



Pedagogical Innovation A Literary-Didactical Story

*Suzana Antič, Mojca Garvas, Natalija Komljanec
and educators of Trnovo Kindergarten*



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Appendix 1: Example of a completed Didactical Map

Foreword

The present manual of the Trnovo Kindergarten represents the outcome of work performed by educators, children, their parents and other education experts. The content of the manual has been created over the past few years on the basis of a research-applicative project, thorough self-assessment for self-development and on experiences obtained from various resources. The expert workers gladly share their knowledge with their colleagues and offer their assistance to other interest groups in the wider pedagogical environment. Our educators are aware of their value and their professional responsibility. For their further research, the educators wish to receive encouraging feedback.

This manual is the outcome of the development of pedagogic innovation belonging to the fifth level of innovation development and corresponds to the principles of the innovative project of the National Education Institute of the RS. The expert workers have therefore methodically and systematically assessed the quality of the invention (the forth level of the development of pedagogic innovation – Didactical Map), which has grown into the kindergarten curriculum. Moreover, they have evaluated the benefits of the new didactical tool and introduced the assessment and evaluation of the used application. The obtained data was afterwards used for creation of this manual. The first part of the manual consists of the basic elements of the updated kindergarten curriculum with the inserted Didactical Map, while the second part presents the benefits of the Project Work with a Puppet (PWP), which had been assessed and evaluated using the reflection implementation method. In the third part, we briefly present three elements of pedagogic innovation and the final recognition resulting from the harmonisation of all three parts. Interestingly, one can read the manual from the beginning to the end or vice versa. In this way, we captured two different points of view on the presentation of the same pedagogic innovation.

The innovation of the PWP has created four logically connected didactical principles emphasizing the importance of mutual connection and support. Moreover, the PWP has improved the teacher's competences and created

didactical novelty within the educator's professional profile. The new profile has been named "Pedagogical Puppeteer". For this reason, additional training in the form of specialization has been founded for educators. Before the educator uses the puppet in a pedagogic dialogue with a child, she/he has to undergo the training and attend workshops where (s)he learns how to handle and communicate with puppets.

Educators create the puppet's profile themselves in accordance with the content and goals of education. They select the materials for its fabrication and make a few models of the same puppet so it can be used simultaneously in different learning groups or situations. Sometimes, they create two different but logically connected puppets in order to present the conundrum of a pedagogical story in a dialogue. Of course, to achieve the final result, the teachers have to spend quite a lot of time researching and creating in the so-called "puppet laboratory – creatory".

The educators have appropriate competences and are therefore prepared to share their knowledge with other educators who are interested in this kind of activity. A "pedagogical puppeteer" is not just any puppeteer. She/he has to act according to the scenario and at the same time show a high degree of empathy to be able to perceive the needs and expectations of the children and harmonize these needs with the aims of the learning plans and create scenarios for an open learning environment, for experience and for children's reactions. Hence, (s)he has to know how to improvise. A "pedagogical puppeteer" knows how to run a pedagogical dialogue with a child and a group within a pedagogical story, which is created spontaneously, yet systematically and deliberately. Activities such as reliving, assessing and evaluating the pedagogical activity, creating and giving mutual feedback to the children in the process of discovery learning are not to be sneezed at.

The entire invention team of expert workers is led by the headmistress. She is always present – from the invention through to its implementation in the kindergarten curriculum. She has been working with consultants from various professional institutions. The PWP is the Trnovo Kindergarten's pedagogical innovation, which has been created in collaboration with the National Education Institute and Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

and it has become deep-rooted and proved its great value. Therefore, we recommend disseminating its use in other interested educational environments as well.

Natalija Komljanec, Ph.D, Innovative Projects Creator and Manager at the National Educational Institute of Slovenia and the groups' consultant

Introduction

The innovative Trnovo Kindergarten raises the curtain. Under the leadership of a team of experts, the educators with their puppets present the kindergarten curriculum as a form of literary-didactical story. The puppeteer is not a robot, (s)he is an inventive educator with a pedagogical vision of approaching the youngest and enabling an optimal achievement of educational goals.

With the help of a puppet, educators and children update the expectations according to our needs. In real life, a puppet(eer) opens the door to imagination. She/he is a friend, a leader, supporter and challenger also having a role in stimulating curiosity in children and in encouraging children and also educators. The puppet(eer) settles in the child's endurance because (s)he assures a safe world of pleasant and interesting learning.

If you are interested in revealing the hidden presents of educating the youngest, you are cordially invited to read this manual. We are looking forward to making friends while creating reliable, sensible and up-to-date education in our kindergarten; hence, we would like you to join us in the creation of our literary-didactical stories.

Creators in the Trnovo Kindergarten





Creators of the PWP in training



The Implemented Curriculum of the Trnovo Kindergarten: A Literary- Didactical Story with Didactical Map

Learning Coexistence

Pedagogy is the science of education based on the philosophy of coexistence. Social pedagogy is a well-known philosophy that arose at the beginning of 21st century in Milan in northern Italy. The idea, however, can be observed before that, in the 16th century in Don Quixote written by Miguel de Cervantes – or even before that, at the beginning of Common Era when Epictetus discusses on inner peace and living in harmony with nature. Social pedagogy is based on bringing together empathy relationships and holistic coexistence with the purpose of creating a better world, which is reflected in: the preservation of nature, the creation of peace, tolerance and altruism, and the coexistence of different cultures and worlds. For creating better relationships within the process of mutual connection, social pedagogy develops a mental battle, one of the extremely important and active forms of mutual support (Milan, 2005).

Expert teams actively cooperate with the youngest and form a strategic learning plan that offers innovative methodological approaches, such as the Trnovo Model of Fundamental Learning (TMFL) or the PWP (Project work

Keywords: community, social pedagogy, coexistence, empathy relationships, method of bringing together, mental struggle, support, TMFL (Trnovo Model of Fundamental Learning), PWP (Project Work with a Puppet), thinking process within a coexisting community, personal growth, community development



with a Puppet). Both models are examples of didactic reflection on the quality of guiding learning based on the constructivist and humanist methods of mutual adaptation. These methods support the thinking processes of an individual in a coexisting community. This enables him/her to achieve personal development and growth in the community (Milan, 2005, Gobec, 2008, and Bruner, 1960, UNESCO, UNICEF, 2007). The PWP project joins the Trnovo Kindergarten staff (educators, children, parents and external experts) in an innovative learning community that is capable of brainstorming.

Pedagogical Story

The literary-didactical story within the PWP project is a pedagogical story created on the basis of a research question and upgraded two to three times a year as we solve the literary-didactical conundrums that arise in the form of a learning challenge. The conundrum represents a learning problem and/or necessity that needs to be resolved so our lives could continue without further disturbances. In this way, the story offers a possibility for resolving the

so-called thinking processes using different techniques, skills and meaningful materials that help children solve the conundrum or unfold the story.

The literary-pedagogical story puts a face on the protagonist – the puppet – who narrates the story. The threads of research (subject of research) define the didactical scenario, a plan of “fun” on the high level of the respectful ethical and aesthetic perception of emotional and mental states, Gobec explains (2008).

Certain characteristics in the literary story are attributed to the puppet(eer) and we select the name of the puppet accordingly. Within the kindergarten curriculum, the puppet is our instrument of motivation, a concrete encouragement in the action that introduces a child into the process of research, experience and creation.

The pedagogical (literary-didactical) story is created and developed simultaneously as a guided and also open spiral process that resembles the



structure of DNA (acc. to Gardner, 2012, Bruner, 1966, Gobec, 2008), a spiral plan that is logically updated according to the needs and expectations of learners. Hence, the PWP model is a unique kindergarten curriculum, even though it was developed in the wake of the Milan puppet laboratory and Reggio Emilia kindergarten as Dora Gobec (2008), the developer of the basic idea, describes the developmental stages of updating in her final work on the pedagogical community and the Agazzi method.

The story is developed in a puppet (pedagogical) laboratory. In this way, the education gets an artistic touch that can also be observed in the theatre where a person has the possibility of reliving certain events. The didactical purpose of the Work with a Puppet project is to enable this reliving. The puppet (acc. Broggin in Gobec, 2008) is the link that gives sense to the educational process. Besides its artistic role, it also has psychological and social role, which is played holistically and perfectly. Broggin (acc. Gobec, 2008) replaced Piaget's cognitive learning method with the method of environment discovery, which includes testing materials and research. He recommended this approach and theoretically defined it in the constructivist learning method (Bruner in Leonard, 2002). This approach enables the puppet to open up the learning environment for the children so they can adapt the role of an actor, researcher, creator or director in different compositions for personal expressions.

