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OD SELEKCIJE DO PRAKSE

PROMOTING TEACHER EDUCATION
FROM INTAKE SYSTEM TO TEACHING PRACTICE



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OD SELEKCIJE DO PRAKSE

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Sadržaj / Contents

Uvodna reč.....	V
Preface.....	VII

MENTORSKI RAD SA STUDENTIMA NA PROFESIONALNOJ PRAKSI MENTORHIP IN STUDENT TEACHING PRACTICE

Vera Rajović, Lidija Radulović. Mentorstvo u svetlu refleksivne prakse: perspektiva insajdera.....	11
Lea Kozel. Research on the contents and organisational aspects of teaching practice in which students of the Faculty of Education Koper participated.....	17
Maria Tzani, Christos Kechagias. The guide and the mentor.....	35
Sonja Rutar. Mentors as partners in teacher education process.....	47
Danijela Petrović. Tradicionalni i savremeni pogled na mentorstvo u sferi obrazovanja budućih nastavnika	57
Olivera Gajić. Izazovi profesionalnog obrazovanja nastavnika u evropskoj različitosti	69
Milica Andevski. Obrazovanje učitelja – ili kakvog učitelja zaista želimo?	77
Emina Kopas-Vukašinović. Profesionalna praksa budućih učitelja: zahtevi i dileme	85
Gordana Budimir-Ninković. Mentorski rad u vežbaonicama za osposobljavanje budućih učitelja.....	95
Spomenka Budić. Praktično-pedagoško osposobljavanje studenata za buduće delovanje u praksi.....	103
Dušan Ristanović, Veljko Bandur. Mentorstvo u sistemu profesionalne prakse inicijalnog obrazovanja učitelja.....	115
Stipan Jukić. Uloga mentora u praktičnom osposobljavanju studenata	135
Lütfiye Cengizhan. Teacher's personal development methods	145
Mimoza Çarka, Merita Isaraj. Mentorship in students' teaching practice at Gjirokastra University.....	151
Sinem Dogruer. The importance and role of school experience and teaching practice courses in faculties of education.....	161
Vera Savić. Towards successful mentoring in primary english language teaching in Serbia	167

Verica Milutinović. Faktori upotrebe IKT u obrazovanju: mentori i budući učitelji.....	175
Irena Golubović-Ilić, Olivera Cekić-Jovanović. Stavovi studenata Pedagoškog fakulteta o svojoj praktičnoj osposobljenosti za realizaciju nastave <i>Sveta oko nas/Prirode i društva</i>	189
Olivera Kamenarac, Lucija Andre. Savremeni pristupi realizaciji profesionalne prakse kroz mentorski rad sa studentima	209
Biljana Stojanović. Povezivanje teorije i prakse u pripremi budućih vaspitača.....	219
Buba Stojanović, Ljiljana Mitić. Metodička praksa na učiteljskim fakultetima – trenutno i moguće	233
Zerrin Balkaç. Applications, methods and reforms in teacher training during Turkish Republic	243

SELEKCIJA STUDENATA ZA NASTAVNIČKU PROFESIJU

INTAKE SYSTEM IN TEACHER EDUCATION FACULTIES

Sunčica Macura-Milovanović, Jelena Starčević. Etička osetljivost kao kriterijum selekcije kandidata za pedagoške fakultete	255
Radmila Milovanović. Selekcija kandidata za pedagoške fakultete kao mera zaštite mentalnog zdravlja dece	271
Vesna Trifunović, Margit Savović. Problem selekcije nastavničkog kadra	285
Lidija Zlatić. Komunikaciona kompetentnost kao kriterijum selekcije za nastavničku oblast, prednosti i ograničenja.....	297
Muzaffer Adak. Attitudes of prospective teachers attending Department of primary school education towards teaching profession	315
Živorad Marković, Aleksandar Ignjatović. Procena fizičkih sposobnosti kao kriterijum selekcije studenata pedagoških i učiteljskih fakulteta	323
Ilijana Čutura, Jelena Maksimović, Marina Janjić. Test osnovne pismenosti u selekciji studenata – budućih učitelja.....	337
Alkan Bayraktar. The importance of career guidance and consultancy on education	349



