction

Needs analysis is a crucial component of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses, as they ensure the excellence and efficiency of specialized language instruction (Kaur and Alla Baksh 2010, 3; Strevens 1978). They enable the lecturer to have a better understanding of the learning setting, learner requirements, and other collaborative requests. Student needs examine has direct pedagogical implications, allowing language teachers to create lectures based on real-world tasks, raising learner motivation and enhancing learning outcomes (Chostelidou 2011, 407; Mohseni-Far, 2008, 4-7). Traditionally, learner needs were mostly determined by the language teacher's perception (Flowerdew, 2013). However, such a form of perception has proven troublesome, as teachers and students may not share the same understanding of student requirements. A needs analysis must look outside the academics to be completely representative. The syllabus created for English for Specific Purposes is meant for the students at their second-year of studies at the South East European University. English course for the third semester are classified as English for Specific Purposes – English for the Social Sciences (ESS). A sub-category that has received little attention "probably because it is not thought to differ significantly from more traditional humanities-based General English" (Hutchinson and Waters 1987: 16-18).

As a result, there are some, but not in a considerable number of textbooks on the ELT market that respond to the queries of students in various fields, especially when they are registered in the same ESP course, as it is the case at the Faculties studying the Social Sciences, which had a need for the creation of in-house materials/textbooks and syllabus.

Students enrolling in the first-year and need to take the English

courses must have studied the language for at least eight years in their former education, and their expertise is expected to be at least B1 level; by the end of the second year, students' receptive and productive skills should be at around B2+ until the C1 level. In fact, their competency level at university ranges from A2 to C1, with the occasional exceptions of C2.

These large differences in language ability, combined with the fact that the class is made up of students from two separate social sciences, creates some obstacles and has an impact on the syllabus and materials design.

It's essential to think about students' knowledge or the needs before design and producing resources. In the first two years of study at the university, all department curricula include ESP courses with the objectives of acquired structures of general language with some essentials of university language within the diverse disciplines taught and attaining knowledge of more complex syntactic and semantic aspects of general academic language used in communication and writing while being fluent in the basic language features of a particular discipline.

The key ESP demand of students has been identified through needs analysis as acquiring the essential competencies for autonomous use of university material in English in their study programs. This is an immediate requirement for undergrads, as they are required to use English-language for research and resources for their study assignments.

Other potential aim is the need of equally important categories of students include following lectures by foreign and visiting professors, participating in research with different students, and attending international seminars and conferences in their future education and career building. When asked about their personal requirements or needs, however, the biggest number of students claim that they need to increase their speaking skills and

grammar knowledge, followed by vocabulary expansion, reading and writing skills also.

As can be evident, there is an inconsistency between students' purpose and individual demands, which, if not addressed effectively by the teacher or the source materials, may have a negative consequence on student incentive. As a result, the textbook tends to focus on reading skills and vocabulary exercises which are suitable with their direct objective needs, while giving more additional material and opportunities for the growth of communication skills and grammar practice; and on the other hand less importance is given to writing skills.

In terms of balancing students' queries, the adopted form to course design falls somewhere between, between the narrow-angled and wide-angled course design options, i.e. geared toward the needs of a fairly specific group of students (Basturkmen, 2010: 55-59). This has been a predisposition for the topics addressed in the course as well. Because students from many fields are enrolled in the course, it was essential to expand the scope of the themes.

Dudley-Evans and St English for Students of Psychology and Education 441 have borne out the piloting of several resources. "Students who are studying English because it is on the test," John (1998: 10) notes. Their institution's timetable [...] may show less results and by more particular work and might be disrupted. ESP material that is closer to the center of the ELT field motivates me more than other types of courses As a result, the textbook's selection of themes and readings indicates an attempt to be diverse and provide fresh ideas and knowledge while balancing students' demands and interests "'being grounded in the learners' experience and knowledge" (ibid., 172); or, meaning, "to be grounded in the learners' experience and knowledge" supply students access relevant real-world material via relatable

carrier content regardless of their area of expertise. The material selected for a term for ESP is in that sense that topics are graded from more general to rather more specific topics, where a progression is evident.

Students who are at the beginning of their studies will find universal interest and relatability to connect with the material in a significant way, even if their subject knowledge is still inadequate in a meaningful sense, making the transition from the generic English they found as being easier to more academic English. Several supplementary texts can be used as reading material between-class assignments can have longer learning load than books used in class, where time restrictions and students' attention spans limit the amount of reading content that can be covered.

Literature review

From the beginning of the century, distance or online education has grown in popularity as a realistic alternative to traditional classroom instruction. Despite the fact that digital education is now a common thing and it can be a great way to get an education, on the other hand it isn't for everyone. While this method may be a great way to get an education, it is not appropriate for every student. Teachers, according to Richardson, necessity "integrate technology as seamlessly as possible". The technological equipment is merely a means to an end, not the presentations content. It shouldn't be the case. Taking notes sometimes can be more effective than computer equipment in some situations - plus paper doesn't crash! p. 14 (Khampusaen, 2004). Many academic experts have been wondering if foreign languages can and if they should be taught online, according to Khampusaen (2014). (p. 90). Teachers, on the other hand, remain the most important part of online education. He also claims that a social learning

environment can boost teacher-student engagement by a significant amount (p. 91).

As an eventual effect, a growing number of institutions have started to offer online studies and online courses in recent years, founded on the idea that students born in the digital age In-person learning may be obsolete and demotivating to some however, true? The arguments used to sustain these opinions, according to Kennedy (2008), should be evaluated more carefully before university educators begin to change the syllabus and different approaches to teaching and learning. These arguments are based on the assumption that all of the students attending the Universities are with similar digital backgrounds and educational experiences. This denotes that university students are all digital natives with some level of computer literacy technical experiences that are consistent Furthermore, this generation of students are thought to have superior technological knowledge and understanding.

Taking into account the findings of researchers in the area of ESP teaching and online instruction, we have tried as ESP lecturers to create and a syllabus which meets the demands and the needs of the students with academic readings, vocabulary and activities which are engaging, inspiring syllabus but also motivating syllabuses for many years now.

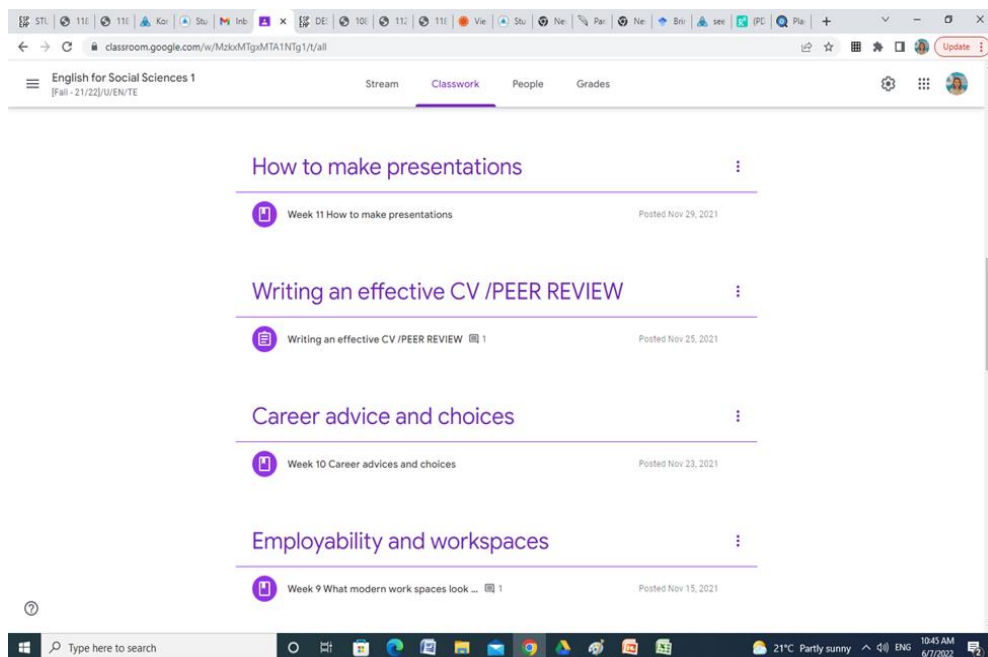
Syllabus adaptation

While it comes to learn a second language, and mostly when learning that certain language in school, inspiration is one of the most critical components. “A lack of motivation will result in a lack of driving strength to complete a task; motivation is the driving force behind the energy required to complete a task” (Nugent, 2013). Unfortunately, there is no uniform method for pushing kids to fully acquire a language because approaches that

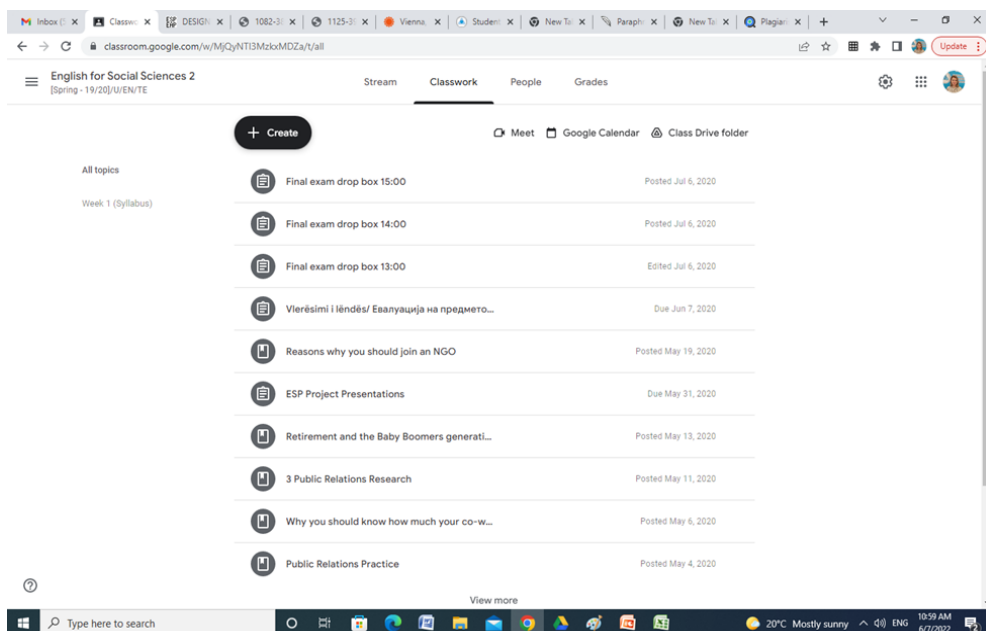
work in one situation with one set of pupils may not work in another. Internal or external sources of inspiration might be found. It is vital to devote equal attention to both incentive factors in order to learn a second language effectively. The ultimate objective for self-directed and autonomous learning is strongly tied to motivation. On the other aspect, digital learning can result in autonomy. The noun "learner" refers to someone who is learning something I instead than emphasizing the role of the teacher, autonomy highlights the role of the student. According to Jacobs & Farell, learner autonomy focuses on the course relatively than the result (2001), it supports students in advancing their own learning goals and objectives considering learning to be a lifetime process. Learner autonomy according to Hafner and Miller (2011) is frequently misunderstood to meaning only autonomous out-of-class learning which learners have complete control over their learning process, the learner, on the other.