The puppet opens the learning environment with a pedagogical story by forming a multi-layered curriculum. In TMFL, Gobec (2008) mentions a three-layered curriculum (rational, artistic and social) and a three-stage



three-layered curriculum

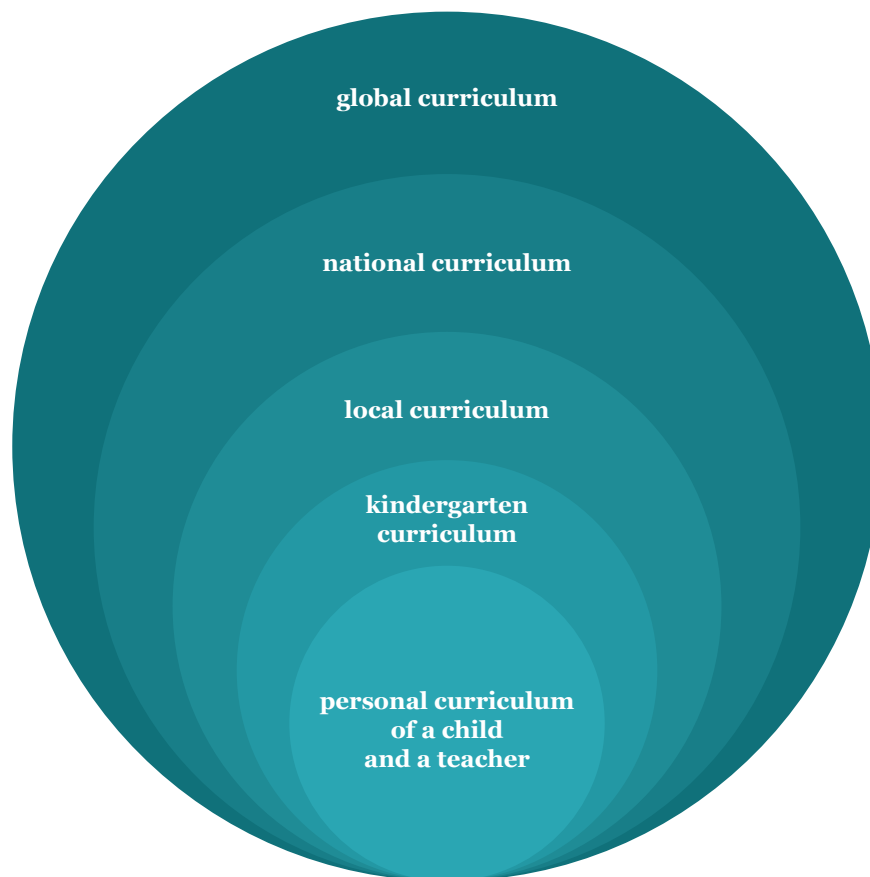
- 1 rational
- 2 artistic
- 3 social

three-stage curriculum

- 1 narrative artistic stage
- 2 stage of didactical units and conundrums
- 3 set of threads of children's activities

1 The layers and stages of the TMFL implemented curriculum (acc. Gobec, 2008)

2 An open learning environment and multi-layered implemented kindergarten curriculum offer the opportunity for inventive learning (innovative curriculum according to Komljanc, 2013 in Antič et al., 2013)



curriculum (the narrative artistic stage, the stage of didactical units and conundrums, and the set of threads in children's activities). In the updated pedagogical innovation of the kindergarten curriculum, Komljanc (2013) points out the following layers: the personal curriculum of a child and an educator (core of the curriculum), the kindergarten's implemented curriculum, the local and national curriculum and a global vision of the world, in

accordance with the philosophy of social pedagogy (Komljanc in Antic et al., 2013). The story is accomplished by the Didactical Map.

Didactical Map

In the Trnovo Kindergarten, the implemented multi-layered curriculum is carried out with the help of a tool or mechanism known as a Didactical Map.

Gobec (2008) described the Didactical Map as a document(-ation) of the mutual implementation of life plan and work in the kindergarten. She added the pedagogical map for the description and photo-documentation of activities within the kindergarten curriculum. Gobec mentions two working fields: 1. artistic and literary presentation and 2. pedagogical and didactical activity. The circle of story is formed by the following elements: 1. reason for learning content, 2. units of fundamental human activities and 3. child's development. In addition, the circle of methodological procedure includes: 1. Process-oriented learning plan (e.g. the processes of the child's development and learning approaches are taken into consideration), 2. the Milan model of development and action research (the process of the development of the educator's insights and competences to perform the PWP), 3. the harmonization of the teams (adjusting social coexistence), and 4. "educators" and experts' reflections. The mutual plan includes: 1. a didactical puppet with a story, 2. subjects of research, 3. research questions (3 at most), 4. didactical units, 5. conundrum, 6. materials, 7. selected kindergarten activities (acc. Gobec, 2008).

Keywords: Literary-didactical story, pedagogical story, conundrum, learning challenge, learning conundrum, development of mental processes, thread, subject of research, didactical scenario, puppet(-eer), motivation instrument, encouragement in action, the process of creation, open learning environment, multi-layered curriculum, inventive learning, spiral process DNA, spiral plan, puppet laboratory, reliving, method of discovery, testing materials, Didactical Map (DM)

PWP

Pedagogical story lead by the puppet(eer)

=

fundamental (basic research question)

+

2 – 3 conundrums for resolving – creating by testing different materials

3 Structure of the pedagogical story

4, 5 The circle of story, of methods and mutual plan (acc. Gobec, 2008)

6 Updated Didactical Map



Keywords: artistic and literary performance, pedagogical and didactic activity, Didactical Map, image of pedagogical activity, action research, triangulation, formative assessment, learning magnet

The structure of the Didactical Map has been updated according to its usage. Its variation is presented in the resource entitled Pedagogical innovation. The Didactical Map (2013) is the outcome of the innovative PWP project and a result of the developmental group of the Trnovo Kindergarten and the National Educational Institute.

A Didactical map is a uniform tool that gives us an insight into pedagogical communication or into our mutual relations. It is our instrument that informs us constantly about the (non)senses, needs, resources and learning opportunities. The Didactical Map organises our place and time so we would not leave out or miss something. It represents a major picture of pedagogical activities so we do not get lost in the labyrinths of individual learning phases and specific details.

literary story	timeline	action circle	didactical story
pre-stage		planning	subject of the teacher's and child's planning
			didactical units – content
stage 1			research questions
			field of curriculum
			hypothesis, goals
			materials, stimulating environment
stage 2		implementation process	activities of research and creation from the point of view of:
			the child
			the content
			methods
			sources
stage 3		assessing and gathering information	different forms of gathering feedback – triangulation
			products
			anecdote records
			outcomes
			data
			photos, videos
			child, parent, teacher
			self-reflection
			participation in mutual documentation
			resources

Entering data in the Didactical Map

7 Guidelines for using the Didactical Map

The Didactical Map outlines the didactical story taking into consideration the rules of action research and the formative assessment of the impacts of teacher's support. The didactical story absorbs the literary story, which represents teaching (educational) magnet. Learning goals, content and resources are reasonably incorporated into the kindergarten process of learning. Feedback in formative assessment analyses the data of triangulation in the action research so that a unique meaningful learning opportunity can be built and upgraded to fit the so-called spiral curriculum (acc. Bruner, 1966).

Guidelines for Using the Didactical Map

Below you will find the guidelines on how to use the Didactical Map in practice. The first part of the table offers an insight into the literary story and the second part demonstrates a didactical story.

Example of a Completed Didactical Map

Example of a completed Didactical Map (Klara Sobočan, 2013) is shown in the appendix (see *Appendix 1* at the end of the manual).



literary story	timeline	action circle	didactical story
<p>pre-stage forming the fundamental research question, “domesticating” a puppet</p> <p>stage 1 formation of the first research question and learning goal</p> <p>stage 2 formation of the second research question and learning goal</p> <p>stage 3 formation of the third research question and learning goal</p>		<p>planning</p>	<p><u>subject of the teacher's and child's planning</u> defining the main subject</p> <p><u>didactical units – content</u> defining challenges and activities</p> <p><u>research questions</u> basic question, followed by research questions for each unit separately and then logically connected into a story</p> <p><u>field of curriculum</u> defining the fields of curriculum, thread is one of the fields within the subject</p> <p><u>hypothesis, goals</u> in accordance with the research questions, logical assumptions</p> <p><u>materials and stimulating environment</u> materials are the source of discovery, materials in use represent the stimulating environment</p>
		<p>implementation process</p> <p>description of the course of discovery and research</p>	<p>activities of research and creation from the point of view of:</p> <p><u>the child</u> the social, learning role of a child</p> <p><u>the content</u> description of daily or individual activities</p> <p><u>the method</u> considering the child's play, which is connected to the discovery method</p> <p><u>resources</u> list of resources used</p>
		<p>assessing and gathering information</p>	<p>different forms of gathering information – triangulation</p>
			<p><u>products</u> achievements created by children</p> <p><u>anecdote records</u> records of interesting statements of children and pedagogical dialogues in the process of discovery</p> <p><u>the outcome</u> collective events, discoveries in the framework of individual stages or mutual achievement, presentation as the evidence of achieving the fundamental goal</p> <p><u>photos, video</u> evidence of achievements</p> <p><u>child, parent, teacher</u> feedback by children, parents, educators that is taken into consideration in the next school year</p> <p><u>self-reflection</u> How have I created and perceived individual stages and orientation points? 1. Was the plan of joint meetings realized? Were the elements of the story logically connected? 2. How were the basic human activities realised so they became educational activities for children, at the same time considering the fields of the curriculum? 3. It is important to define one's point of view in the implementation process (questions, dilemmas, joyfulness, achievements etc.) on both levels – the educator's and the child's (group – individual) 4. Dialogues and interactions (dialogue between children, between the educator and a child, between the child and other children etc.) 5. Write down the best situations/leading discussion, the things that cheered up the children the most, the successful solving of cognitive problematic situations and conflicts, the creativeness of children 6. Reflection: in which field would you like to improve your professional skills and improve your work? Which thing(s) can you assess as very good in the current project or which things did you do particularly well?</p> <p><u>contribution to the collective documentation</u> fulfilled Didactical Map</p> <p><u>sources</u> entire pedagogical documentation</p>





8 Pedagogical innovation – Literary-didactical story

Pedagogical innovation: A literary-didactical story, implemented curriculum by the Trnovo Kindergarten within the PWP

Learning coexistence – the mental struggle for mutual support in a mental process

Pedagogical story = born with a research question + challenges - conundrum for the development of mental processes

The literary-pedagogical story creates a character – puppet – support for mental process

Puppet leads threads of a research – subjects of research – define the didactic scenario in the form of a spiral (DNA) in the pedagogical puppet laboratory - didactic purpose = experience

Puppet = link between children and educators, giving meaning to the education process – cognitive learning is replaced by the method of discovery learning – it opens a child's learning environment by creating a multi-layered curriculum = it is an opportunity for creative learning

The multi-layered curriculum is carried out together with the Didactical Map – it represents a big picture of all the activities and specific details – it considers the content and method of FA – formative assessment and AR – action research

Reflection on the Trnovo Kindergarten Curriculum

Reflection Upon the Benefits of the Didactical Map

Educators evaluate the beneficial value of the Didactical Map as excellent. They believe it is a very effective tool, guide, instrument and methodology for holistic planning. Here is a summary of our comments: The Didactical Map directs our education. It enables a holistic structure of the kindergarten curriculum. The instrument provides sense and unifies our educational method and at the same time supports the development of didactical education. It is clear and holistic and we feel connected to it. It also enables a clearer image of the education, encourages teamwork, and gives an insight in the work of other educators, which enables more qualitative mutual coordination. Synchronic cooperation enables children to move from one group to another. The tool also enables us to gather information, materials, reports and plans. The completed Didactical Map is an evidence of our pedagogical activities and it is also a collection of didactical and literary ideas for creating new stories. With the help of the Didactical Map, our education activities become clearer: it comprises annual activities, activities sorted by subjects, weekly and daily activities, which are all carefully planned and assessed. In



Team reflecting on the Didactical Map

this way, we improve the quality of our pedagogical activity. The Didactical Map is a simple remainder that enables a processed connection between the content and the method of work. The educators consciously turn to the Didactical Map, which underlines the relationship between various prevalent didactical questions (what, how, why) that accompany us on the path of holistic planning, implementing, assessment and evaluation of the effect. Each interrogative is processed individually within the methodology provided in the Didactical Map and in their logical interaction (what–how–why). This is how the interrogatives become meaningful and more efficient, which enables a more unified and complete education.