**MENTORSKI RAD SA STUDENTIMA
NA PROFESIONALNOJ PRAKSI**

**MENTORHIP
IN STUDENT TEACHING PRACTICE**



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THE GUIDE AND THE MENTOR

Summary: The paper studies contemporary educational systems which evangelize that they offer creativity, ability in decision making and self awareness. However, the teacher must reevaluate his or her role, in order to continue being a valuable and irreplaceable agent of the humanizing process. The mentor inspires, guides, and advises, being an open minded person himself, he has to have a special inclination in detailed analysis and be able to evaluate the results. By using his personal qualities, the teacher becomes the mentor which is in position to guide the pupil towards his goals.

Key words: educational systems, guide, mentor, humanizing process, All-day School

We live in a period that one of its main characteristics is the abundance of cognitive information; nevertheless the majority of the population distances its self from original knowledge. We have institutions that supposedly help the individual to select successfully a professional orientation, but the number of people that are happy with what they are doing, decreases. The people that feel self fulfillment and are in direct contact with their achievement, while at the same time derive inner balance and existential appeasement from their actions, are even less.

Our educational systems evangelize that they offer creativity, ability in decision making and self awareness. Every day an increasing number of people – especially young people- feel that real creativity is an opportunity that they will encounter rarely. The school is the main humanizing institution and it must evolve to deal with other sources of education such as the mass media, video games, the family etc. The teacher must reevaluate his or her role, in order to continue being a valuable and irreplaceable agent of the humanizing process.

The mentor inspires, guides, and advises, being an open minded person himself, he has to have a special inclination in detailed analysis and be able to

evaluate the results. These elements spring from his or her¹ unending love for youth and their development. By using his personal qualities such as: personal integrity, highly developed communication skills, self confidence, optimism, intimacy, awareness, deep thought, intelligence, the teacher through premeditated conjunctions of the above qualities, becomes *the mentor which is in position to guide the pupil towards his goals*.

In the school of the future, the teacher has to evolve to an *original mentor*. In order to be suitable for this role, the teacher should not be selected only on the basis of specific knowledge that he acquires, the main criteria for his appointment, should be his deep affection for the developing child, his unquestionable trust to the humanizing effect of knowledge and to the deep understanding of the results that are associated with this process, that offers existential liberation of the self and fulfillment of the enlightened consciousness. This educator is obliged to:

- a) Function like an advisor of the pupils, encourage and guide their efforts, the first step of the pupils is to learn “how to learn” and how to develop their inclinations and talents.
- b) Encourage and inspire the efforts of young children, that the teacher initiates and introduce them to knowledge, to the satisfaction of discovery and the enjoyment of every achievement, those elements become an on-going motivation for them.

While the teacher supervises or gives guidelines to the pupils, he observes this dynamic process and he perceives cognitive information, which is used constantly and direct the actions of the teacher, especially in the case of problem solving. This process precedes the identification in a rightful and logical manner of the problem setting. Therefore the teacher becomes a guide that encourages the effort for the conquest of knowledge.

In the new reality, the teacher *stops being the frontier of his pupil*, he does not belong on an opposing side of the pupils. He moves beside him and assumes a different and more substantial role:

- He is an initiator that from early stages, will initiate the children to the beauty and importance of knowledge. He will also inspire the solid force and ability of self-definition and *self-awareness* that this knowledge provides.
- He is the one that guides, encourages, facilitates and co-ordinates their efforts for knowledge.

¹ Because of the inability of the English language to have one personal or possessive pronoun in the third person that denotes both sexes, we are going to use only the masculine pronouns, for reasons of text fluency and refer to both sexes, masculine and feminine.