Students from all faculties at South East European University (SEEU) in Macedonia (apart from those of the Department of English Language and Literature) are compulsory to finish English language courses specialized to their field. Students begin these courses during the third semester, on their second year. The Language Center (LC) provides the syllabus, materials, and the instructors for these courses. The English for Specific Purposes for Political Sciences and Communication 1 and 2 courses are two semester courses which include four class hours per week. The full length of the course is 15 weeks per semester and they are designed according to students' needs and interests. The courses focus on the four main language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. In the semester they will learn job hunting vocabulary and processes,

soft skills, how to write a letter of motivation or resume/ CV, mock job application of or job interviews, how to deliver a speech or presentation in front on an audience, think critically and evaluate situations.



ESP 1 Overview of Google Classroom



ESP 2 Overview of Google Classroom

The ESP 1 course, as shown in the image, covered a wide range of intriguing topics for students to learn about. Independent learning was facilitated by various assessment tasks, followed by peer and self-evaluations. When assistance was required, without having to wait for a class or office hours, it was provided. Students saw that they preferred the quick reaction they got online to the potentially delayed input they may get in a classroom. Additionally, students may have more time to consider a criticism and make adjustments if they receive the feedback online instead of in class.

Discussion

Needs analysis are essential in ensuring that a course is capable and creating a connection between what students already know and what they require (Eslami 2010, 7). Many research findings on the other hand, demonstrate that a NA does not always yield clear responses that can be used

to make broad generalizations. Nonetheless, these preliminary findings reveal at least three patterns that can be used to guide course design.

The significance of these activities is very well known in language instruction research. Because the students usually have basic work experience, their main demands are related to the classroom. ESP assignments provide the authenticity that is so important in language training, given the immediate applicability of academic abilities (Guariento and Morley 2001, 352).

Furthermore, according to the second language use Present Self notion outlined by Schug (2019, 284), strengthening academic skills could stimulate learner motivation; students are more. Instead of generic goals they have for their futures, people are more likely to be driven by tasks that relate to their current circumstances.

Teachers have to, however, use caution when focusing on EAP activities. Taking notes and paying close attention to lectures may be realistic tasks based on necessary requirements, but they may not be powerful motivators (Hutchinson and Waters 1987).

Although additional examination is needed to determine the influence of EAP exercises on student contribution and satisfaction, teachers have to weighing scales them with group activities that capitalize on the social aspect of language learning (Dörnyei, 1997).

It should be also emphasized the need of teaching students how to learn effectively. Even graduate students have a wide range of interests, extending from general to more corer and specific courses using independent learning practices. Future research will need to look into other tracking systems for guided, self-directed learning.

Moreover, it's worth noting that many former and current students are confused about their future professional routes. As a result, it can be difficult to know exactly what assignments students will need to complete in English. This research wires with Long's statement (2005, 20) that students are not inevitably the most realistic source of information about their needs. Furthermore, it is evident that liberal arts students have a higher dropout rate. While these figures may originally cause difficulties on ESP course proposals, they also allow the English instructors to assist students in developing future English-related projects. The research on learner motivation and possible selves (Markus 2006, in Dörnyei 2009, 17) informs such activities. Further research could look into techniques for assisting students in visualizing their future selves.

Conclusion

The goal of this research is to give some more importance and clarification on the English requirements of students who are majoring in other disciplines rather than those who study languages. Creating a set of online or activities which include the use of technology for students to use in class or as assignments was part of this research. New digital devices and applications are produced all the time, and new ways to use those gadgets emerge. The digital tasks created for this study were well acknowledged by students, and they were deemed to be beneficial to their learning. Instructors can provide a considerably more engaging course of study to their students by implementing the study's recommendations, one that takes into account the students' digital world. As this article has demonstrated, improved student performance is a result of a mix of technology, student control over their learning, and their learning objectives, rather than the style of education.

The teaching and learning process is strongly connected to technology. Technology aids educators while also transferring some learning obligation to students thus, larger number of studies could follow Long's (2005, 33). To better understand how English is used in those contexts, offer recommendations and conduct in observations of various professional settings. Many students which studied in the past or are currently studying have not very clear study objectives, but later on can be inspired and do more research to analyze strategies for developing the learner's self-concept or their own concept, a topic not often seen in research (Dörnyei 2009, 34).

By engaging in an online learning program, students can set their own pace for learning, direct their development, and reach to that point when they can access to course content. Technology can give you the tools to organize your learning experience on your own. Students that use technology in this atmosphere become active users rather than passive recipients of information (EDC, 2011). Students must employ several technology tools in the classroom to accomplish this goal. According to Hamilton (2007), the most significant part of integration is destroyed by limiting the classroom to one technology instrument.

Only by mixing today's technology with living skills that students will require in the future does learning become valid and genuine. We also learned from the pandemic crisis that students need to have specific skills. The most important are problems where they have to address a problem, critical thinking, flexibility, and information and technology literacy. These must be systematically ingrained in educational institutions. Students are more competitive and equipped for the outside world as a result of the skills they learn in their classes.

Several key considerations had to be made when designing the syllabus and the course book selection. Because the course syllabus was written to address the requirements of students in two related but different disciplines, it required a method that was, either generalized nor overly broad with carrier substance which was valuable and engaging to both sets of students. Another issue it is to meet the demands of students with varied levels of lingual competency by giving a variety of language content of varying complexity. And as an end result the textbook has attempted to achieve a balance between the interests and needs of students, both objective and subjective.

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MSW. Jason Hedrick

Ohio State University Extension
hedrick.10@osu.edu

Ph.D. Greg Homan

Wright State University Lake Campus
greg.homan@wright.edu

Ed.D Jason Horstman

Wright State University Lake Campus
jason.horstman@wright.edu

Ph.D. Mark Light

Ohio State University Extension
Light.42@osu.edu

Jeff Dick

Ohio State University Extension
Dick.4@osu.edu

RETAINING YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES**Abstract**

Rural population loss is a major problem in the United States and abroad. Rural location typically lose populations as young people move towards urban and suburban centers for education and job opportunities available there. This region continues to face a problem with shrinking population. The researchers in this study surveyed high school graduating seniors (typically ages 18 and 19 years of age) to evaluate the issue of rural population loss by assessing youth impressions of their home communities. The sample revealed strong positive impressions of their home communities when evaluating their schools, safety, and how affordable the community was to live. The young people reported lower evaluation of the job opportunities and the availability of entertainment, cultural, and job options. Youth from families deeply rooted in the rural community for generations and those youth working in high school jobs with higher rates of pay were more optimistic about their rural community. Youth report a strong influence of parents on their future choices about remaining or returning to their rural community.

Keywords: rural, community, development

Introduction

Population loss in rural communities is an important issue when considering sustainability of small towns in the United States. Many rural communities struggle retaining young people, as they make choices to immigrate to urban and suburban locations for educational and employment opportunities. Recent data from the U.S 2020 Census reveals that the rural population declined between 2010 and 2020. Between 2010 and 2020 population loss was widespread across rural America, with more than two-thirds of all nonmetropolitan counties losing population (Johnson, 2022). Since the 19th century, various forces — declining employment in agricultural and extractive industries, the globalization of manufacturing, and economic growth in urban areas — have led many people to leave rural communities for cities and suburbs (Marre, 2022). The exodus of young people from small communities leads to a decreased local workforce and lower tax base, while services and infrastructure costs of small towns and villages stay the same. Rural counties experiencing population loss did not see costs drop proportionally and some costs, such as those for roads, increased per capita (Wallheimer, 2020). The ability to attract people to rural communities becomes much more of a challenge as this happens. As a result, policy makers and community stakeholders are forced to explore what incentives can be created and highlighted to retain and attract young people to small town communities. Being proactive (as opposed to reactive) can be measured by a small town's willingness and ability to act on a particular challenge before it becomes a problem (Lambe, 2008). Small towns with the most dramatic outcomes tend to be proactive and future-oriented; they embrace change and assume risk (Lambe, 2008).

The authors analyzed the trends and issues related to the retention of

young adults in Northwest Ohio to evaluate the perceptions of rural youth at the conclusion of their high school education regarding their community and life goals. Researchers also analyzed the support from parents for their children to remain in their communities to better understand sustainability of communities in rural Ohio. Historically, the population trends in rural areas within northwest Ohio have been in decline. When analyzing the US Census Bureau reports, rural counties and rural town outside of metropolitan areas continue to see population losses. Meanwhile, urban and suburban locations have grown.

Methods

An online survey was administered to high school graduating seniors'

in Northwestern Ohio. 236 respondents completed surveys from four rural community school districts. A web link was sent to all graduating high school seniors ages 18-19 between the last day of classwork and graduating in the spring of 2019. As outlined in Table 1, there was an average response rate of 25% (N=236). Descriptive statistics analyzed overall student ratings of their awareness of employment opportunities in their respective rural areas, the impressions of their community, how they see their future in the region, the parental influence in staying/leaving their rural areas and parental influence on career pathing after high school.

Table 1

School District	Number Respondents	of	Percent of Sample
St. Henry	64		27.0%
Coldwater	67		28.7%
Marion Local	33		13.9%
Celina	72		30.4%
Total	236		

Findings

Are students aware of the opportunities available to them in their rural communities? Young people often indicate they leave their communities based on the perception there are better opportunities in larger urban areas. Is this perception based on understanding the local job market and opportunities or based on small town stigmas? When asked if students were aware of the companies and careers located in their region, the data indicated only 4.8% felt they did not have a good understanding of the opportunities. 62.3% of students noted they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘I am aware of the companies and careers located in this region’ indicating most feel they have a good grasp of what work opportunities are available to them.

Table 2: I am aware of the companies and careers located in this region

Response	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1.3%
Disagree	3.5%
Neutral	32.9%
Agree	54.4%
Strongly Agree	7.9%

What are the impressions of living in rural communities? The students living in the rural communities in which the research was conducted have an overwhelming positive perception of living in their hometowns. As outlined in Table 3, nearly 90% of those surveyed indicated they either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that their rural communities were safe places to live. Students also indicated a high degree of confidence that their rural communities were good places to raise families. This aligns with past findings that indicates the presence of parents and the desire to raise their children back home were the most frequently cited reasons for returning to live in relatively remote rural communities (Cromartie, 2015). Only 5% surveyed indicated they strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed their communities did not provide a good place to raise families. The two elements that emerged from the survey that are challenges for small communities in this region are in the areas of cultural experiences and interesting/fun activities. Providing things to do and offering a rich cultural scene is difficult. Nearly 30% of respondents indicated there was not enough cultural activities in their communities and not enough interesting / fun things to do.