The Didactical Map is still an object of research. We have been discovering different ways using it but we are not yet completely and fully aware of the possibilities it has to offer. Its digital version is slowly coming into use. We also plan to include photo material and other learning evidences (portfolio) in the table.

The Formation of Didactical Principles

Within the multi-layered kindergarten curriculum in the form of the literary-didactical story, we consider the following didactical principles that have been perceived according to several reflections:

1. The coexistence (connection) of results obtained in domains from previous years by the children's imagination is perceived as the fundamental human activities. This exact didactical principle is emphasised by Gardner, who believes it is one of the most important elements of the learning strategies of the 21st century (Gardner in Duke Colloquium, April 2012, <http://colloquium.duke.edu/people/howard-gardner/>).

2. The coexistence (connection) of child's play and discovery – setting research questions to form personal cognitions and findings based on the elementary data. The sources are obtained in the environment and every-day activities. The emphasis is on the place and time for sensual and emotional perceptions. We connect science with art and create by comparing different findings so we could discover – search for answers to the questions: what – how – why. On the one hand, vivid orientation reduces the hidden curriculum and on the other, it reinforces the daily activities of youngsters. Adults influence on children with an open approach that gives a child an opportunity for active participation in the direct learning process. According to Gardner (ibid), a creative mind and synthesis of the mind are being encouraged in this way.

3. The coexistence (connection) of the child's and adult's knowledge – learning from each other (self-learning); in this way we define key notions, we self-diagnose our pre-knowledge and we reinforce abilities for searching for adequate co-workers, experts and resources. Within the lifelong learning, the teachers develop respectful and ethical relationships with other colleagues and with experts' findings. These features are also acknowledged by Gardner who was persuaded that this approach was one of the crucial approaches of the digital era and also of the era in which he believes we should self-develop our pedagogical practice.

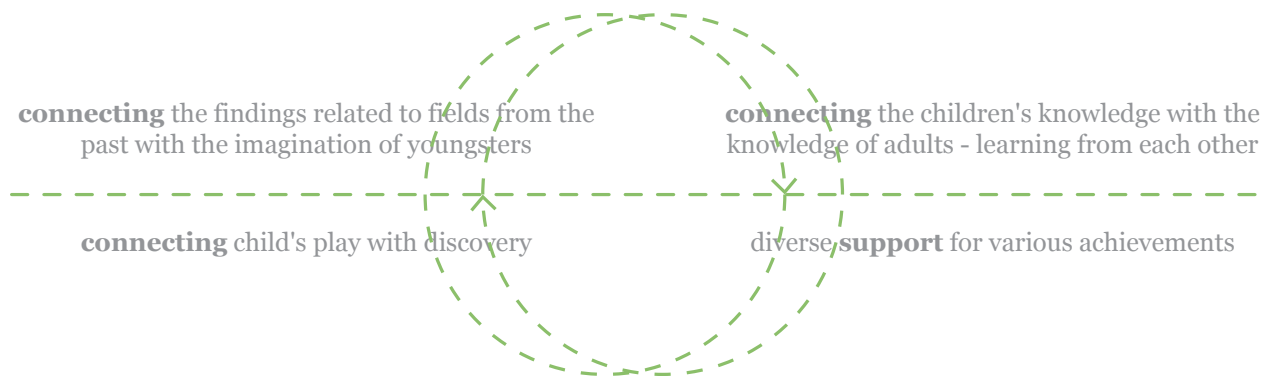
4. The coexistence of various forms of support and different achievements – (Scaffolding accord. to Bruner, 1996 and Gardner, 2012): assessment and awareness of the learner's prior knowledge, encouraging autonomous and mutual responsiveness, assessing the child's growth and the educator's self-development.

Life in the Trnovo Kindergarten has its purpose and represents a fulfilled harmony of impressions and expressions. Abilities to connect and to support each other are our basic competences. This is how we imagine a fulfilled life. We are oriented toward a discovery learning approach (accord. to Bruner, 1966). The Didactical Map with a qualitative formative assessment and mutual accurate feedback and support enables the accurate and unique (individual) creation of a spiral model of kindergarten curriculum (accor. to Bruner, 1966) – a DNA model (according to Gardner, 2012).

9 Didactical principles (4P) in coexistence

Creating a Story

Innovation is constructed based on experiences. Prior knowledge is upgraded with better ideas. The innovative story is formed under our close surveillance and under thorough consideration of the best possible story in time and place. Our innovative story arises when a good old experience encounters a new



cognition, idea, motive and learning magnet. We form the so-called spiral (process) curriculum taking into account the prior knowledge of children and teachers. The literary-didactical story is a result of our work, it is written as an artistic text that also intertwines with a scientific base comprising all the major didactical principles.

Besides ethics, aesthetics also influence the artistic and scientific viewpoint of the discovery made by children together with the educators. Ferrucci writes about the ability to perceive beauty as one of the fundamental human needs (according to Maslow in Ferrucci, 2010). Beauty does not depend on any theory, neither is a captured rule, it is a vital need. The author states that a human who is touched by beauty becomes renewed, his/her character changes, his/her inner life becomes richer and varied and has a more vivid perception of emotions. This means that beauty in relation to another human being enables a more subtle perception of the world's impressions and consequently a more shaped mode of expression. Moreover, the author mentions that in relation to others, a person enjoying beauty, confronts more easily and learns more

thoroughly about life itself. In addition, he/she is able to express a stronger individuality and more solid self-respect. He/she has a stronger will to live and his/her decisions are more adequate, in a broader sense of the word – this person moves more. His/her aesthetic intelligence is built from the point of view of the size and depth of the experience, as well as the ability to include beauty in coexistence. Once you experience beauty, it becomes your untameable need. It becomes your refreshment and encouragement, an unrepeatable moment in education, and a renewal of physical and mental health; it has the role of the inner beauty of emotional recognition, mind-development and love. The beauty is the basic principle that concerns all the aspects of our being. It opens us up to the world and brings harmony to our relations. Our experiences confirm Ferrucci's findings.

The creative expression of beauty is expression that comes from the inside. It is a creation that is full of eros. It is never impersonal. It is intimate and never cold. It is passionate. According to Maslow in Ferrucci (2010), Ferrucci made a list of the characteristics of a spiritually healthy person: power, self-confidence, expressiveness, ability, familiarity with irrationality, openness to beauty, spontaneity, absence of inhibitions, defence



mechanisms, the ability to forget about oneself, innocence etc. – and a list of characteristics of a creative person, which are the same as for spiritually healthy person. The ego is full of the will for life, play and improvisation, expressiveness, creative thinking comprising a creative impulse – an authentic expression. According to Mithen in Ferrucci (2010), the artistic expression is the outcome of three abilities: 1. creating a mental image, 2. planning meaning, and 3. the ability to announce it to others. Because of these things, we are more human-like. The story that unfolds on our pedagogical stage in our kindergarten includes all the forms of pedagogical and human personal and aesthetic communication (pedagogical play, drama speech, responses, non-verbal messages, play or stage performance, alive and current speech, consideration of the present time and current events, which are logically connected). The performed conflicts and tensions create gradual dynamics, drama and mental entanglement that have its clear exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and denouement. The learning magnet attracts children towards feverish and autonomous research of the best possible solutions for life problems. The research is also performed with the help of other children, educators and parents. The story is in fact a simulation of real life situations, which are shown through a play. The simulation is safe and extremely interesting, important but not panicky. The story strengthens us and prepares us for future challenges in real life situations as the actors themselves segue from their play into real life safely and can shift back to the game when they need safety or time for reflection. The story enables us to be alive, important, to cooperate, to be included and to have our own place and role in society.

It also enables the right amount of astonishment and effort, as explained by Kant, and it is the key to every thinking process (Kant in Gavrić, 1991). In the active story, the children experience the peak of their strengths in their mental growth before the story is unfolded. They try to master, direct and balance their strengths. Gradually, the children master the dramatic rise in tension and co-create the place and time – world.

They keep trying out new resources and perceive them not only as consequences but also as causes. The story always offers open possibilities for a

divergent search for solutions. Moreover, it also provides new entanglements that change the course of action toward a new path that an educator has not foreseen but still responds to the new plan every time. The children experiment how “good” can become “evil” or “failure” and what previously seemed to be “evil” or “bad” later turns out to be “good”. The children and teachers shape their lives according to their abilities and possibilities. The decisive moments in the story solve the problem and restore the order and balance in children. With the teacher’s and parents’ support, the children build up stamina, they communicate with it and gradually direct and control it more and more autonomously and successfully (self-control according to Socrates).