- Finally he is the individual that assists the children through self- assessment and assessment by others, leads them gradually in levels of *self-awareness*² and to the internalization of an original humanizing culture.

New roles for teachers

The role of the teacher is changing radically in the All-Day School. The pupils are given the chance for searching and discovering knowledge, with personal or team efforts. It is required from the teacher to transform from a barren “*provider*” of knowledge, isolated and predictable, to a real Educator.

This means that he should not only know the answer to a specific question, in relation to WHAT, but more importantly the HOW we reach to this answer and with this process we acquire knowledge and accumulate it. Above all he will know a method that does not take advantage of the natural³ and instinctive desire of human beings for learning is doomed to failure and refers possibly to the temporary acquisition of dexterities, rather than an effort for qualitative and permanent knowledge.

Furthermore, the teacher is obliged to acknowledge the fact that new technologies are instruments that make their role more effective and improve the whole educational process. This is particularly important in cases of learning difficulties and in relation to the psychological needs of the pupil. The teacher has to accustom the new technologies and learn how to use them. He has to investigate their potential and beneficial aspects that technology could provide to the learning process.

More specifically the teacher has to:

- Advise, encourage and guide the efforts of the pupils initially on how to learn and how to develop their inclinations and talents.
- To inspire the efforts of the young children, who initiates to Knowledge⁴ and the pleasure of discovery as also the joy they derive out of any achievement that works as a constant motivation for them.
- Finally the teachers, while they supervise or guide the pupils, they observe the dynamic aspects of the process and receive cognitive stimuli,

² In this occasion self-awareness refers to the process, whether previously it referred to the result.

³ Inspired with affluent and original knowledge the ancient Greeks had stated that “To know is something that naturally pleases man” {φύσει του ειδέναι ορέγεται άνθρωπος} on the contrary to the Christian belief, that the Christian philosopher Pascal puts forward, that the motive for knowledge of humans is... vanity.

⁴ The teacher initiates them to the necessity and beauty of knowledge, making sure that the children realize that it is going to be the real and solid force in their life.

especially in relation to problem solving. Thereby they become guides and provide inspiration which facilitates the learning process.

The philosophy of the All-day School requires the teacher to be the individual that:

- Enhances self-action which the developing child should grasp.
- Reinforces the motivation of the child for learning through incitement.
- Gives guidance to their efforts whenever is necessary.
- Encourages the personality and initiatives of the child.
- Promotes their ingenuity.
- Enhances their creativity⁵ and their appreciation for achieving.
- Helps by supporting or give guidance to the problems of the child by facilitating the ability of communication between them with actions that express the teacher's acceptance towards the child. He achieves the encouragement of the child that has learning difficulties, troubles of completion or non evident social acceptance, by engaging in dialogue.

The foundation of a new relationship between the teacher and the child.

The teacher of an All-day School develops, broadens and substantialises his knowledge. According to new scientific data, his foremost role becomes that of the initiator into the learning process. He is the one that will initiate the pupil into the value, beauty and necessity of knowledge during the course of their life, this way the teacher will create the desire to the pupil to activate himself for the discovery of knowledge.

This is mentally ascended to the actual place where the learning process occurs: The teacher stops being on an opposite side of his pupil, he comes beside the pupil and gives guidance and orientation whenever is necessary. He encourages and advises, he is teaching the pupil how to set the criteria and make judgments. Thereby the pupil is able to choose, this ability will prove very useful in the learning process. When a pupil comes across a difficulty in understanding the teacher gives guidance by posing a set of questions. When the pupil finds the

⁵ It enhances the creativity of the child, to the level that is possible with every child, this is an aspect that is neglected in our educational system (Kousoulas F. [2003], "The effects of interdisciplinary education to the creative expression of Primary School pupils", PhD. Thesis, Athens, 2003), originally published in Greek (Κούσουλας Φ. [2003], «Η επίδραση της διαθεματικής διδασκαλίας στη δημιουργική έκφραση των μαθητών του Δημοτικού σχολείου». Διδ. Διατριβή, 2003)

answers to the given questions, he understands and he is in position to deal with the subject that was puzzling him. The above, demands a teacher that has a complete knowledge of the subject in matter, but also a teacher that knows the child and has the ability to perceive the specific features of a given difficulty that are troubling the child, this way the teacher becomes resourceful and invents the appropriate ways to clarify certain subjects, for one pupil or the whole class⁶.