Table 3: Impressions of living in their rural communities

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Some-what Agree	Strongly Agree
This is a safe place to live	1.68%	1.68%	8.40%	31.93%	56.30%
This area is a good place to raise a family	1.68%	3.36%	13.87%	28.15%	52.94%
I can stay in this area and get a good education	3.38%	8.44%	14.77%	35.02%	38.40%
The people here share my values and beliefs	5.04%	4.62%	36.97%	26.89%	26.47%
This area offers enough cultural activities	11.02%	17.37%	26.69%	23.31%	21.61%
This area provides interesting and fun activities	10.50%	17.23%	21.43%	37.82%	13.03%

Respondents in the survey feel as if the educational systems are strong within their communities (Table 4). Despite data indicating population decline in the area, students feel as if their communities are generally in an era of growth and providing enough employment opportunities. When asked if the likelihood this region will have a good paying job for students later in life, 48.26% of students indicated they somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (Table 5). Not surprising, local shopping opportunities and restaurant options are considered limited. Also not surprising, nearly 65% of students feel their small town environments create places where people know too much about each other's business.

	Strongly Disagree	Some-what Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Some-what Agree	Strongly Agree
The schools/teachers here are high quality	2.52%	7.56%	18.07%	42.44%	29.41%
There is positive growth in this area	1.68%	6.72%	22.69%	35.71%	33.19%
There are enough employment opportunities	1.27%	3.80%	25.32%	36.29%	33.33%
There is enough shopping and restaurants in area	8.82%	24.37%	27.73%	25.21%	13.87%

My family can buy the things others can	1.26%	3.78%	25.21%	31.51%	38.24%
People in this area know too much about others	2.10%	8.40%	25.21%	33.61%	30.67%

Table 4: Education, Community Growth and Opportunities

Students indicated an apparent desire to live and work in the rural areas in which they were raised. Nearly 75% of those surveyed said they had at least a moderate desire to live and work in the region in the future and of those, 44% indicated they had a strong or very strong desire to stay. When asked who has had the most influence on the desire to stay, respondents indicated mothers (74.66%), compared to fathers (71%) tended to have slightly more influence over the choice to stay and or return to area.

Table 5: Future in the Region and Parental Influence

	Very Weak	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong
My desire to live and work in the region in the future	16.09%	9.13%	30.43%	22.17%	22.17%
My mother's influence on my intention to stay or return to the region	9.95%	15.38%	45.25%	15.84%	13.57%
My father's influence on my intention to	12.15%	16.36%	39.72%	18.69%	13.08%

stay or return to the region					
Likelihood this region will have a good paying job for me later in life	15.22%	7.39%	29.13%	26.09%	22.17%

As reported by graduating high school students, mothers tend to have a higher level of involvement in their child's formal education than do fathers. 83.1% of respondents indicated their mothers had at least a moderate level of involvement in their formal education and 48.76% of those were involved in a high to very high degree. Mothers tended to be more involved with their communities as volunteers as well.

Table 6: Parental Involvement with Youth Education and Community

	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Mother's involvement in my formal education	2.89%	12.81%	38.54%	26.45%	22.31%
Mother's involvement in community/volunteerism	9.40%	16.67%	42.74%	20.51%	10.68%
Father's involvement in my formal education	7.56%	17.78%	32.89%	24.89%	16.89%
Father's involvement in community/volunteerism	9.59%	21.92%	33.79%	21.00%	13.70%

Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Northwest Ohio, like other rural areas in the United States, continues to struggle with retaining youth in their communities. Northwest Ohio Counties, as a region, are not competing as favorably as other more metropolitan areas of the state. When analyzing the impressions that young adults (age 18-19) have regarding Northwest Ohio, the results indicate an overall positive evaluation. Young adults report Northwest Ohio as a “safe place to live”, “a good place to raise a family”, that there is an “affordable cost of living” and that there are “quality schools.” The impressions of our communities are generally positive. As community stakeholders explore strategies to retain and recruit young adults within their communities, it would be suggested to focus on the aspects of what makes these communities a safe place to raise families. This may be of appeal to the millennial generation as they are in the stages of raising families, finding good schools, and settling into safe neighborhoods.

As we move beyond the pandemic, there is an opportunity to reframe work opportunities within small towns as more jobs emerge in the remote work environment. Remote work probably will have significant economic impacts on urban, suburban and rural communities long after the pandemic eases (Milder, 2020). While businesses and workers have been gradually shifting to remote work over time, the sudden shock of COVID-19 represents an unexpected and massive trial run for many workers and companies (Ozimek, 2020). The constraints of location for work are changing. Small town success, traditionally reserved for towns that were within the commuter belt of larger metropolitan areas, is broadening.

Those that have opportunities to work remotely can choose to live in small towns that offer affordability and safer living, while earning larger paychecks from bigger companies located elsewhere. These remote jobs

filter incomes back into small town economies. Small communities should focus on broadband infrastructure, to prevent making remote work difficult. This will become critical in rural areas if they want to compete for the remote work demographic.

As found in the survey results, it appears students feel their communities, schools and employers are doing a good job educating young people on what jobs are available to them in rural areas. However, it seems this is not the catalyst for keeping younger generations planted in their hometowns. Young adults did reveal that there were challenges in living in rural Northwest Ohio. Among the greatest challenges were the perceived lack of “entertainment and cultural activities.” Researchers suggest the next step in attracting young adults and retaining youth in communities is to promote the best of small-town life. There has been some movement in local communities to tackle the perceptions of “there is little to do” and “there are low cultural experiences.” In some cases, community leaders have established committees that lead efforts to build downtown open stages, green spaces for events, and focused revitalizing of main streets. The goal of these improvement committees are to promote their small towns through a variety of cultural events and experiences. These committees should work with individuals, businesses, and community service organizations to encourage and support cultural events that develop and grow the vitality of the area. They also should foster a culture of community through events that highlight local and regional music and arts, history, and natural surroundings. Small communities should be deliberate about creating intentional marketing campaigns targeting young people through social media and web-based outlets.

Historically, rural America has been increasingly hollowed out in

recent decades as young people migrate to urban areas. Today, small towns may be finding themselves on the verge of opportunity if they can capitalize on the changing landscape of remote work and highlighting what makes them unique in terms of affordability, safe places to live / raise families and having access to quality educational opportunities for children. The limited shopping opportunities, that in the past plagued small towns, may not be a mitigating factor as our consumer culture shifts to online purchasing as a means of getting products and goods. Amidst the changes in the way we work, shop and live can be an advantage to small town growth and retention. The quality-of-life factors that our upcoming generations are looking for can be found in small towns.

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Ph.D. Vesna Prodanovska-Poposka

Faculty of Biotechnical Sciences

St. Kliment Ohridski University

vesna.prodanovska@uklo.edu.mk

CLASSIFICATION OF ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES AND OVERVIEW OF THE LANGUAGE SKILLS IN ESP CONTEXT

Abstract

English is the official language in more than 50 countries around the globe, and is the most common second language worldwide. It is believed that English appears as the most learned and taught language in over 100 countries in the world and that almost half of the population in the world use English, either natively or as a foreign and second language. Since General English knowledge seem to be not satisfactory in helping professionals function well at work or at vocational educational settings, therefore the necessity for English for Specific Purposes or English as a Professional Language arose. English for Specific Purposes or ESP is a branch of applied linguistics in regard to second language acquisition and English as a foreign language, with particular emphasis on students' academic, professional, social and cultural needs. This paper presents the earliest classification of ESP and an overview of the basic linguistic skills such as speaking, reading, writing and listening in ESP context. In regard to the productive and receptive language competences speaking, writing, reading and listening in terms of ESP, speaking as a skill in ESP context indicates that being "orally skillful" is not considered to be crucial, due to the fact that it is believed that writing is to be prioritized because written proficiency was said to be crucial for a successful learner. Moreover, authentic texts are important for reading in ESP so the emphasis is on professional information that is in the text, and not within language structures. The vocabulary is an inevitable segment when it comes to reading, as reading is considered as an independent skill (acquiring professional vocabulary independently) and integrated skill. Listening in ESP and Listening in terms of General English are not equivalent, therefore ESP listening aims to develop active listeners who construct interpretations on the basis of input and ask for the needed information.

Keywords: *English for Specific Purposes, Language skills, ESP classification, English for Occupational Purposes*

The Beginnings of English for Specific Purposes

English as the official language in more than 50 countries around the globe, is the most common second language worldwide. It is believed that English appears as the most learned and taught language in over 100 countries in the world and that almost half of the population in the world use English, either natively or as a second or foreign language. Since the knowledge of General English is not satisfactory to help professionals function well at work or at vocational educational settings, therefore the necessity for English for Specific Purposes or English as a Professional Languages arose. English for Specific Purposes or ESP is a branch of applied linguistics focusing on Second Language Acquisition, i.e. English as a foreign language, with particular emphasis on students' academic, professional, social and cultural needs. The main goal of the ESP is to facilitate the communication and the learning process to those who tend to study in this language, or to improve communication in the workplace where its practical application is reflected. Moreover, one of the aims of ESP is the social and psychological integration of students into the target professional or academic community in which communication is fostered mainly in English.

There are several types of ESP classifications made by many authors. This article presents only four of them, focusing on the period between 1983 to 1998 such as David Carter's classification in 1983, The ELT Tree- by Hutchins & Waters in 1987 and the ESP classification by Dudley-Evans & St John, in 1998.

English became a generally accepted common language of technology and trade in the 1960s, so in this period a new generation of learners was created, aware about the exact reason, i.e. the purpose of language learning. The rapid development and unprecedented expansion of

science, technology and economics created the urge towards the necessity of functional language lessons aiming specific goals. So far the ESP has gone through several stages of development.

In 1983, David Carter proposed a classification that included types such as: English as a restricted language, English for Academic and Occupational Purposes and English with specific topics. The initial one refers to a discourse used during particular events such as in hospitality sector with strictly limited repertoires grammatical structures and terminology. According to Carter the next one- English for Academic and Occupation Purposes does not bear specific definition as it is believed that their usage is interchanged. As for the third type proposed by Carter - English with a specific topic - the emphasis shifts to the topic and this makes this type extremely relevant to the expected needs of students in the future. There are experts who believe that ESP is not a stand-alone type but more likely an important element of ESP curricula with a focus on situational language. It is this situational language that is set on the basis of studies of learners' requirements in relation to the authentic language used in the respective professional environment. ESP courses also have their own specifics. Among their main characteristics Carter (1983) points out the authentic materials, the specific purpose and the self-direction. The role of authentic materials is of utmost importance for the successful conduct of ESP and the achievement of the desired results in terms of the specific communicative competence of the learner. The specific purpose may require the reproduction of a public event preparing reports, taking notes, as well as to be asked to read and write. Self-direction is seen as that "...the point of including self-direction... is that ESP is concerned with turning learners into users" (Carter, 1983: p. 134). For this purpose, the learner needs to feel free in the decisions of the place, the content and the manner of what is to be

learned. Some authors believe that the main characteristics of the ESP are the time constraints and the homogeneity of the study groups. Homogeneity here does not mean the level of language proficiency, but belonging to the same profession, because the work is specific in terms of skills. In all cases, the specialized courses are to be flexible and in accordance with the learners' individual and group needs.

According to Hutchinson and Waters (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987 p. 6-7), the following three are the reasons for the ESP development:

- Demands of the Brave New World (technology and commerce development)
- revolution in linguistics (setting aside the usual approach i.e. grammar and switching to the usage of language in actual communicative situations) and
- arousing of the learner-centered methodology (approaching attitudes to learning, needs and interests).