The pedagogical and literary-didactical story facilitates exciting and encouraging development, cooperation between the youngest and the rest of the world, and most importantly, it enables the formation of desired (referential) criterion of coexistence. The following elements are fundamental for healthy spiritual growth: discovering the world, active inclusion, cooperation and participation. The child copes with the strain and therefore

Keywords: Didactical Map, tool, networking, support, harmony of impressions and expressions, selected creation of a spiral curriculum, ethics and aesthetics, creative impulse, creative expression, creation of a mental image, planning meaning, the ability to express, the ratio of surprise and effort, co-creation of place and time – world, divergent search for solutions, order and balance, self-control, formation of referential measures of coexistence, healthy spiritual growth, open play, pedagogical spirit, differences in reliving, bringing together by the story, teamwork

has a more realistic vision created in didactical/child's play. The play can be a limited, closed, uncreative space if a player plays its own play or takes into consideration the limited didactical instructions. Play that comes in a form of learning is normally opened to the world, especially when it enables the possibility for presentation, cooperation and co-creation. Spontaneous and didactical play are united in an open play and only these two elements enable a harmonious rhythm and melody of impression and expression.

The educators at the Trnovo Kindergarten perceive the literary-didactical story mostly as a unique feature, novelty, creation, active pedagogical work, humour, imagination, magic, harmonization, unrepeatable element or connection with a puppet. Some educators experience the story as: an interesting experience, research, entanglement and a phase of artistic or pedagogic creation, some consider it a key to intelligence, originality, meaningful integrity, the collection of ideas and cooperation, others again think it releases the imagination, spontaneity, a research team's strive for optimal professional research, a special feature of methodological-didactical content, a method of project work, a research method or created mutual achievement, active research by children and educators, the tension of the content in order to attract, as creation, playfulness, and the mutual research of the children and the puppet. Regardless of the years of teaching, all the professional workers experience the innovative literary-didactical story – a form of implemented kindergarten curriculum – as a premiere education, personal experience and recognition. Demonstrating impressions and expressions through literature is perceived as one of the possible creative benefits that make us happy and give us pedagogical elan (a high level of psychical readiness for work – zeal) and high spirits (the tendency to increase the level of personal development). Before the story is introduced to the children, the professional workers first process, then analyse the selected subject (according to Downes, 2006 in Komljanc, 2012) and finally leave all to the imagination and begin to simulate the story. Every child perceives the story his/her own way. This approach clearly shows how differently children and adults perceive literary-didactical stories. The resulting story is unrepeatable.



It is nice when we work together. We follow the same goal, but each using his/her own approach. We chew over different ideas and issues, select and build the story. While forming the story, we support each other, so we are not alone in the process. The story brings us together. We connect vertically and horizontally. The teams are formed simultaneously, considering needs, and thus we have various types of teams. Together we build a safer and more reliable kindergarten curriculum. Our soul sings when it is in action. Sometimes we realize that we can barely hold back and avoid revealing the secret to the children too quickly. At that point, we try to hold our thoughts and give the children the possibility to express themselves.

10 The learning process

PWP – learning plan

**educator = holder of the didactical process,
balances the difficulty and performance of
learning**

pedagogical dialogue:

**child = proactive creator, holder of
the mental process, emotional
intelligence**

**materials: didactical puppet and other instruments and tools in accordance
with the content and method of discovery**

Creating the Pedagogical Puppet – Pedagogical Communication

The Puppet as a Form of Communication

The pedagogical communication does not only happen between educators and management but also between experts and children. Communication in the “puppet show” happens with the help of a medium – a puppet, a new or additional communication channel that plans the path toward achieving an educational goal (according to Korošec, <http://www.pef.uni-lj.si/vilic/gradiva/3-korosec-komunikacija.pdf>). It enables an independent form of creation, understanding, expression and the formation of relationships. There is a particular flow of energy between educators, children and the puppet and it goes in various directions. There is no such thing as a wrong message. We respect each other. Communication comes from the children’s play, to which we add a more holistic form. The child’s senses are pure; a

child improvises in the best possible meaning of the word. Moreover, this sort of work relaxes the educators and refreshes their knowledge; it also rejects stereotypes and provides more possibilities for creation and individuality. The forms of education are various. The puppet is a metaphorical communication whose ability enables the naming of a certain phenomenon with an expression. The puppet is the central protagonist (central person). It often seems that a child more easily communicates his/her needs and expectations to the puppet than to the educator. The feedback in the dialogue between the puppet and the children are natural, direct, fearless and without restraints.



The Puppet’s Power

Puppetry has its origins in very ancient rituals. The rituals represent the communication between people and the energy we feel. The communication takes place with a range of stylized movements, voices and visual appearance. The puppet grows together with a person’s willingness. It gets a symbolic meaning and becomes a being. The puppeteer’s

energy brings it to life as (s)he believes in its power. Nevertheless, one has to go through a long period of practice and training to be able to achieve this ability. Brane Vižintin taught us how to find the power of the puppet and how to share it with the youngest. While delivering the content to the children, the puppet can be very helpful in overcoming certain obstacles, in possessing various tricks and in motivating children and educators. The children trust the puppet (educator). They are certain that the educator does not know about the secrets they share with the puppet even though it lives in the hands of

the educator. This is the puppet's magical power. This faith in the puppet can be compared to animism where every object has its own soul. A toy also has a soul in a child's imagination. This is the reason why puppets charm everyone. It represents numerous possibilities for passing on experiences and for familiarizing with the world. It is a mediator between a child and the environment. Its touch represents a strong communication element, which enables less stressful inclusion in the social world (according to Majaron, read more: <http://www.pef.uni-lj.si/~vilic/gradiva/3-lutke-kurikulum.doc>).

The Puppet as a Song (Rhythm and Melody – Synchronization of Pedagogical Dialogue) Creating Impressions and Expressions

A puppet is a figure, an artistic representation of an object, a rhythm (a regular pattern of certain elements) and melody (a sequence of relations) that is accompanied by voice and mimicry or animation – a fictive revival of a figure (anima - soul, the emotional and moral side of a person). The animator makes the thoughts, emotions and perceptions tangible. Thus, educating with puppets represents a form of pedagogical sensation and thoughtful systematic guidance of sensory perception. Puppets possess the elements of impressionism including the principle of capturing fresh and original impressions, colour, light and inspiration from everyday life, as well as expressionism for expressing emotional experience. Life is full of impressions that should be recorded in a pleasant and interesting way in order to create new (next) impressions. The images of a scene enable learning opportunities for discovery – flash, enlightening. Children paint their worlds according to their will and their desire to express. Consequently, educators put a lot of emphasis on what a puppet looks like since its appearance normally represents the purpose and character of a literary story and also corresponds to the educational goals. Educators spend a lot of time making a puppet and talking about its origins and the purpose of its visit to the Trnovo Kindergarten so they would be able to provide answers to the



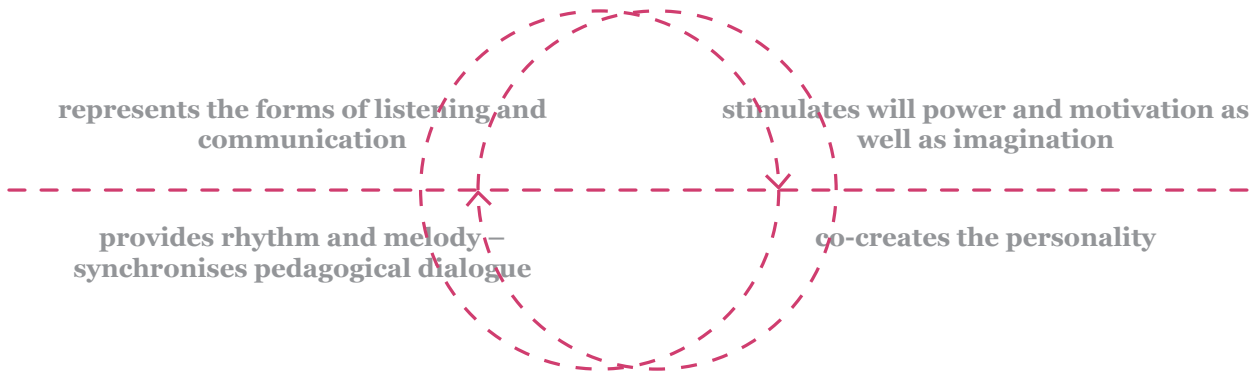


children's questions about it. A puppet (according to Gobec, 2008) is the third person who sets a new line of communication. The puppet teaches children how to love and how to express their love. A strong connection - a friendship is built between them, each carrying its share of responsibility for the life, freedom and happiness of another being. Love for a puppet is pure, unconditional love without contact (Gobec, 2008, p: 86). When the puppet asks the children for help, it triggers an emphatic process, a process of social behaviour and moral decision making. The puppet develops a culture for giving. When the project is finished, the puppet returns to its homeland. This farewell causes sadness and even the pain of saying goodbye, a separation that needs to be accepted and donated. The puppet therefore gives the children the opportunity for different perceptions of the world, a realistic perception and a hypothetic relationship. Following the "DNA" spiral, children actively construct, build and harmonize their own image and the image of the world according to their own personality and whole life and social context, also considering different situations and occupations in the kindergarten and in real life within the interaction with the environment (according to Gobec, p: 45).

The Puppet Co-Creates Personality

The puppet is involved in the creation of personality, positive self-image and life orientation. It socializes, educates, builds relations, emotional connections, experiences, co-creates values, and develops multiple intelligences (according to Gardner, 2010). Gardner encourages us to start learning from mistakes at an early stage, to connect with experts, to test our ideas and to experience changes and the reasons for them. According to Gardner the disciplined mind is not related to the individual subjects but to the fields of knowledge that are taught with the support of a puppet that passes various methodologically useful experiences on to children. Based on that, the children recognize the differences between the rules and procedures of society. With the development of a respectful and ethical mind, the child takes responsibility for his/her own mental acts.