By this we want to stress that the teacher should be in the position to realize the moment that a pupil(s) does not understand. The inability of understanding could be attributed to the rate of difficulty of certain cognitive information, or the absence of previous mentioned cognitive information, or because closely related fields of cognitive information are not fully understood.

This means that under no circumstances does the teacher provides an “already made” knowledge or *education nutritive*, but guides the way to the discovery of knowledge. The pupil responds according to his biological and psychological aptitude, which defines the development of motivation and guides the cognitive awareness that the learning process is only natural to create. Therefore the axon, the source and the motivation of the pupil’s actions are guided by **interest**, which results from previous cognitive feedback. It is obvious that all these presuppose an alteration of the expectations that we have, regarding the learning process. The potentials and the results of the ordinary school and the philosophy associated with it, are very different from the All-day School.

Will the mediums-tools of learning remain the same as they were in the past?

a) Methodological choices

The method of teaching in the new school should, as we estimate from the results of recent surveys, be based on the following acknowledgements-scientific thesis:

- Human beings are born with an instinctive cognition potential. That should be stimulated, cultivated and developed to an ability. This includes Learning, that is a shaping factor of the individual.
- The child is learning and understands, provided that the interest is stimulated for one or all areas of cognition.
- The best method of learning is experiencing. That permits the child to explore, discover and process a cognitive field or certain information.

⁶ The term *facilitator* (a teacher that facilitates the learning process) that was internationally used, is found inappropriate and should be replaced with the more accurate term *Inventor* (a teacher that invents during the learning process).

Therefore the methodology of a School of the future:

- Has as a starting point the particularity and uniqueness of each pupil, as it is shaped from the biological aptitude, as also from the child's learning and social development.
- It transform the learning process to a challenge for the pupil who is able to exercise all of his mental functions and follow a course of experiencing which lead to the discovery of learning and personal expression, that finally will show the way to the fulfillment of someone's potentials.
- The creation of motivation and evaluation, are corresponding to the actual learning process. This process provides meanings to the pupil and expresses his cognitive, emotional and social needs, as they are naturally raised from the contact with the environment.
- In this spectrum the learning material is being offered with the aptitude of interdisciplinary connections and holistic approaches that are being explored from the pupil. This way the pupil is permitted to establish mental connections and associations which bare a meaning and a result in the way the brain functions, as long as the information is understood and integrated by the individual.

b) Substantial Usage of New Technology

Except from the school text books and work books new cognitive instruments have already been implemented in the learning process. The present situation in schooling reveals that the usage of interactive multimedia, the internet and systems of e-learning (mainly with interactive sessions), have been incorporated in all the grades of the school's outline.

In the school of the future, the interactive multimedia is used as a facilitative and a multifunctional tool. For example in the learning of history the pupil can learn from a computer program, that includes photos, video footage, maps etc. The learning activities begin from problem solving and the formulation of questions in the style of a *puzzle*. This type of activities exercise critical thinking and may ascend to playful activities. The pupils participate assuming the role of an archaeologist or a treasure hunter etc., in order to discover ancient civilizations, cities, towns and their artifacts. With this way remarkable civilizations of the past and crucial moments of history, will revive in a virtual world.

Another example stems from the subject of Geology. With the virtual study of volcano behavior and the movement of the tectonic plates, the pupils participate dynamically in the learning process and reach various conclusions in relation to the geological phenomenon of earthquakes. Except the obvious gain of knowledge, the pupils also learn how to react in a case of an actual earthquake.