Therefore, Hutchinson and Waters emphasized two important historical periods that had and still have a decisive impact on the development of such English.

The initial period was marked after the World War II and is characterized by unprecedented scientific and technological progress, which is accompanied by a remarkable economic boom worldwide. During this period, the economic power of the United States expanded which as a result positioned English to become the lingua franca – a language for international communication. The subsequent important epoch appears during the petroleum embargoes in the beginning of the 70ties of the last century which led to a reorientation of Western capital and scientific potential to countries rich in oil, whereas English is again marking this potential. Therefore, these circumstances challenge teachers to meet the emerging needs of learning English, "...English had previously decided its own destiny, it now became

subject to the wishes, needs and demands of people other than language teachers. English had become accountable to the scrutiny of the wider world and the traditional leisurely and purpose-free stroll through the landscape of the English language seemed no longer appropriate in the harsher realities of the market place (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p.7)''.

According to the ELT –Tree by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) ELT is divided into:

- a) English for Science and Technology (EST),
- b) English for Business and Economics (EBE), and
- c) English for Social Studies (ESS).

Each of these subject areas is further divided into two branches: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). An example of EOP for the EST branch is 'English for Technicians' whereas an example of EAP for the EST branch is 'English for Medical Studies'.

One branch of ESP is English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). As presented by Hutchinson & Waters on page 17 it is clearly demonstrated that they categorize the terms English for Occupational Purposes, English for Vocational Purposes and Vocational English as a Second Language as synonymous.

Hutchinson and Waters, just as David Carter claim that there is exact boundary between EAP and EOP arguing that there are people learning and working concurrently or apply what's learned in an academic setting as soon as they start work. However, one area in particular has influenced the ESP expansion, and is called English for Science and Technology, which Swales uses to illustrate the development of "the occupational language" in general..." With one or two exceptions...English for Science and Technology has always set and continues to set the trend in theoretical discussion, in ways of analyzing language, and in the variety of actual

teaching material.” (Swales 1985, p.x).

Dudley-Evans and St. Johns (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998) categorize ESP such as EAP and EOP. EAP is further divided into English for Science and Technology, English for Medical Purposes, English for Legal Purposes and English for Management, Finance and Economics. However, the second category or EOP is further divided into English for Professional Purposes (divided into English for Medical Purposes and English for Business Purposes) and English for Vocational Purposes (divided into Pre-Vocational Purposes and Vocational English).

Dudley-Evans and St John explain that the EOP "includes professional purposes in administration, medicine, law and business and professional purposes for non-professionals in work or pre-employment situations" (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 7). This division is supported by examples of English for General Business Purposes (EGBP) and English for Specific Business Purposes (ESBP). In the first case i.e. the EAP the learner is an experienced professional who shares experience in a language-learning environment, while in the second case students are either just starting out or preparing for a particular profession. Particularly, according to Kim (Kim, 2008, p. 2) EOP refers to the learning and training of adults whose goal is to improve their business potential through better communication in English, i.e. through the improvement of language skills needed for the job they do or intend to do.

ESP Teaching methodology

In terms of ESP teaching methodology many authors mostly describe or recommend techniques, but do not instruct teachers much on how to use them or what is the mutual function of these techniques, and what is the goal of the learners' specific communicative competence. Likewise, Hutchinson

& Waters (1987, p. 18) pointed out that "There is, in other words, no such thing as an ESP methodology, merely methodologies that have been applied in ESP classrooms, but could just as well have been used in the learning of any kind of English". **General competencies** that are expected to be acquired within an ESP courses are: - communication competence: use of language resources for understanding, organizing, structuring and adapting messages (discourse competence); - information literacy (information, media, technology, library): finding, evaluating and storing information within the course and beyond; - way of learning: developing co-responsibility, self-assessment and defining learning objectives and the use of different learning methods and techniques; - social competence: developing awareness of different cultures and understanding intercultural communication and the development of appropriate communication strategies; constructive communication: developing listening and empathy skills; -creativity, initiative and entrepreneurial spirit: developing critical thinking, taking the initiative, teamwork and group work. Additionally, **Specific competencies** expected to be acquired within ESP course are: developing the ability to use language skills (lexical, grammatical -morphology, syntax, semantic, phonological and spelling) to understand messages and different texts and produce new messages and texts; - developing awareness of the functioning of the language system in terms of vocabulary, typical grammatical structures, spelling, etc.;

- reading, understanding and analyzing the text; - writing various types of texts; - speaking and listening to convey information and understanding in different situations and for different purposes and critical thinking.

Language competences/ skills in ESP

Language skills have been set as productive and receptive.

Productive

are the speaking and the writing and the receptive are the listening and the reading. However, the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages** lists five skills such as in addition to reading, listening and writing, speaking is divided into speech interaction and speech production, with speech interaction involving conversation between at least two people and production of a person's speech on a topic i.e. monologue. Nevertheless, many researchers on the topic argue the limitation to the four skills, such as Paltridge & Starfield (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013, p. 31-33) on the ESP topic suggests that vocabulary is the fifth skill and Celce-Murcia adds up vocabulary and grammar along with the established four skills (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Speaking

Speaking is a key skill that can be used to assess language proficiency. Using a language in communication has proven to be the most difficult skill because it is a set of several language skills. Proper or successful communication the principal goal in second language acquisition today however, speaking as a skill is still neglected due to many reasons. When acquiring the speaking skill, the final goal goes beyond attaining a level of mother tongue i.e. as native speaker, but rather a reversible process i.e. to be understood among those who use it and understand them. In these modern times, high-tech software and apps are even “overused” among learners from every age nowadays, thus whether through technology or in real professional situations, speech interaction most often takes place between speakers whose English is not their mother tongue, and most often

serves as a lingua franca. Teaching speaking is the very first skill of the Foreign Language Acquisition and according to Brown (1994) this skill refers to acquiring accurate and fluent speaker. The first contemplates teaching methodology through language use and the latter refers to teaching by conveying message. On the other hand, when it comes to speaking as a skill in ESP context, being “orally skillful” is not considered to be crucial, due to the fact that it is believed that written proficiency was said to be crucial for a successful learner.

Reading

Number of authors pointed reading as significantly important ESP skill emphasizing the fact that learners find it the easiest, although this is not always the case in practice. According to Grabe & Stroller reading as a skill is actually a set of skills such as “...phonological awareness, word recognition, a large recognition vocabulary (i.e., words that readers can comprehend but not necessarily use on their own), main idea comprehension, knowledge of discourse structure, inferencing skills, and a range of strategies that support appropriate goals for reading (Grabe & Stroller, 2009, p. 441)”.

However, a proficient reader needs to be skillful in comprehension, cognitive analysis, synthesizing and predicting. The above-said is thoroughly confirmed by the elaboration of the matter by Schleppegrell & Bowman (Schleppegrell & Bowman, 1986, p. 18) explaining that these skills require intensive and extensive reading, intensively in regard to analyzing shorter paragraphs and improving vocabulary, grammar and comprehension, and extensively in terms of reading longer paragraphs faster, in order for learners to understand and focus on the main ideas. As for the teaching English for academic purposes, reading is necessary because students seek information, acquire comprehension and acknowledge new information, as

well as synthesize and re-examine information, all these attained through reading (Grabe & Stoller, 2001, p. 187). Authentic texts are important for reading in ESP so the emphasis is on professional information that is in the text, and not within language structures. Skills that are recommended and practiced in teaching reading in both- General English and ESP are skimming- getting a general idea of a text by quick reading and scanning- gaining detailed information through reading. The vocabulary is an inevitable segment when it comes to reading, as reading is considered as an independent skill (acquiring professional vocabulary independently) and integrated skill. Vocabulary in terms of ESP differs from the vocabulary of the General English and is quite diverse. However, solid vocabulary in terms of general proficiency in foreign language does not refer to solid vocabulary within ESP. Unlike the independent reading, reading as integrated skill is a link to or appears complementary to the other language skills. Reading is most often associated with speaking and in English for science and technology with writing.

Writing

Equivalent to the reading, throughout the last century, writing was observed as a linguistic skill, and with the development of cognitive psychology the focus was set on the learners' cognitive skills that include learning, memory, attention, language, reading, writing, reasoning, problem solving, etc (Grabe & Stoller, 2009, p. 440). Consecutively, writing was not acknowledged as a result but rather as a process that involves” ... comprising the cognitive processes of planning, generating, organizing, using long-term memory resources, producing text, monitoring, reviewing, rereading, evaluating, and editing”. (ibid). In addition to these processes, plenty of recent research focuses on reading and motivation, as important factors in

the writing process. Ken Hyland (2013, p. 95-113) considers that the concept of writing in the language of the profession differs from the concept of writing as a process. He believes that the task of a language teacher is not only to control linguistic errors or sort out style, but also to approach contextual variety as well as genres and practices. As for the ESP learners' specific needs, the writing genre has a crucial role in terms of writing. Hence, Hyland (Hyland, 2013) lists the most frequent written types of works in ESP, such as: Undergraduate essays, student dissertations and theses, research articles, scientific letters, book reviews, and peer review reports on journal submissions. Writing as a skill is an obligatory segment of every profession and it is essential to prepare future professionals for any situations in practice, so it is very important to be approached entirely with proper teaching and learning strategies for successful acquisition.

Listening

Listening has had a status of a neglected skill similarly as the other three language skills. Listening is to be considered as an important segment in daily life and in foreign language classroom as well. Besides being a basic skill inevitable to implement the language learning process, it is considered that half of the time that learners dedicate effectively in foreign language will be devoted to listening (Nunan, 1998). Rost (Rost, 2005) claims that listening is "...a complex cognitive process that allows a person to understand spoken language", pointing out that listening in mother tongue and in foreign language are very much different. Hedge (Hedge 2000) believes that listening develops automatically with the practice of grammar, vocabulary and speaking. Listening in ESP and Listening in terms of General English are not the equivalent, therefore, according to Brown (1994) ESP listening aims to develop active listeners who construct interpretations on the

basis of input and ask for the needed information. This construct involves cognitive processes (bearing accent and vocabulary skills) as well as skills to facilitate interaction and comprehension. Listening in terms of ESP also depends on language skillfulness in terms of Phonology, syntax and vocabulary; Contextualization, familiarity and actualities such as previously-gained knowledge or structures; and Language use – as discourse (Anderson, 1995). Listening is a means to acquire a foreign language therefore a means to acquire proficiency in ESP.