According to Gardner, the real thinker respects three elements of good work in the right place: excellence of an expert, high quality, ethics (moral responsibility) and



11 The puppet(eer) in a pedagogical communication

Keywords: various directions of energy flow, sensation communication with a metaphor, protagonist, puppet grows together with will and imagination, rhythm and melody, impressionism and expressionism, expresses experiences, teach how to love and how to express love, empathy, culture of giving, interaction, multiple intelligence



engagement (inner motivation). Gardner represents good work with the three E's: excellence (expert, high quality), ethics (responsible, moral) and engagement (meaningful and intrinsically motivated). All three principles work at the same time and complement each other and therefore reinforce their power. Gardner compares them to the DNA spiral. Recently, these three E's have also been complemented with the three d's (defence, digital and disinterested). He points out the value of feelings and a free mind. What do children want from us? Gardner replies with "Give – a password". In our case, the puppet gives the password to the children. Gardner believes that the children need an admission ticket to be able to act autonomously and with the required support, for instance by our puppet. Creation is a process where the children, educators and other experts reflect the dilemmas and think about different possibilities for better solutions, possibilities for cooperation in various groups that can work together intensively. Today, as most of the children believe that formal education – school – is boring (acc. to Gardner, 2012), the puppet may enable a more interesting teaching approach. Moreover, as an excellent expert, it inserts important recognitions into the teaching process.

Experiencing the Puppet

Children's Opinions

Girl (5 years): "The puppets are there so we are not scared, they sleep with us and eat everything."

Boy (5 years): "The puppet is partially human and partially it is made of fabric."

Girl (5 years): "It resembles our animated character. I like that I have never seen a similar puppet before."

Girl (5 years): "We can play with a puppet. If the puppet had been a boy I would have married it."



Boy (4 years): "It is our friend."

Boy (4 years) "Once I was at a performance, I was this big and I saw little mice. A person moves them so they can talk but some think that the mice talk. These are puppets. The performances are near the kindergarten. The Piglet is a puppet."

Girl (3 years): "A puppet is the one that we can dance with. The one that can transform into a good fairy."

Boy (3 years): "The puppet comes from puppet theatre!"

Girl (3 years): "I am a puppet."

Girl (6 years): "We can squeeze it tight so we are not afraid anymore."

Girl (5 years): "The puppet has to have a hole for the hand to fit in."

Boy (5.5 years): "The puppet is everything for me. Plush or solid puppets."

You could be a puppet – if you (the teacher) talk, the puppet talks too.”

Boy (6 years): “They are marionettes.”

Boy (6 years): “This reminds me of a performance - as if the Piglet Srečka who lives in Piglet Mountains would be a show.”

Parents’ Opinions

The world of puppets and their power have been popular among children all over the world. Puppets help the children get to know the world and share experiences, to overcome obstacles because the puppet knows and understands everything.

The puppet has a magic power and the children can more easily express their feelings.

In the Trnovo Kindergarten, the parents have the possibility to observe the education process involving a puppet. This has been possible for quite a while now. It seems to me that the children enjoy the time they spend with puppets very much and the parents, of course, share the happiness with them. It is nice to see the

direct contact the children make with a puppet and to observe the wonderful imaginary journey on which they go every year. I am impressed with the things they learn and how easily they absorb new knowledge.

I believe it is a very clever idea of joining the real and imaginative, the playful and the artistic world. Therefore, I congratulate the team, which on a daily basis tries to bring closer everyday feelings and knowledge and other worlds using this innovative approach.

It seems that the educators of the Trnovo Kindergarten have become puppetry experts.

Puppets know how to educate in a simple and effective way. Their magic touch enables direct communication with a child. In its imaginative space, the child participates as an actor or spectator, depending on how he/she feels. It is small but yet a big encounter enabling a genuine experience of situations and the possibility of thinking about the situations and enabling holistic learning from experiences.

We eagerly and seriously look for solutions that would contribute to research and to solving the problems set by the puppet.

I personally like the project even more because I know that the character suits my child. He literally adores it and we can use similar “fairy-tale” approach at home.

Children perceive a puppet as a 100 % living being and therefore vividly explain all the adventures they had together.

With the educators’ help, children look for answers and solutions to the problems they may encounter some day in their everyday life. This approach encourages creativity and logical thinking. Moreover, it uses play as a resource for new knowledge and discoveries.



These projects are very intriguing for the entire family as they establish a connection between parents and children in a new world and in a very amusing way.

I perceive the teaching method with a puppet as an extremely positive and sometimes intensive experience of constructing the bridge between imagination and reality. The children feel safe in the presence of the puppet. They enter the real world in a manner that is understandable and appropriate to them. In this way, they gain experiences and knowledge about a subject that would otherwise probably not interest them.

The puppet is a great medium that fires the child's imagination since it represents some kind of alliance. Encouraging children to be creative is great. After all, the imagination is one of the personal characteristics that is the most unique. Moreover, the puppet helps the children reinforce their ingenuity and feeling for mutual assistance, which are two wonderful and important virtues.

Besides all the mentioned features, the story also has a strong educative purpose.

The puppet represents an intermediate link between the educator and the child and has a positive influence on gaining new knowledge.

Educators' Opinions

Teachers perceive the puppet as a "kind, gentle, emphatic and interesting being, meant for teaching the youngest. The children can easily identify with it. It is their kind and resourceful rescuer. It also enters the adults' and children's hearts because it has a soul. It is magic, it connects dreams with reality, it makes things up and makes dreams come true. With its help we manage to achieve everything. It reveals the unconscious part in us. The puppet floats, flies, feels, revives and is happy. As I take it into my hands, it becomes my soul. The puppet is our motivation for learning throughout the year. It is a character, a third person who lives with us. It stimulates our imagination. It is a soft, mischievous, provocative, loving, sensual supporter. It can hear and it is unpredictable in its actions. It is alive and has the characteristics of a human being. It has a magic touch and the restless mind of a researcher. It wants to get close to

us and hug us. It is strong. It is our friend, our assistant and it is very thoughtful and sympathetic. It connects the earth with the sky. It is a part of our community. It loves everyone and is available for everyone. It represents a pedagogical mirror. It has a character. It is our mask and it personifies us. Everything is possible with its help because it encourages us. The puppet represents “I” and “us”. It has our soul, the happy soul of those who like to learn. We revive it, and inhale a life in it, we impersonate it so it becomes our partner in research and creativity. The puppet is able to tell things that we couldn’t. It has human virtues, it is not a robot, it is not stiff and without ideas. The puppet is a muse.

Head teacher’s Opinions

A summary taken from a conversation: “I am an active member of the expert team and I contribute to every activity of the project. I am always available for all the groups in all departments. I am part of the team and I am open to new ideas and virtues that are identified in the

learning groups. We are trying to show our understanding of this didactical activity through our actions.

Nevertheless, we are aware that we have different competences in different fields, therefore we help each other and at the same time keep the learning environment open for the unlimited crossing of groups. The children chose for themselves where and with whom they want to relive their new experience.

A great deal of my leadership is dedicated to opportunities for self-awareness in learning approaches. Educators always take the learning pathways first by themselves and only after that do we take our children along. The simulation encourages us as the prior experience helps us more easily foresee the whole process and consequently we can assure a more qualitative offer for the children. We always take time for reflexions where we observe the reactions of educators and children. We noticed that there were considerable differences between the perceptions of younger and older children. It is important to emphasise that the children equally influence the course of action in the literary-didactical story, in other words, the educators react to the children’s initiatives and reactions and consider their opinions, suggestions, initiatives and doubts that arise throughout the development of the story. The children therefore have a constant influence on the quality of the kindergarten curriculum. The pre-prepared simulations thus have beneficial effects on teachers who might doubt the successful realization of standards set in the learning plan.

The most important thing in my opinion is the possibility to learn from each other since it enables us to give the best we can. We create the best we know and can and consequently set out better and better conditions for education and cooperation with parents. An educator does not only cooperate with those parents whose children are in his/her group but with all parents. At this point, I have to compliment the educators on the excellent selection of materials, which help us reach the appropriate and creative interpretations of our learning goals.

The educators have somehow internalized the open laboratory that is available for everyone. Giving sense to the role of educators and children

is our constant pedagogical activity. We analyse the way children and puppets open up the emotions of introverted children and children with special needs. At this point, we have realized what powers a child has as sometimes only he/she can understand and help the other child. Every complaint from parents is accepted as a gift. It represents a two-way agreement. The set consensus defines the quality of cooperation, which is based on unselfish care for each and every child in our kindergarten.

We constantly work on ourselves. We have different mood swings, which is normal since we are influenced by different reactions. However, we try to remain professional. It is our wish and I am convinced it is also becoming our ability (competence). I am aware of the importance of the self-satisfaction of every professional worker in the desire to express creatively. A good work climate and interpersonal relations are very important in my opinion. The Trnovo Kindergarten gives opportunities to the youngest to test themselves in various strategies. If the children have limitless possibilities, they can decide on different ways of finding solutions to problems. They make decisions and know how to justify them. The teachers listen to children and understand them. It is a support for setting diverse approaches for solving some issues and accepting personal challenges. The open possibilities for self-decision making are ones that do not cause tension and aggression in learning and social groups but encourage humane approaches. We do not judge a person but we reflect on the conduct and possibilities. We are aware of the feelings and we evolve them.