Therefore new technology makes possible for the pupils to reach a wide and immediate combination of educational goals.

The internet becomes almost a parallel program of learning. It is being used as a source of information, knowledge and entertainment. In reality the term *edutainment* (education + entertainment), has been invented to depict the exact description of these fast lanes of exchanging information, which occurs with the internet. The internet is an instrument of learning that helps individuals to attain information, cultivate ones mind, and communicate with specialists, sharing their views, while at the same time work together with other pupils from different places around the world.

1. General Aim: The children are learning “how to learn”

In the school of the future, the usage of computers and the internet will be an instrument of expression, teaching, learning and communication for everyone in the school. This can be achieved through the appropriate organization of educational activities, in combination with the school subjects and school activities. The focus of the above should be the development of thinking and the ability of pupils to understand, having as the main goal the achievement of a better level of learning, through a dynamic cognitive processing of information. The pupils should:

- be instigated to search beyond the information that have been given to them.
- While at the same time they should keep a critical overview of this information.
- learn to deal with a systematic way, the problems and the situations that they come across while simultaneously they
- communicate (verbally and written) with substantial and resourceful ways.

The pupils learn how to use a computer and various educational or other programs, in the subject of “Computing” or “Technology”, they are learning “**how to learn**” and make choices, while using technology as an instrument for learning. The minimum needed potentials for these activities are defined by the following.

- Learning through experiences.
- Interdisciplinary and a wide spectrum of approaches of knowledge.
- Introduce “play” in the learning process.

It is assumed that the achievement of a goal should be immediately attainable for the pupil/ pupils, because this is the best motivation for keeping an interest and continuance of their efforts.

Principles of methodology

General Methodological Principles

The All-Day Primary School cancels the *education nutritive*, and offers the child the possibility to explore and discover knowledge individually or as part of a group, with the guidance of the teacher.

The teacher teaches the pupil to seek knowledge, but he does not present himself as the only source of information, or a certified book for that matter, but he is suggesting many more sources of information, such as the internet, modern technology and the usage of laboratories, but more importantly the Library and reading rooms.

The acquisition of knowledge for the young pupil occurs through the combination of closely related areas of cognition, which are consolidated by the individual with a variety of activities.

The philosophy (regarding the general principles) is common for all the subjects. It includes though **specific methodological principles**, which are added and adjusted to the general principles. This occurs according to the demands of the different cognitive subject (eg. Physics, Language). Thereby we have to mention separately the subjects and the appropriate methodology for each one, in the All-Day School.

Prerequisite: The head teacher of each class should engage children to explore and if possible while playing. The process evolves: the children to observe, and give a description on the subject of their observation and express a “why” in relation to the strange, odd and non expected features that they notice.

In the subjects that require experiments, laboratory work or a visit to a certain place, the children observe, and they **experience an interaction** with the cognitive subject and the features that are part of it. In these occasions, the teacher pinpoints the subject of their first observation. The children are learning to experiment or pay attention to a team of children –from their school or class– that demonstrate an **experiment**⁷.

⁷ For example, the children are in a forest or in a park or in a garden or in the yard of the school, assuming that something of the above is feasible, the children can collect, flowers, leaves, stones, whatever is necessary each time. After they observe their findings, they have to describe what they observed.

The pupils have to describe what they observed, they are divided in teams and **pose questions**, of the things they observed, both the ordinary and the extraordinary aspects of what they witnessed. The children have learned to think and provide answers to given questions. Their answers can be used as **hypothesis for experimentation**. The opinion of the children should immediately put to a test their sayings and discover if what they said is valid or false. If the children do not think of a “why” and come up with a “therefore”, of a fact or an aspect or an observation, then the teacher may offer a “therefore” himself. Following the same procedure as before the children put the teacher’s proposal to the test in order to find out the result.