Conclusion

English for Specific Purposes or ESP is a branch of applied linguistics that deals with teaching and learning English as a Second or Foreign Language, with particular emphasis on students' academic, professional, social and cultural needs in terms of content and methods. Due to the influence of the changed social and economic conditions in the world, which contributed to the need to acquire general and specific knowledge of English, thus it became the most learned language initiating the introduction of ESP. Its scope is very broad, as it covers English for Academic Purposes, English for Occupational Purposes, English for Vocational Purposes i.e. Vocational English, English for Science and Technology, English for Medical Purposes, English for Legal Purposes and English for Management, Finance and Economics. In regard to the basic language competences speaking and writing, reading and listening in terms of ESP, speaking is the very first to come to when discussing General English, yet, when it comes to speaking as a skill in ESP context, being “orally skillful” is not considered to be crucial, due to the fact that it is believed that writing is to be prioritized because written genres were considered essential to professional success in the past. As for the specific needs of the ESP learner, the writing genre as a

crucial role in terms of writing covers undergraduate essays, student dissertations and theses, research articles, scientific letters, book reviews, and peer review reports on journal submissions. As for the reading, authentic texts are important for reading in ESP so the emphasis is on professional information that is in the text, and not within language structures. Skills that are recommended and practiced in teaching reading in both- General English and ESP are skimming- getting a general idea of a text by quick reading and scanning- gaining detailed information through reading. The vocabulary is an inevitable segment when it comes to reading, as reading is considered as an independent skill (acquiring professional vocabulary independently) and integrated skill. Listening in ESP and Listening in terms of General English are not equivalent, therefore, it is significant to point out that ESP listening aims to develop active listeners who construct interpretations on the basis of input and ask for the needed information. ESP listening is also dependent on knowledge about language, context and discourse. In conclusion, English has gained a status of *Lingua Franca* due to its important role in higher education, therefore English for Specific Purposes is a significant component in internationalization of the higher education and the educational process, which would lead to improved knowledge and proficiency of English in a broader sense.

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Jasmina Troshanska

Faculty of Pedagogy
University of Tetovo
jasmina.troshanska@unite.edu.mk

Teuta Ramadani Rasimi

Faculty of Pedagogy
University of Tetovo
teuta.rasimi@unite.edu.mk

Buniamin Memedi

Faculty of Pedagogy
University of Tetovo
buniamin.memedi@unite.edu.mk

BEHAVIOR IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Abstract

Introduction: Autism is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder that affects behavior. People with autism also face difficulties in social and emotional reciprocity and a reduced interest in sharing emotions or feelings. They often fail to respond to social interactions. A child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) may have challenging behaviors that educators, parents, and siblings find difficult. The aim of this article is to present results of the research using Motivation Assessment Scale (MAS) for detecting motivation of the behavior of children with autism in primary school.

Methodology: A total number of 35 participants were took part in this research, where 31 participants were children with autism and 4 of the participants were special educators. The research methods used for the study were descriptive and as instrument a questionnaire (MAS-test) was used to detect those situations in which an individual is likely to behave in certain ways, by selecting a behavior that is of particular interest.

Results: *Our results showed that our respondents have the following behaviors more often: screaming loud, clapping their hands, tendency to hide their head, constantly shaking their head, hitting (face, head, body), dragging, spiting at the educator, parent, adults, singing and vocal stereotypes, talking to themselves, crying, desire to go home and scratching. Some of the results show that children's screaming is motivated by the need of attention, while continuous behavior with hand clapping is motivated by sensory reasons, and avoidance usually is presented by hitting behavior (face, head, body).*

Conclusion: *According to our results we can conclude that challenging behavior is very often in children with autism that visit schools, mainstream or special. To prevent these behaviors, it is necessary to know the motive. Therefore, teachers and professionals need to have knowledge of applying simple tests to detect the behavior of children with autism to prevent it. Children with autism have their own strengths that can only arise when the challenging behavior is removed. These strengths are needed and should be used to successfully pass the educational process and be able to integrate into society.*

Keywords: *autism, behavior, MAS test.*

Introduction

Autism is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder and affects the behavior of a person that includes persistent deficits in communication and social interaction, sensory sensitivity, and differences in flexibility of thinking. People who have autism also face difficulties in social and emotional reciprocity, have a reduced interest in communicating their emotions and feelings in social interactions and understanding the relationships.

One of the biggest problems in raising and educating a child with autism are behavioral challenges. Parents and teachers often do not know how to deal with a child's behavior. Even if he/she has good cognitive abilities, if the child has challenging behavior, he/she will not have the opportunity to develop and learn.

Important factor in working with children with autism is dealing with behavioral challenges. To deal with these challenges, we need to know their cause, because every behavior has its own function. For this purpose, we conducted research, using a scale to assess the motives of the behavior.

The data were collected through direct observation of the children, then they were crosstabulated and analyzed by 4 areas: weather behavior is a result of child's desire to get something, child's desire to reject something, result of sensory differences or is related to material things. Our research contributes to autism awareness in parents and professionals in Republic of Macedonia.

Methodology of the research

The aim of this article is to present data that we came to while discovering motives of behavior in children with autism according to the MAS-test. We analyzed four categories of reinforcement:

1. Is the challenging behavior the result of the child wanting to get something?
2. Is the challenging behavior the result of the child wanting to reject something?
3. Is challenging behavior the result of sensory differences in a child with autism?
4. Is the challenging behavior related to material things?

The research methods used for the study are descriptive with percentages and crosstabulation.

As a technique we used Motivation Assessment Scale questionnaire (MAS-test) to discover those situations in which an individual is likely to behave in certain ways, selecting a behavior that is of our particular interest. The MAS-test is a sixteen-question questionnaire that assesses the functions or motivations of specific behaviors. The sixteen questions are organized into four categories of reinforcement: sensory, avoidance, attention, and tangible.

A total number of 35 subjects participated in this research, where 31 subjects are children with autism and 4 of the subjects are special educators. The research was developed in collaboration with special educators, in two settings, in the school "D.r. Zlatan Sremec" - in Skopje and in the association for autism "Ura Blu" - in Tetovo. The data for the children participating in this research are anonymous, while all ethical norms in the research are respected.

Results and discussion

Children with autism can have different types of challenging behaviors. From the following table (table 1) it can be seen that among our respondents the following behaviors appear more often: Screaming in high tones, clapping hands incessantly, tendency to hide the head, constantly shaking the head, hitting (face, head, bank), crawling, spitting on educator, parent, older adults, singing and vocal stereotyping, self-talk, crying, wanting to go home, and scratching. These behaviors are often seen and commented in other research also.

Table 1. Children's behaviors

Behaviors of children with autism	The number of children	%
Shouting in high tones	5	16,2
Clapping of hands incessantly	2	6,4
Tendency to hide the head	2	6,4
Constantly shaking his head	3	9,7
Hits (face, head, bank)	3	9,7
Dragging	2	6,4
Spit on the educator, the parent, the adults	2	6,4
Singing and vocal stereotypes	3	9,7
Talk to themselves	2	6,4
Crying	3	9,7
Desire to go home	2	6,4
Scratching	2	6,4
Total number of children	31	100%

In the table 2 we can see data related to the behavior “scream in high tones”. In this table, 3 of the subjects are part of the attention category which can be seen that the children's screaming is motivated by attention. When children scream, the teacher approaches, talks and plays with them. This is a motivating or rewarding situation for children, as high tone screaming

ensures that the teacher will interact with them. The behavior occurred when the child felt alone.

From this table we can notice that even in the category “avoidance” there is a subject. This child often screams in high tones to escape from the task offered by the educator. Also, one child has sensory issues.

Table 2. Behavior: Screaming in high tones

Behavior	Motivation of the behavior			
	Sensory	Escape	Attention	Tangible
Screaming in high tones	1	1	3	0
Total number of the children	5			

Some of the children have “clapping hands continuously” as challenging behavior. In our research, 2 of them had this behavior because of sensory issues. The behavior occurred when the children were left alone or when an unknown person entered the classroom. With this behavior, the children ensured closeness with the educator. “Tendency to hide the head” as a behavior we found in 2 children, one because of avoidance, when the child was ordered to perform a task, and the other because of seeking the attention of the teacher.

Table 3. Behavior: Constantly shaking of the head

Behavior	Motivation of the behavior			
	Sensory	Escape	Attention	Tangible
Constantly shaking of the head	0	1	1	1
Total number of the children	3			

Behavior “Constantly shaking the head” (table 3) was present in 3 children and each of them had different reason for it. One of the children was motivate by avoidance to avoid request, one of the children was motivated by seeking attention, and behavior occurs when his teacher was speaking with another child, and the third child was motivated by the material thing, when teacher took his toy out of his hands.

Table 4. Behavior: Hitting (face, head, body)

Behavior	Motivation of the behavior			
	Sensory	Escape	Attention	Tangible
Hitting (face, head, body)	0	2	0	1
Total number of the children	3			

In this table (table 4), the avoidance appears in 2 subjects, and the

hitting behavior (face, head, body) is motivated by the avoidance. The behavior started to happen immediately after the request to perform a new task, to escape from the task the children hit the face, head, or body.

Motivation of material nature appears only in one subject, where the behavior of hitting begins when he wants to reach his favorite sweet. Dragging, as challenging behavior appeared in two children, and this behavior was motivated by seeking attention of the teacher while spiting on the educator, parent or adults appeared in also 2 students motivated by avoidance of the tasks.

Table 5. Behavior: Singing and vocal stereotypes

Behavior	Motivation of the behavior			
	Escape	Attention	Tangible	Escape
Singing and vocal stereotypes	1	1	1	0
Total number of the children	3			

When analyzing the behavior “Singing and vocal stereotypes” one of the children was motivated by the sensory need, one of the children was motivated by avoidance of doing homework, and one child was seeking the attention. This child was starting with singing when teacher was leaving the room out. “Talking with themselves” as challenging behavior was present in 2 children; one was motivated by avoiding and with talking with himself he refused to listen to the educator. The other child was motivated by the material things. He started to be talking to himself to indirectly told the teacher that he wanted to play/take her favorite toy. “Crying” was motivated in tree children: in one by sensory need (too loud), then in one because of the

avoidance the task and in one child because of seeking the attention of the mother. “Desire to go home” and “Scratching” was manifested in two children.

During our research, we reviewed literature that provided explanations for behavior in children with autism. Namely, in addition to the behaviors that we have encountered, in the literature, the most common forms of behavior mentioned are outbursts of anger, biting, gnashing of teeth, self-injury, etc (Wing, 1979).

Sensory system dysfunction occurs in children and adults with autism, as well as all those with developmental disorders. Sometimes one or more senses are hypersensitive or not sensitive to stimuli at all. Such a sensory problem can be a significant cause of behaviors such as arm rocking, spinning, and shaking (The American Occupational Therapy Association, 2022).

Some of the researches say that it is difficult to define how a person's senses work, because each person experiences stimuli from the environment differently, and in relation to what their experiences are, so is their behavior (Stone, 2006).

According to the avoidance, a child with tactile defensiveness can react violently with "fight or flight" at the simplest touch. It is very active to the point of disturbing parents and teachers. The neurological basis, in fact, leads us to problems in learning, but the behavior that causes this condition significantly disrupts the learning process (Heller, 2002).

Research related to the senses says that children who seek sensory stimulation have a high threshold for irritability and an active strategy whereby they constantly seek active movement – pushing, pulling, bumping into furniture or people. These children like strong hugging, pressing and when they write, they press very hard on the paper. They rock in the chair

while sitting, hit the back of the bed while sitting, enjoy jumping on beds and like to hide under heavy blankets. Biting, hitting or aggressive behavior may occur in these children. They may exhibit self-stimulatory behaviors such as self-biting, scratching, or head-banging (Larkey, 2007).