To sum up, our kindergarten's motto is that everyone is seen, heard and respected. The philosophy of our professional work is the contribution of an individual. The parents participate on every level of activities as well. For this reason, we have organized various communication channels, where everyone can actively take part in the process of education and everyone can contribute his/her best. We are all aware of the mission in the sense of understanding the role we play in the child's development and in setting the best possible conditions for the child to express and feel happy. The culture of work organization is really on a high level in terms of morality and professionalism. To be able to retain these high standards, we try to ensure

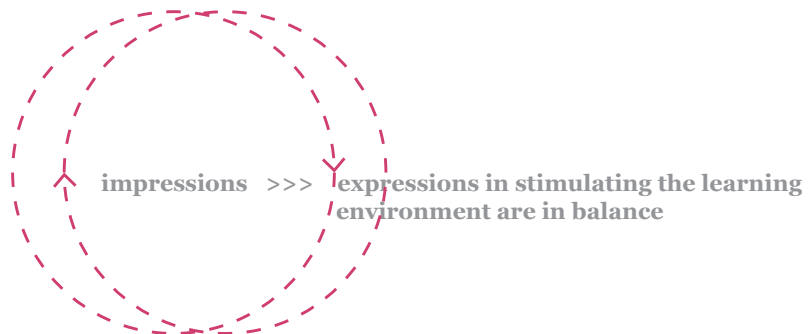
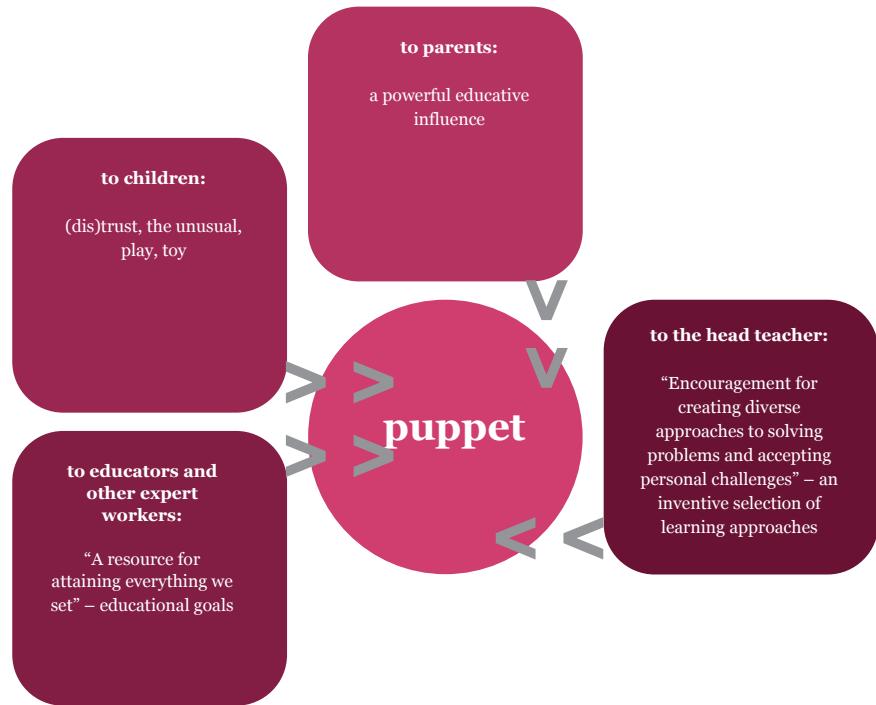
our staff the optimal work conditions and update and develop the educational programme. Moreover, we encourage the staff for personal development, for the development of their strong fields and we are aware of how important it is to keep the constant support for the education of our professional staff. The educators help each other and collaborate on the horizontal and vertical levels of implementing curriculum. In addition, we carry out a parallel course of work with individual professional teams; likewise, we plan methodology with experts and are all constantly involved in the process of action research of our kindergarten curriculum. The culture of organization is of vital importance when dealing with the updating of the kindergarten curriculum.”

Summed Up Opinions of People Involved in Education

The children's perception of the puppet corresponds with their wishes regarding the learning environment, which should be pleasant, safe and appropriate for play and reflection. Educators and children synchronically perceive the puppet as something enjoyable

12 What does a puppet represent for each participant?

13 Pedagogical dialogue in the Trnovo Kindergarten



and encouraging. In fact, the children see the puppet as the opportunity for theatre play and the kindergarten as a place for presenting thoughts. The puppet is a toy and a resource for the expression of an individual. Children, parents and educators of the Trnovo Kindergarten experience the learning theatre as an artistic and also pedagogical institution.

The photos (non-verbal messages) show the following elements: contacts, laughter, close relationships, curiosity, the power of discovery, acceptance, attentiveness, cooperation, assistance, interest in dialogue, transmission of energies, observation of movements and speech, direct learning, encouragement of willingness, experiences of a friendly environment, interest in other people's feelings and needs, wishes and challenges, fun, presentation, demonstration, communication, mutual creation, reactions, imaginary presentation, collective awareness, friendliness, eagerness for reflecting, gathering and sharing thoughts. We observe passion and the tendency to come closer to a child, willingness and verbalization, movement and setting moments in time and space, intensive observation – the perception of impressions and expressions. The parents as indirect observers realize that this education is simple and efficient since it encourages and enables the active participation of the youngest in the learning world. It represents the standards of quality education, a condition for the sustainable development of the younger generations.

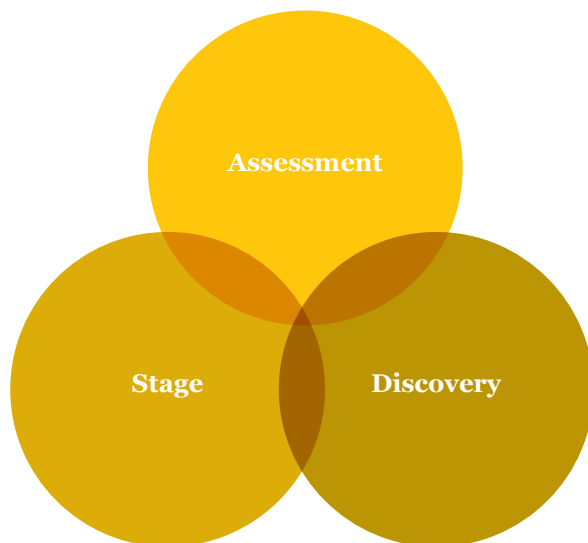
“A puppet is a medium that entices people into collective experience. Educators trigger the children's reactions. Additionally, they guide and provide feedback to the children. The puppet's additional strength is to provide guidance for the educator as well. The educator influences the emotional perception and expression of a child. Therefore, the puppet leads them through the world of discovery. Learning becomes simulation in the imaginary theatre (according to Walter Broggini)”.

The head teacher of the Trnovo Kindergarten leads the educational process by introducing share-management into the process, which includes the division of roles and responsibilities. She builds her leadership on good mutual relationships and fosters a team spirit. This approach accumulates the power of the team, mutual trust and safety, which is also felt by the

children and their parents. They act humanely. The kindergarten spirit is the source of inspirations. The dynamics of coexistence enables a highly intensive flow of impressions and expressions. The environment encourages the creativity.

Does the Trnovo Kindergarten curriculum remind you of Goethe's education - of his grandmother who painted the world through the theatre - a small stage where the young Wolfgang could perform and which represented a world for learning, personal declaration and, as he wrote in his autobiography, help to become an artist and scientist?

What turned out as a novelty, an important part that affects the openness of the kindergarten curriculum? Firstly, it involved planned, systematic assessment and constant feedback. Modified control of work and cooperation has opened up the possibilities for “more” and “better”. The assessment of activities creates new ideas such as scenarios for education and play that are more and more complete, the planning of current support in personal and professional growth, the creation of unique learning stages and professional support. The assessment of activities enables diverse and more open learning approaches – e.g. the discovery learning approach. All three elements are importantly and meaningfully connected forming a uniform entity. Only a qualitative assessment can lead to unique learning ideas and only open communication believes in discovery. This is open learning on all didactical levels, such as: when selecting material, defining educational goals, giving instructions for teaching children, educator’s pedagogical leadership, their self-education and cooperation with the management and outsourced experts. The communication is dynamic and dispersive, thus we could easily



14 The three innovative elements of pedagogical innovation in mutual coexistence in the Trnovo Kindergarten in the years 2013/14

get lost if it wasn't for the Didactical Map. This tool keeps us safe.

Assessment

Educators' Questions on the Forms of Assessment

What happens if my expectations are too high and the feedback of a child does not answer my expectations? The uncertainty is greater when we shift the groups, as the educator passes from older to younger children. What should we assess? How should we adjust pre-knowledge to match expectations (personal and standardized)? We spend a lot of time assessing and taking notes, therefore we are looking for the shortest and the most effective way. When and how an educator should quickly gather information is another dilemma we are facing as we practice a constructivist-oriented formative assessment of the education of the youngest.

Reflection on the Didactical Map

We connect the Didactical Map with the reflection of experiences, verbalization, consideration of the quality and planning new possibilities.

Reflection is a mechanism that pushes our plan (starting point) and activities forward. It requests a thorough reflection on how the data should be gathered and what the measures for assessing success should be in order to enable the growth of our thinking process and to ensure that the curriculum follows it and consequently upgrades in a spiral way (spiral curriculum according to Bruner, 1966).

Sens(e)(ing)

Children and educators feel and sense the world. A mental process is happening between four mental key elements such as memory, reason, imagination and consideration which are co-dependent. In memory, we retain those things we considered and our consciousness retains the things we imagined. The four mental processes are connected to each other by feelings, sensual





perceptions from the outside (senses) and by feelings, sensual perception from the inside (feelings). Effort as a form of response is connected to motivation - motives and action or will for participation in activity. To achieve the set goal, the feelings and efforts logically interchange. Kant in Gavrić (1991) reveals that the balance between feelings and effort is vital for perception.

Perception

To perceive the means to recognize, to understand paintings, words, actions and thoughts. It represents an intensive literacy, the development of competences for greater autonomy in acquiring information and connecting and interpreting them as well as the competences for the more autonomous creation of holistic meaningful conceptions. Assessment is therefore understood as wilful perception, understanding and the process of changing physical

outcomes into feelings of understanding experiences and their interpretation. Reading as detectives (to grasp) is the process of decoding and understanding. The process is not successful without qualitative formative assessment and without enriched feedback that “appease” the creators for future thinking and action. Attentiveness is a cognitive process in which reason prevails. It is also a focus on the learning magnet, concentration and awareness. Hence, perception does not exist without a focus on the content. Sensory organs restore the relationship with cognition as they activate working memory. Attentiveness activates working memory and concentration for recognizing and translating information from one form into another. Detection is recognition whereas decoding is the translation of information from one form into another.