After the previous process the children are lead to the **setting of rules**, this means that the children have understood –through this process- the phenomenon or item that they had to investigate or describe.

This process is very important, because it makes compulsory for the child to see the world from a scientific point of view. It is holistic and conjunctional. It cultivates the **creativity** of the child, because he or she has to think, distinguish, invent, follow all the mental activities that the brain is able to implement and at the same time cultivate their judgment. The next step of teaching is for the child to learn how to reach conclusions, formulate his thoughts in sentences, of the understandings that he made. This is the meaning of the phrase “**I am learning to someone how to learn**”.

The methodology of the All-Day School anticipates and demands that every cognitive unit to be consolidated by the whole of the other cognitive or creative activities of schooling (see related paragraphs).

The All-Day School does not allocate daily assignments for homework. Everything occurs in the school. The closest thing to a homework assignment in the All-Day School is the gathering of information from the family library or the study of a children’s book or poem that the children will present in the classroom. The achievements of the children, for example a report, can be seen by their parents or the school. At designated periods there can be the organization of exhibitions that the parents could visit. If there is a need, the parents can be informed from the headmaster, the teacher or the child-psychologist. The parent’s association must work closely with the teacher’s association and this relationship should not be restricted to the day of the grades, by asking about the development of their children. The teachers and parents should organize a set of meetings in order to discuss issues and problems that might appear.

Aims and Goals

In conclusion the All-Day Primary School:

- Is a place that the pupils develop cognitive, investigating, constructive and cultural skills. They evolve their knowledge, their personality and their character by “learning how to learn”, “how to accept others” as well as to be responsible and creative.
- Changes the teaching of traditional academic subjects, through a variety of approaches that affect the personality of the pupil in a multiple/interactive manner.
- Assists, in the best possible way, the development of the child’s personality and the assimilation in the educational system.
- Constructs with “new” elements the developing course of the pupils, in a way that corresponds to the new, technologically evolved, society- the society of knowledge. It satisfies the need for a developing complete personality, which can fulfill the expectations of modern society. At the same time it develops in the psyche of the child, social and emotional cohesion. This way the child learns to derive pleasure out of the effort and the achievement.
- It reassures the protection of the child against negligence, ill treatment and potential dangers that might be present in the family unit or the wider social environment, thereby it offers *creative monitoring*.
- It enriches their language skills and develops their imagination – their ability for representations through an efficient cultural involvement. It supports and gives advices to the child regarding the troubles that he faces. It facilitates their ability for communication through actions that bare the meaning “I accept you”, especially for the children that have troubles achieving and learning. This kind of dynamic of the school allows the transition of the pupil from the “*realm of I*” and “*disclosure*” to the realm of “*we*” and acceptance/ concession of the other.
- It contributes to the constant intervention on learning and educational concern, as well as to the multiple evaluation process and the effort that the pupil does in order to minimize existing educational inequalities.
- It contributes to the relief of the pupil’s family, especially in cases that both parents are working, or in cases that the pupil belongs to a single parent family, there is no alternative way of protecting the child.

- It brings out the sensitivity of the parents and mobilizes the institutions of the local community, by aspiring the “opening of the school to society”.
- It defends the public character of education and “persuades” for the reliability of the Educational System.

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ULOGA MENTORA

Rezime: U radu se analiziraju savremeni obrazovni sistemi koji propovedaju kreativnost, sposobnost donošenja odluka i svest o sebi. Međutim, nastavnik mora da preispita svoju ulogu kako bi mogao da bude vredan i nezmanljiv činilac procesa humanizacije. Mentor podstiče, vodi i savetuje, a pošto i sam treba da bude osoba bez predrasuda, on mora da ima sklonost ka detaljnoj analizi i da bude u stanju da proceni rezultate. Zahvaljujući ličnim kvalitetima, učitelj postaje mentor koji vodi učenike ka cilju.

Ključne reči: Obrazovni sistemi, vodič, mentor, process humanizacije.