Conclusion

From our research, we can conclude that in most children with autism, different types of challenging behavior can occur. Each of them has a different motivation. It is important when working with them, to discover the reasons for the behavior and to work on their extinction or their replacement (Heather, 2011). The work of improving behavior requires the introduction of various methodical procedures. Research around the world suggests physical exercises for children with autism. Exercises have a positive effect on the development of the vestibular and proprioceptive system, can reduce aggression and repetitive behavior in children and people with autism (Rosenthal-Malek & Mitchell , 1997), new skills are learned, and bilateral abilities are developed. Some studies show that simply placing children with autism in a group with typical peers, without other interventions and adjustments, can increase their social interactions (Lord & Hopkins , 1986) and decrease repetitive behavior (McGee, Paradis, & Feldman, 1993), but other studies have not shown these effects (Strain, 1983). Thus, further research is needed to see if simply placing children with autism in a group with typical peers is effective (Autism Speaks, 2022). Behavior of children with autism is very important to be subject in the future research, because today, in our country, because of process of inclusion, a lot of children are visiting mainstream schools. Most of the teachers have problems with these children, who usually have challenging behavior.

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Prof.as.dr. Florinda TARUSHA

University of Elbasan
florinda.tarusha@uniel.edu.al

Prof.as.dr. Ema KRISTO

University of Tirana
Ema.kristo@unitir.edu.al

NEW APPROACHES TO EVALUATING TEACHER PERFORMANCE

Abstract

In recent years, in the framework of educational reform, the reform of the teaching profession has been undertaken. Education reform has focused on four areas: legal, administrative, curricular, teaching technology and human resources. Human resource reform aims to improve the quality of education sector staff, in particular improving the quality of teachers. The competency-based approach developed within the professional training of teachers has led to a significant modification of the assessment system.

Education continues to face issues such as evaluation of teacher performance. The teacher's performance is regulated by a set of legal documents and administrative instructions. In this context, the evaluation of teachers' performance will be discussed in the light of new modalities, which will allow us in this paper to compare and evaluate the complexity of this process.

The paper undertakes to answer the research question: New approaches to assessment place teachers in active and professional roles. Is this really happening?

Methodology used in the realization of this paper:

- *reviews of published documents and research on the situation of teacher performance evaluation.*
- *Interviews and surveys with teachers, principals and education specialists.*
- *Analysis of professional development and teacher evaluation models in the world in order to identify the most successful models that can be used or adapted in Albania.*

Objectives of the research paper:

- *Analyze teacher evaluation practices from a comparative perspective.*

- *Describe teacher performance evaluation practices, the extent to which these practices promote this process.*
- *Identify the strengths and weaknesses of current practices for evaluating teacher performance as well as the effect of these practices.*

Results

One of the main findings of the paper is that evaluating teacher performance should take into consideration the fact that teacher effectiveness and developmental needs may change over the years, and this view is conveyed to school leaders that they should be responsible for helping their teachers to grow professionally. School leaders cultivate a performance-focused culture, and this is achieved through the constant observation of teachers. Another finding of the paper is that in teacher evaluations the main emphasis should be placed on improving the quality of teaching, precisely on those evaluation methods that have the potential to improve the quality of teaching.

The paper brings recommendations to influence the improvement of the teacher performance evaluation system based on the best experiences.

Keywords: *performance evaluation, teaching quality, evaluation methods*

I. Introduction

Teacher performance evaluation plays a key role in educational reforms. In the past, performance evaluation has been more focused on how tasks are accomplished, thus neglecting contextual performance.

From the perspective of information gathering, there are three dominant types of teacher evaluation, they are:

- Assessment of the teacher's competence;
- Evaluation of the teacher's performance;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the teacher. (Wulf, 2020)

Assessment of the teacher's competence - used to assess the knowledge that the teacher possesses. This is usually measured by a written test. The results of this assessment serve for teacher licensing or certification purposes. It is usually used to evaluate the results of teacher competency training.

Teacher performance evaluation - used to evaluate the teacher's performance, i.e. his behavior, and to collect information about the quality of the teacher's work. This is a subjective assessment, which can be done by supervisors or superiors, colleagues or students.

Evaluation of teacher effectiveness - serves to evaluate the effect of teaching on students or to evaluate the influence of the teacher on the progress of students towards important educational goals

These three evaluations are closely related to each other. These are important elements in teaching and learning processes. They are the essential currency all schools have to improve teachers and performance as well as the students' learning, but schools often spend this currency unwisely. Too often, evaluations are a source of tension and conflict especially when teachers' performance is evaluated only in terms of

students' achievements and scores, with ignorance to the fact that teachers' evaluation is a mean of teachers' professional development towards better learning environment and thus better student achievement.

The traditional evaluation is based on limited or competing conceptions of teaching, and is often characterized by inaccuracy, lack of support and insufficient training. Teacher evaluation has frequently been used to weed out the poorest performing teachers rather than to hold all teachers accountable or to improve the performance of all teachers.

Because of these traditional limits on scope and efficacy, teacher evaluation has had a limited impact on teacher performance and thus on the learning process. Nowadays all teachers wish for an evaluation process that focuses on improvement, instead of just uncovering shortcomings and weaknesses. The evaluation process should be directly tied to both the individual goals of teachers and the school's goals.

Assessment of teachers' performance in the past and how it should be today

Performance management is the best way to hold teaching staff accountable for the performance of tasks and the results achieved. Its purpose is the all-round formation of students, through the improvement of teachers' professional competences, dedication to duty, building self-confidence and self-respect.

In the past	Nowadays
The teaching staff was evaluated for their achievements/failures based on 2-3 data (mainly average grade,	The competences and achievements of the teaching staff are evaluated despite the

lesson observations) and only aims to evaluate the work	teacher's job description and plan, based on his professional standards . This assessment is intended to help every teacher improve.
Teacher evaluation does not had a certain philosophy, it was simply a conclusion of several indicators.	Performance evaluation should be based on the philosophy designed for this purpose. It is an opportunity, for both parties, to talk, to decide for everyone what needs to be done, to face challenges and obstacles, to give the necessary help and encouragement, for a better performance.
Teaching staff are not encouraged to self-evaluate during the school year, they only wait for the end of the year to receive the principal's evaluation.	All staff should have their own performance expectations, the fulfilment of which can be progressively assessed in the middle or at the end of the school year. (Self-esteem)
Assessments in most cases are carried out and signed only by the principal and the teacher is simply informed about it at the end of the school year.	Assessments must be documented and signed by both parties (teacher and principal)

Since there is no clear description of the teacher's job, job evaluation is more of a manager's perception and a general description, rather than based on specific issues of the teacher's job or based on standards.	Assessments must be carried out on the basis of the performance agreement agreed and signed by the principal and the teacher (teacher's job description).
When improvement is necessary, the teacher is given disciplinary measures, and when failures are repeated, the teacher is referred for termination of employment.	When improvement is needed, staff should be offered support and guidance, while repeated failures to meet targets should be taken seriously.
Performance evaluation is based on the head's perceptions, on the basis of teachers' or parents' opinions, and the only data possessed by the head (classroom observation, documentation observation) are not (in most cases) taken into consideration in the evaluation yearly.	Teacher performance evaluation must be done according to the teacher's standards, based on data collected and documented throughout the year, and not based on the principal's perceptions.
The performance evaluation may not be done every year, but only when superiors (in some cases managers) request it.	Teacher performance evaluation is an obligation for the principal and is done every school year.

Based on the comparative table above, that's why there is a need to

have another look to the current teacher evaluation systems, tools and methods.

The purpose of this study was to find new tools and methods to evaluate teachers' performance rather than the traditional tools and methods used recently and may not be satisfy and fair to the teachers' efforts in their contribution and teaching. Because of the traditional limits in Albania teacher evaluation has had a limited impact on teacher performance and thus on the learning process.

- The existing evaluation procedures that focus on complying with regimented sets of behaviors do not encourage teachers' involvement in their own self-development or in the development of collaborative school cultures. Therefore, all teachers wish for an evaluation process that focuses on improvement, instead of just uncovering shortcomings and weaknesses. The evaluation process should be directly tied to both the individual goals of teachers and the school's goals.
- There is a must to create new evaluation tools and methods that help teachers address the angles of their weakness in the educational practices and performance so as to help in improving and developing their professional skills in order to be able to meet the educational goals, school goals and teachers' own goals of improving themselves.

II. Review of the Literature

A review of the literature was done on effective teacher evaluation practices, models used to assess teacher practices, and teachers' perceptions of evaluation systems. A review of literature was also done on why teacher perceptions of evaluation programs matter and should be considered. Based on the literature, the researcher derived the following definition of teacher evaluation: a function of an educational organization assumed as a part of teacher supervision, designed to make judgments concerning teacher performance and competence for the purposes of personnel tenure and continued employment decisions (Darling, 1983). The process as a whole can lead to improvements in teacher performance.

Scriven (1967), one of the first scholars to explore the purpose of teacher evaluation, defined it as a "methodological activity which is essentially similar whether we are trying to evaluate coffee machines or teaching machines, plans for a house or plans for a curriculum". Scriven (1967) argued that the specific roles and activities of evaluation can become a barrier to accomplishing the goal of evaluation if that goal is not clearly articulated and communicated. Wise et al. (1984) postulated four basic purposes of teacher evaluation and framed them in a matrix. One side was labelled with level, and the other side was labelled with purpose. The purposes were based on whether the evaluation was assessing for improvement or accountability (purpose) and whether the results would be applied to the individual or the organization (level). Wise et al. (1985) noted that individual and collective teacher improvement was the primary goal, and the processes and methods determined the purpose of the evaluation system. Conceptualizations developed since the 1990s simplify the purposes of teacher evaluation to two main purposes: hold teachers accountable by measuring teacher performance to make personnel decisions and promote

teacher growth and support teacher development (Beerens, 2000; Daley & Kim, 2010; Danielson, 2012; Duke, 1990; Gordon, 2006; Hallinger et al., 2014; Looney, 2011; Marzano, 2012; Marzano & Toth, 2013; Stronge, 2006; Young et al., 2015). While the terminology used to describe each purpose may differ from author to author the concepts are consistent (Wulf, 2020).

III. Methodology

The main questions of this study are:

1. What are the current methods used in evaluating teachers' performance in Albania?
2. How can teachers help in creating new methods and tools of evaluation with regards to some chosen areas for improving?
3. How is teacher evaluation linked to teachers' professional development?

Methodology used in the realization of this paper based on Interviews and surveys with teachers, principals and education specialists. The two main methods used of data collection are: Focus Groups and Interviews, interviews are conducted in the written form, and the answers to the questions are presented in this study, the focus group conducted with the principals, supervisors and teachers. 10 supervisors, 10 principals and 40 teachers participate in this study. The limitations of his study are:

- 1- The study is restricted to Albanian schools during the academic year 2020/2021. (Secondary school)
- 2- The study is restricted to Albanian schools' principals, supervisors and teachers.