Awareness

We are aware that the youngest also have experiences and rich (pre-)knowledge. The educators intertwine this wealth with the basic literary-didactical story. The curriculum is formed based on the needs and expectations of our



social learning groups. Bruner calls this process collaborative learning (Bruner in Leonard, 2002). Authors of the curriculum are focused on the child's thinking and activities. We are not a primary resource of knowledge; however we provide support during the learning process, which corresponds to the scaffolding approach (according to Bruner in Leonard, 2002) and we conduct the implementation of the project. We try not to obstruct the children in their autonomous research of the world, but nevertheless we want a good overview of learning and ensuring the required safety in their growth and development.

Constructivists' Story

There are several education paradigms or models of constructivism behind

the constructivist theory, such as Vygotsky's model of social constructivism, the situated learning of Jane Lave, Piaget's developmental learning theory or Bruner's model of discovery learning (Bruner in Leonard, 2002 <http://www.questia.com/library/101312823/learning-theories-a-to-z>). During the process of accommodation (adaptation), the existing mental structures change as they try to give meaning to the new events. Therefore, during this process, an individual interprets events on the basis of the existent mental structures. The point of Bruner's discovery learning is that children remember the concepts if they do the research themselves, using their pre-knowledge. Of course, children make mistakes during the process but this is an integral part of the learning process and a signal for improvement of the existent knowledge. The important thing is that a child develops and is becoming self-motivated and more experienced so he/she can actively and autonomously overtake some part of learning in order to build and check the structures of the learning content. The opposite happens when the educators take the leading role in creating the content and place for research, discovery and when pointing out mistakes and demanding proof for mastering learning subjects.

We believe there is more than one single truth. Vygotsky was thinking in the same way and thus added social learning to the theory. Vygotsky focuses



on the qualitative strength and the assistance of children with their formation of content (in Leonard, 2002). The children are looking for approaches that enable more efficient interaction and they are thinking about the mental constructions. Constructivism looks for the environment for children in order to ensure an open learning environment in which he/she builds new meaning by using the acquired knowledge. He/she adds meaning to the new knowledge and therefore creates renewed content and constructs new mental product.

Constructivism and humanism are both focused on self-guidance, self-control, self-regulation, autonomy of learning and personal growth achieved by active participation in the learning process (in Leonard, 2002).

Constructivism is a distinctively free learning process that we take into consideration as we plan, implement, assess and evaluate the process of adaptation to the world. This approach enables young researchers the possibility of discovering in their way, which permits them to discover their own strategies and their choice of tools. Only then do the children feel free. Qualitative formative assessment enables current and interesting interaction as a form of learning and so it became an important element of education and the Didactical Map.

The Pedagogical Stage

The Stage as a Place and Support for the Puppeteer

The learning stage of educators from the Trnovo Kindergarten is an open environment that takes care of the needs and expectations of learners. We deliberate over the appropriate and interesting environment that would correspond with a certain experience. When would the youngest most easily understand and comprehend? Is it where the environment is safer and one can feel in a creative mood? We discuss events in the environment that would enable efficient insights for children. In accordance with the mentioned measures, we select the locations, learning sources and tools with the intention of ensuring that the children gain interesting and lasting experiences



and to form a solid mental scheme of the world.

Scaffolding, which is mentioned by Bruner, provides support for the young generation in the autonomous upgrading of knowledge. Vygotsky developed this idea before Bruner by introducing the zone of proximal level of development with the support of adults. If we want to know exactly where we stand and where we would like to go, it is not difficult to define proximal learning. Nevertheless, a constant assessment and an appropriate feed forward is vital for achieving this. The didactical support of the educator comes in the form of his/her competence to detect the needs and expectancies of learners and his/her ability to preserve learning rhythm and melody. To be able to follow the

dynamics of comprehension of children, the educators not only need to have a good empathic perception but also a respectful relation and agility as well as vast knowledge.

The Puppet as a Mental Support

The puppet comes on the stage and invites the child to get familiar with it, its situation and its way of thinking. In addition, it enables the children to put themselves in the shoes of the others who are involved in finding a solution to the quandary. The puppeteer gives the child the opportunity to understand and look at things from different perspectives, which is the condition for developing mental tolerance, innovativeness, emotional intelligence and empathy. The puppet relieves the children of the fear of authority so they can more easily make contact with other people (according to Bastašić, 1990).

Experience

Experiencing is a subjective holistic assessment that is made through perception, comprehension and self-control. Experiences are the basis

for recognition and understanding, which represents the highest degree of human wisdom.

We feel the world. Our brains transform the messages into perceptions so they can explain visual stimulus. It often happens that some things are missed, especially if we perceive them as unimportant. The feeling is actually an experience and a sensation depending on the circumstances/environment. Sense is a guide and metric unit or a tool for more thorough and better consideration. Senses are antennas for receiving, decoding and defining or categorizing the impression or message, which we then transcribe so it can evoke associative relations and release chemical and physical reaction. This process enables the interpretation of this impression / the process of understanding / imagination. The overall intention behind it is our reaction.

The reaction in our brains already refers to our subconscious and conscious reaction. The reaction is a message for other new impressions that one person feels through his/her actions and the other person for whom the reaction is intended feels it as well. This is sensual dialogue – a communication. The impressions and expressions are not only isolated information but they represent energetic flow or transfer with their own value and influence. This energy passes on to others through perception. Each form of energy has its own message / code / chemical and physical compound / ingredient that influences the reaction. The hormones add a taste of a spirit to the compound. Glands have enzymes. These are chemical compounds that are accelerated by physical portable energy. Hence, learning has never been only a transfer of information and messages since each message or even better, the entire impression, has its own feature/essence (spirit). As the spirit is processed in our brains and body with our chemical enzymes, we can taste the impression in its purest form and it impresses on our associative network (according to Suderland, 2010).

Experiential Education

Experiential education mentioned by Dewey (1938) defines the philosophy of education describing the process that occurs between a child and an educator



that infuses direct experience with the learning environment and content. Dewey (in Leonard, 2002, <http://www.questia.com/library/101312823/learning-theories-a-to-z>) defines it as organic schooling lead also by his daughter Evelyn and consequently also as holistic education, which enables experiential education. If you are present in the situation, you can influence the activities. Educators form pedagogical action within the project learning environment.

Experiential education represents a live image, a challenge for mind, learning and handling for educators and for learners as well. According to Bullens (1991 in Krajnčan, 1999), experiential education is unrepeatable and unique. Learning as a form of pedagogic experience has an extraordinary social power for children, educators and indirectly also for parents. It is spontaneous yet planned, justified and transparent (Ziegenspeck, 1992 in Krajnčan, 1999). One of the fundamental measures of experiential pedagogy is the inclusion of natural experience. It is based on the co-responsibility of all the participators who are trying for the success of the project. Learning unfolds in social relations. This process involves a certain degree of risk but it also strengthens everyone's capabilities.

Holistic draft in terms of experiences is marked by "heart, hand and reason" (Ziegenspeck, 1992, p. 23). All three elements together consider and form the integrity of human life and social relations. In this process, the heart serves for life and love, the hand for handling and managing and

reason for learning and guiding. The totality of all three elements should represent the point of this world as it gives confidence and emancipation to individuals. We educate (adapt to each other) by direct learning with the heart, hand and reason in realistic circumstances, with creative drafts on solving the problems and characteristics of social invitations.

Experiential education is a form of education that puts forward a capability of experiencing, self-perception and reflection of social and actual situation. The experience is gained through one's own perception, comprehension and self-control. The basic purpose is to experience and understand the living environment and behaviour. Experiences are vital for holistic personal development. Conversation and the ability to listen represent crucial importance in this education. For this form of education, our comprehension has to be open and flexible.

The nature of freedom is interesting. The feeling of freedom comes with the active inclusion and participation of cognition in the living community. It is valid for the management and also for educators and for children and their parents. Education

represents intellectual development through experiences. Only at that point can you know when you can be successful.

The Goal is Outside and Inside

A goal is formed from reflection on the way we react. It depends on the strategy and working approach, the chosen methods and techniques, reflection, content, motive, willingness for adaptation, experiences and virtues and manners of judgement. The goal depends on various conditions such as: the will (of the receiver and sender, of physical and chemical processes), the question of whether one likes networking, expressing, accepting impressions, the openness of one's mind, the openness for new knowledge, on having a driving energy and the potential for movement and the acceptance of impressions and the transmission of expressions. Will is connected to achievement and success (previous and planned). It depends on us, our personality and on the way we react. Introverted people tend to respond differently – achieving the goal – to extroverted ones.

In the first place, educators have to get to know themselves and

the children, predict their influence and the influence of the children, also predict the things they can expect and trigger in the learning scenario and know how and when to react. Educators have to know the sensual spectrum of anger and fear and the spectrum of sensual combinations that cause different reactions. Emotional intelligence and its components such as awareness, understanding emotional impressions and reactions, the ability of emotional reaction, communication and creating atmosphere (mood, relations) are put to the test for everybody in the social learning group. An educator should master different learning theories and the general possibilities for their usage; he/she should also have a good knowledge of the emotional encyclopaedia and predict different emotional combinations of the prevailing types that define learning styles or personal characteristics. In addition, an educator should be familiar with the different teaching theories and other concepts such as the creation of impressions in the learning environment, the encyclopaedia of phenomena and different fields of science, humanism or learning content that represent the learning magnet (according to Sudeland, 2010). An educator should predict simultaneously and spirally (upwards to follow the growth) the corresponding DNA form (what – how – why): 1. what applies to the content, concepts, phenomena, magnets for adapting to the environment, 2. how does it apply to the function, how our limbs and head work, create principles and reflect in the environment, 3. why does it apply to relations, emotions, will, learning styles, work, reaction



to creating an impression. These three interrogatives help educators reflect on how a person develops literacy, comprehension and consequently how (s)he discharges him-/herself and others in the environment.

Discovery

Discovery in this sense is the method and/or learning and operating strategy.