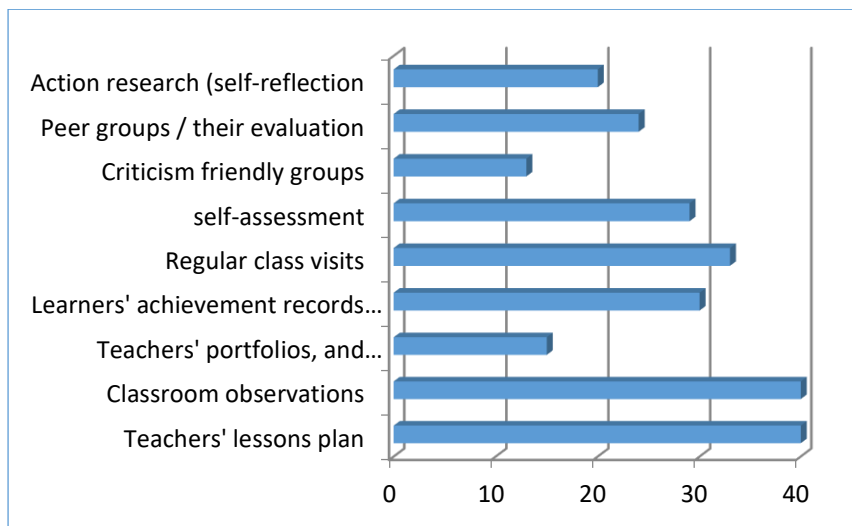
Interview results with the teachers

- Current Evaluation Methods

All of the participant teachers gave the same tools that are the base of

the evaluating system of teachers in Albanian schools. Teachers are being evaluated based on several criteria that depend on the following:

- ♦ Teachers' lessons plan.
- ♦ Classroom observations.
- ♦ Teachers' portfolios, and students' work samples.
- ♦ Learners' achievement records and data.
- ♦ Regular class visits
- ♦ self-assessment
- ♦ Criticism friendly groups
- ♦ Peer groups / their evaluation
- ♦ Action research (self-reflection)



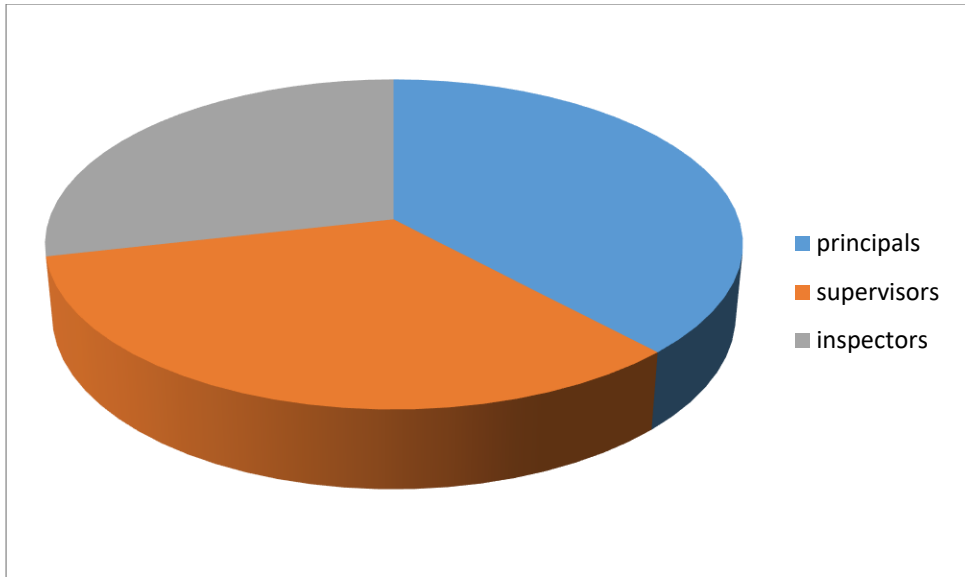
As we see the most commonly used tools for evaluating teachers are

lesson plans and classroom observation. Lessons' plans are an important aspect of teaching and learning as it is attached to student learning. That is because students' learning is affected by the level of planning that links the learning objectives to the teaching activities. Classroom observations do serve to capture a good background and collect some information about teacher's instructional practices in the classroom, and can be used to track the teacher's growth and level of improvement, and also can identify the professional development areas needed for each teacher.

- Evaluators

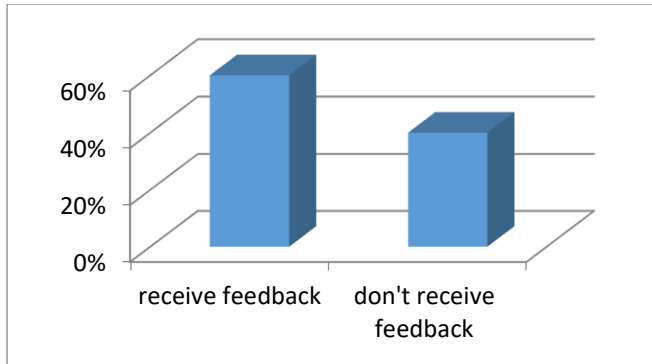
The parties involved in the process of improving teachers' performance are: (a) Teachers. – everyone should have evidence of teaching, through portfolio and lesson monitoring, and a self-evaluation report. (b) principals – who must analyse the self-assessment report and interview the teachers before he/she completes the report form. According to the need, the school director can be accompanied by the related educational directorate with his/her representative, or be replaced by one of them. (c) The Directorate of Education - makes the decision on the level of performance according to the evaluation report. This can be done through a special commission. (d) Supervisors – it must be that the realization process is realized successfully.

Teachers were asked about who are the best ones to evaluate teachers' performance from their point of view. The most common evaluators are the principals, supervisors and inspectors from the directorate of education as the teachers answered. Teachers mentioned that the principal engaged in evaluating teacher's performance must have a background or knowledge of the curriculum or the subject being taught. The evaluator who have good knowledge of the subject, its curriculum and content, can give professional advice and comments to improve the performance.



- Frequencies of Evaluation

All teachers said that they are evaluated once every year. New teachers have been evaluated annually too. These teacher evaluations should serve as important tools for rewarding good teachers, helping average teachers improve and holding weak teachers accountable for poor performance. All the teachers agreed that the number of times the teacher is evaluated is a chance for a better evaluation and a good chance to track the progress and improvement in teachers' performance in several areas of teaching. It is important that teachers are observed and receive feedback early in the school year. 60% of the teachers interviewed stated that they receive feedback from the evaluation that has been done, while 40% of them emphasized the fact that they do not receive any feedback from the evaluators.



- Teacher's Evaluation and Professional Development

Most of the teachers ensured that the main target and goal of the teacher evaluation is to improve teachers' teaching performance and to identify the problems and weaknesses of the teacher as well as to offer him the appropriate advice and training. Some of the evaluators think that evaluating teacher is just to look for the wrong practices of teachers, addressing them and write them in the report. That is the wrong way.

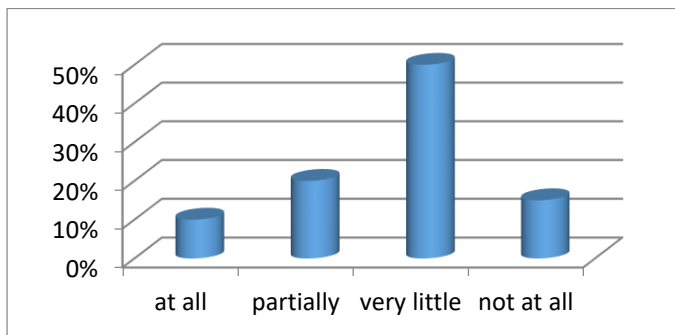
Content of professional development should focus on concrete tasks of teaching rather than abstract discussions of teaching, on specific pedagogical skills, and on how to teach specific kinds of content to learners. Processes of professional development should be designed to according to how teachers learn. Particularly effective processes include modeling, constructing opportunities for practice, and reflection on new practices. Continuous dialog in professional community and examination of teaching practice and student performance can also be effective in developing and enacting more effective practices. 3. Professional development is most effective if it is a coherent part of a larger school improvement effort. Curriculum, student assessments, standards, and teacher professional development should be linked into a coherent system of learning and improvement. These professional community contexts exist both within the school and beyond it.

Another complain from the teachers is that the results of the evaluations are not really used to further teacher development. For many teachers, the evaluation process can frustrate them and disappoint them.

The supervisor is responsible for providing adequate support to the teachers for the development of their learning requirements and ensuring that appropriate training opportunities are made available to acquire the necessary competencies. Through a regular appraisal process the educational supervisor should also ensure that the teacher follows a program which meets the educational objectives.

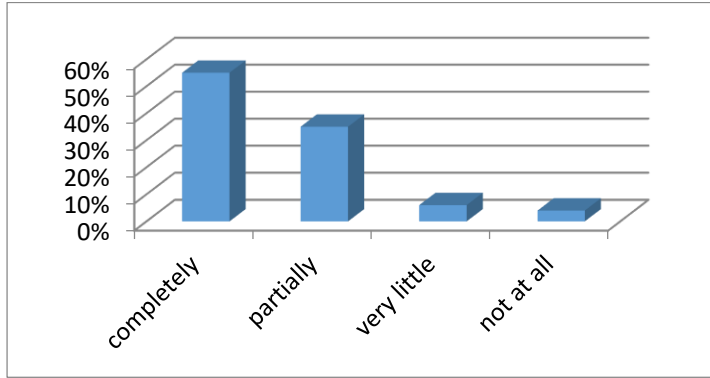
- Subjectivity during the performance evaluation process

Question: How much do you think there is subjectivity (non-real assessment) during the evaluation of performance process? From the data of the graph, we find that teachers have different perceptions. As can be seen from the results, 10% think that there is subjectivity during the evaluation process, 25% partially, 50% very little, 15% not at all.

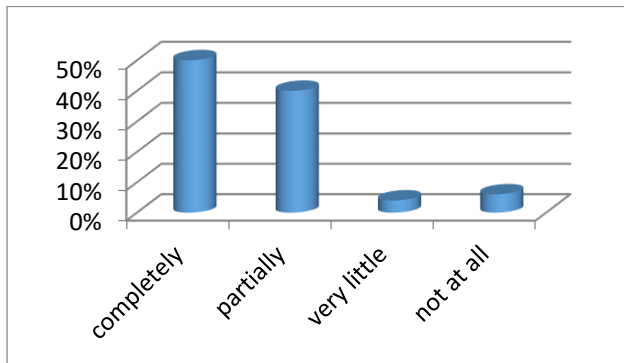


Question: How much does evaluation affect your dedication to your profession and work with students? The data of graph show how much the assessment affects the teachers' commitment to their profession and work

with students, from the teachers' statements, 55% think it affects completely, 35% partially, 6% very little, 4 not at all.

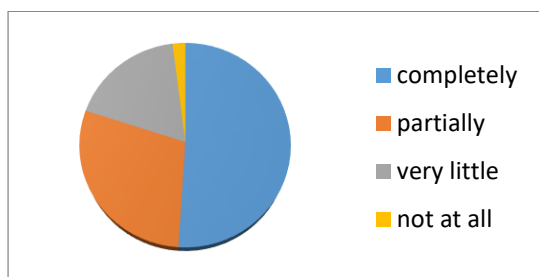


To the question of how much the evaluation affects taking initiatives for professional development and advancement, 50% of the teachers answered "completely", 40% partially, 4% very little, 6% I am not sure. From the results, we can say that the majority of teachers think that evaluation affects taking initiatives for professional development and advancement.

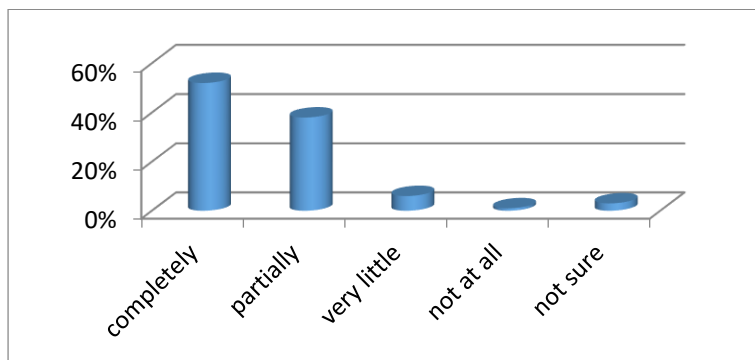


The question of how much the assessment affects the use of new

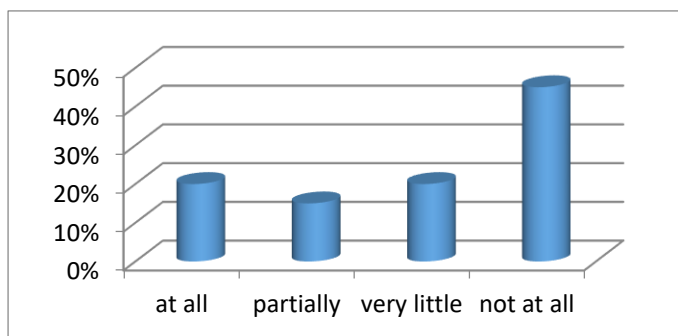
strategies in teaching? In the next question, regarding how much the assessment affects the use of new strategies in teaching, we have the following responses from the teachers: 51% of the teachers affirm "completely", 29% partially, 18% very little and 2% not at all. It is clearly observed that the majority of teachers declare that evaluation affects the use of new strategies in teaching.



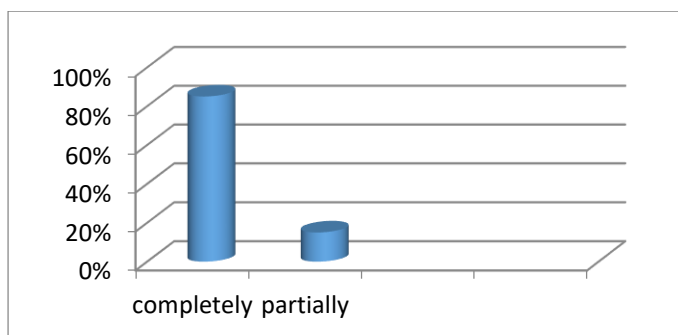
To the question how much do you think it is necessary for a professional teacher to participate in the assessment together with the monitor (principal or inspector), 52% answered completely it is necessary, 38% partially, 6% very little, 1% not at all and 3% I'm not sure. As a conclusion, it turns out that during the evaluation process it is necessary to participate together with the monitor (principal or inspector) a professional teacher too.



Question: Have you participated in professional development activities in the last 2 years? Regarding to this question, from the chart we have this data: 20% of teachers declare fully, 15% partially, 20% very little and 45% not at all.

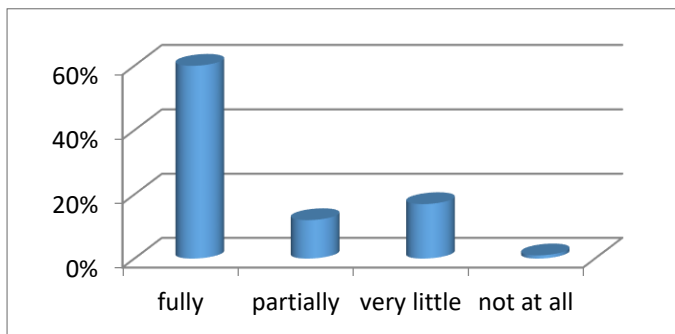


Question: How much do you rate your performance and do you make efforts to improve the level of teaching and educational work through appropriate professional development? Based on the results presented, over 85% of teachers declare "completely" and 15% partially. From the statements of the teachers and the results of the research, we understand that they value their performance and make efforts to improve the level of teaching and educational work, through appropriate professional development.

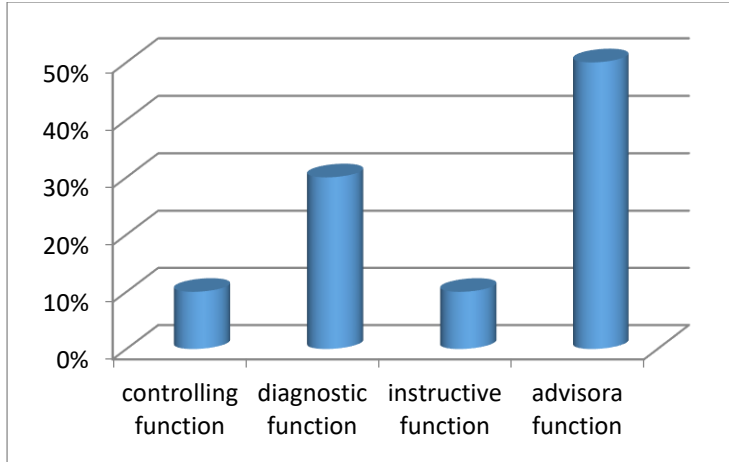


The question. Do you self-assess your professional performance?

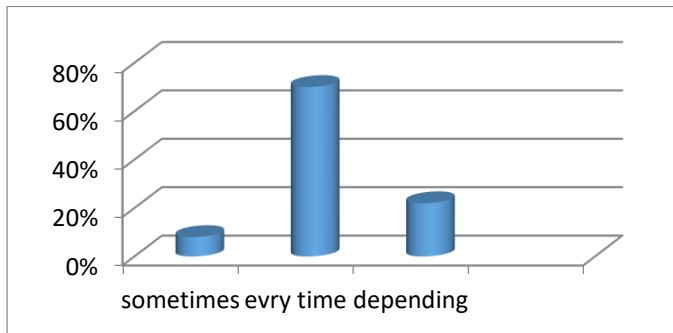
From the data of chart, we understand that teachers do self-evaluation of professional performance, where 60% fully declare that they do self-evaluation, 12% partially, 17% very little and 1% not at all. As a conclusion, from the data analysis, we can understand that the majority of teachers do self-evaluation of their professional performance, while the remaining percentage do not do self-evaluation at all.



Question: In your opinion, which of these functions are most important during the monitoring/evaluation process? Asked about the issue, in your opinion, which of these functions are the most important during the monitoring/evaluation process, as can be seen from the results in the graph, more than 10% of the respondents affirm that during the evaluation process the most important function is "controlling function", 30% diagnostic function, 10% instructive function and 50% advisory function.



The question. Are teachers notified of the time of monitoring and evaluation in lessons? Regarding this question, we have the following answers: 8% say "sometimes", 70% every time and 22% depending on the purpose.



Conclusions

Some of the main findings of the study are:

The quality of evaluation is the factor that is perceived as having considerable weight and among the most important factors is the increase in the performance of teachers, in their professional development, as well as in the improvement of the quality of teaching. This finding has been accepted

by all evaluation actors including teachers, school principals and educational inspection officials.

The level of monitoring and evaluation is related to the process, purpose, planning, classroom observations as well as the feedback that teachers receive as a result of the evaluation.

According to the attitude of the teachers, the findings show that over 70% of the teachers have partial knowledge on the evaluation of the teacher's performance. As can be seen from the data, teachers with longer experience in education and with a qualification level with faculties have more knowledge about evaluation of performance than those with less experience in education. So, longer experience in education and higher level in education are factors that influence teachers to have more knowledge on teacher performance evaluation.

Little knowledge of teachers about standards, criteria, areas and all aspects related to evaluation and performance, not only affect the lower evaluation of the external evaluation, but above all negatively affect the professional development of teachers, improvements expected in the implementation of the curricula and the fulfillment of the school's objectives.

Based on the statements of the teachers, the findings of the study show that some school principals do not have the proper skills to make an objective evaluation, due to the fact that there is no knowledge of the standards, criteria and methods of how performance evaluation is done. The lack of knowledge on the part of directors consequently creates dissatisfaction and unnecessary tensions.

Based on teachers' attitudes regarding the impact of feedback on their work, the findings show that over 79.43% of teachers think that feedback affects their work. The findings of the study show that teachers do not always receive feedback from the school principal or another person. The data also

show that teachers and inspectors value feedback as very important for the development of teachers.

The evaluation process depends entirely on quality, so the overall quality of the teacher evaluation process is considered a weighty factor in raising the performance of teachers, in their professional development, as well as in improving the quality of teaching. The teacher evaluation process in most of Albania schools still follow the traditional teacher evaluation methods with no creativity, or initiatives by the evaluators to improve it to be aligned with the new trends and concepts of education reforms and improvements. It is obvious that the evaluation system being adapted in Albania schools is not encouraging and not linking teacher evaluation process to teachers' professional development. Not to mention the need to more efforts from the educational authority to organize and make these professional development opportunities available for teachers. As well as giving more authority to the principals, supervisors, evaluators and teachers to come up with a well-planned evaluation process that takes into consideration the teachers' professional development needs. The participants agree that the following describe the recent evaluation system:

- Evaluations done only once or at best circumstances twice a year for each teacher.
- The most common evaluation method adapted in evaluating teachers in Albania schools is the classroom observation
- Teachers are evaluated in terms of teaching styles, the ability to deliver the content of the lesson, lessons' plans, and classroom management skills.
- Most of the evaluators' reports are not valid and not reliable from the point of view of teachers, and that's because of some factors like the evaluation frequencies, evaluators' background of the

subject and the techniques of teaching it, short evaluation time, and not giving the teachers the chance to or the opportunity to give their input regarding the evaluation methods and tools, to identify what is the best method and tool to be used as an evaluation tool so the results would be more reliable and valid.

This leads us to the fact of the need to come up or design new evaluation system with new policies that serve the real purpose of the process of teacher evaluation, and thus serves teachers, students and schools at the same time.

The following recommendations can help policymakers:

- Define the standards of qualified teachers. To define the academic standards for what a qualified teacher needs to have in terms of qualifications, skills and knowledge to be considered as a qualified teacher.
- The evaluation system should focus mainly on improving teaching practice. This means that evaluation should be view easing informational tool to help evaluators and principals to identify teachers who need additional or specialized assistance and to help individual teachers improve their instructional practices.
- Evaluators should be trained in order to conduct more accurate and effective evaluation of teachers.
- Teachers and principals should have a good understanding to the evaluation system and regulations before implementing it. This will guarantee confidence and evaluation system's long- term sustainability.
- Teacher evaluation should be linked to teacher professional development. Teachers should receive professional development

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KOLEGJI UNIVERSITAR

BEDER

bjes.beder.edu.al

Address:

"Jordan Misja" St. Tirana - Albania

Contact: e-mail: bjes@beder.edu.al

web: www.bjes.beder.edu.al