Discovery Starts with the Need

Discovery is usually initiated by notions such as need, desire, inner movement or even a mission. It is usually fun and exciting. The process of research supports astonishment and the desire for more and for revealing the undiscovered, which is frequently already foreseen. Astonishment is a strong motivational force for encouraging further curiosity in a child, a tendency for discovery, joyful performance and life satisfaction (in Gobec, 2008, p. 140)

The Puppet Leads us to Astonishment

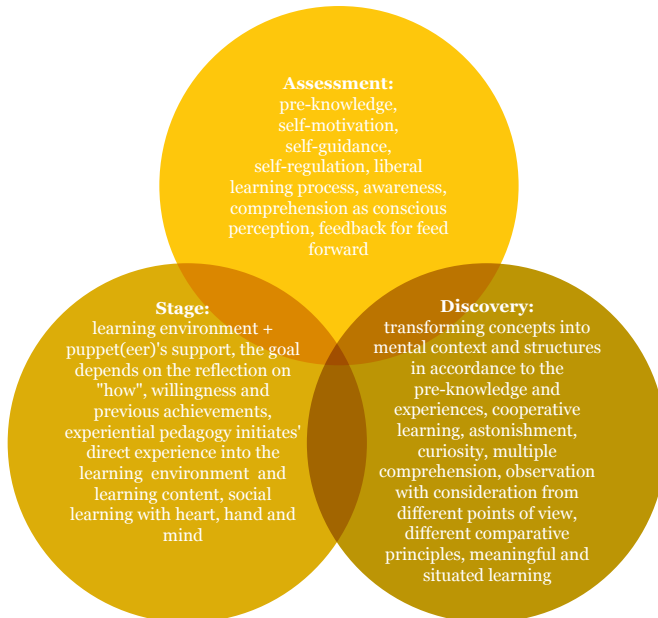
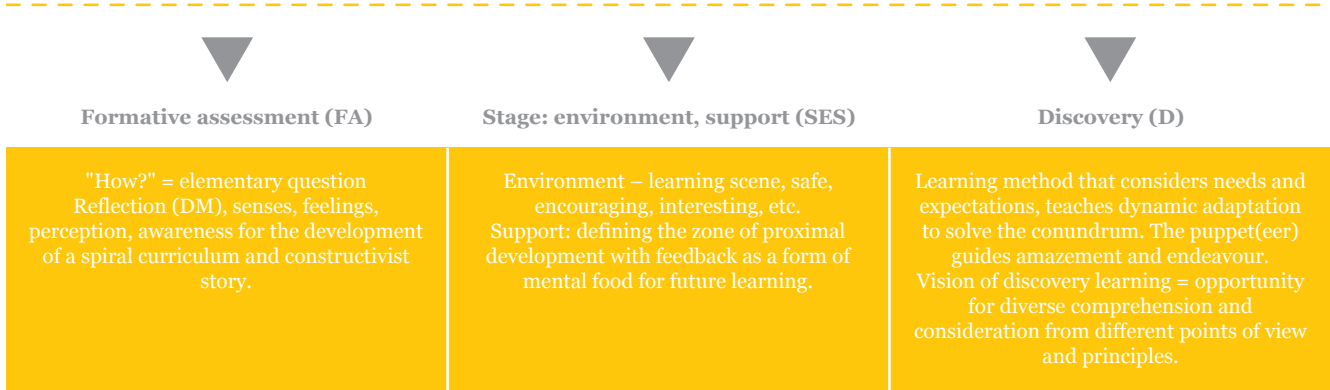
The puppet(eer) leads us to astonishment and is thus an important motivational instrument for enriching and sensualising the child's emotional and social potential because it enables the children to get accustomed to the situation and to the manner of perception (Gobec, 2008, p. 140). With this approach, we develop pre-dispositions for observation from different angles, which is a preliminary condition for the development of social tolerance, flexibility, comprehension and innovation (updating) and for the child's development of emotional intelligence and the capability of empathy so the frontal lobe would carry out its function.

Discovery is a Method

Generally speaking, discovery is open inquiry work comprising research, integration and the explanation of evidence. Usually, discovery is not made

in isolation. On the contrary, it represents a collaborative, sometimes competitive cooperation. In the discovery process, we are interested in relationships and phenomena, therefore we are open for different functional principles. In the process, we tend to research and form new content to which we give meaning and awareness. To be able to discover, we need to look for, follow, assess, observe and familiarise. The mind and senses are flexible, elastic and open. Normally, we find what we are looking for. The goal is already predicted. We imagine it in advance and ask for it. While discovering, we get to know key values, we verify and translate. The research is carried out by analysing, exposing, comparing and establishing the relations and associations, connecting, joining, generalizing, suggesting changes, improvements and new values. The revealed features are set back to its functional place so that the environment remains safe and reliable. This also applies to the puppets. For this reason, we build mental processes, develop potential cognitive mental relations, receive humanely and tolerate the findings of others.

Open kindergarten curriculum = the autonomous but meaningful selection of materials or resources, goals, teaching and learning methods, self-education, control etc., and the use of Didactical Map (DM)



15 What does an open kindergarten curriculum represent for us?

16 Three innovative elements in mutual coexistence at the Trnovo Kindergarten in the years 2013/14 with keywords

From the Constructivist Theory

Discovering the world through discovery learning has its place in constructivist learning theory. This learning form, defined by Jerome Bruner, covers an active form of learning by which learners have to remember the concepts if they want to discover in their own way. Learners include the concepts in their own learning, seize them and integrate them in their mental context and structures, so it would correspond to the learner's pre-knowledge and experiences (in Leonard, 2002).

Supposedly, the child is mature enough for discovery learning and meeting the challenge, he/she is personally motivated and experienced in the active co-formation and structuring of learning content. The educators are mostly innovative encouragers who support the learning pathways and assess the growth of the children's capabilities and treasures or talent in an active learning process. A child needs a scheme based on which he/she can reshape, construct or add context and based on which he/she can conclude, connect, set the hypothesis and make decisions. If the child is actively included in the formation of the text (context), he/she can more easily comprehend and form his/her knowledge in the mental process of transformation.

The contrary happens if the educator creates and forms the content him/herself as there is little time and place for teaching children, for their self-discovery and upgrading their comprehension. In the process, he/she can use multiple resources, internet, hypermedia etc. with the intention of forming associative thinking patterns, associative connections and natural patterns.

Vision of Discovery

In his late research of discovery learning, professor Jerome Bruner recommends this sort of learning for the youngest and emphasises that the kindergartens of the 21st century should enable learning that supports the following principles: 1. multiplicity principle (various comprehensions), 2. perspective principle (observation and judgement from different points of view,

including on the future) and 3. comparative principle (Bruner, <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/about-us/video-archive/>). Discovery learning includes elements of meaningful learning from the point of view of motivation as the ability of comprehension and the elements of situated learning approach from the point of including the present time component in the learning environment.

Keywords: systematic assessment, constant feedback, unique learning stages, liberal learning process, discovery according to one's own desires, solid mental schemes, zone of proximal development, empathy, ignoring the unimportant things, feeling is experience, sense is measure unit for consideration, co-responsibility, self-control, situated learning

Cognition

The Project Work with a Puppet is a project established on the basis of philosophical co-existence. It comes to life with a literary-didactical story and unfolds by solving various life conundrums. The project is run by the puppet(eer), who is in coexistence with the children. The story is formed and shaped as a report in the Didactical Map. Everybody enjoys and believes in the project: educators, management, children and their parents. The Project work with a puppet stresses the values of coexistence and its preservation by the principle of interconnecting (coexistence as constant connection) achievements and play. Alongside that, it enables the participants to experience the beauty and balance between will and creation. The PWP represents unique and unrepeatable life stories. Participants of the PWP learn how to think and cooperate. They have a first-hand experience of a goal as a representation of happiness. The PWP instils into the young generations and into their educators the safe and stable exploratory (developmental) life that is a key feature of our existence.

Bruner perceives the world of discovery in a constructivist way and so do we. Bruner focuses on the curriculum and its formation in a way that enables an enriched programme and facilitates the learner to achieve the optimal knowledge, the knowledge beyond expectations or/and limitless knowledge in the sense of a traditional learning environment. Therefore, we



permit, enable and even support the child in the creation of a learning environment that encourages the discovery of the world inside the playroom. It is this sort of education we really enjoy. Bruner encourages open education for the optimal personal development of staff and learners, a formative assessment with feedback that feeds the child and the educator for further discovery of the world, for his/her understanding and expression. This represents our education model. Moreover, Bruner encourages research in terms of analysing, exposing, comparing, and discovering the relations and associations, connections for further conclusions, generalization and suggestions for changes, improvements and new values. Together with the puppet, our children perform all these actions. The revealed features are set back to its functional place so that the environment remains safe and reliable – stable. For this reason, we build mental processes, develop cognition and potential mental relations, and humanely receive and tolerate findings, including those by others. The puppet leaves when it is no longer

needed, as the experience remains part of us, of our personality (according to Bruner in Leonard, 2002).

Love and loving relations are one of the gifts of Mother Nature, Suderland (p. 183, 2010) believes. Everybody has one's own basic genetic system of abilities for love, which depends on the experiences, mostly gathered in childhood (p. 184). To love in peace means to connect love into deep state of wellbeing. The person we love brings security, comfort and meaning to our lives. We have a real perception of this person and we build up the basic trust. To love in peace also means to feel very safe (idem, p. 184). Play guided by a child activates wonderful opioids that decrease the level of stress hormones. Those who know how to love also know to ease the distress of loved ones. Mental health and happiness depend on the abilities to create deeper human relations. The quality of communication with other people is absolutely the most important factor that influences the quality of life. A strong connection with another person also reflects in a better inner connection and connection with our life. In addition, we get to know ourselves in the relation to others and consequently, we develop thanks to the relations with others, Suderland (p. 217, 2010) believes.

In the Trnovo kindergarten, we experience Rousseau's pedagogic eros as we are aware of the fact that our puppet, for example Pinocchio, represents a strong wish for self-regulation, a sharpening of one's own mind with the final aim of becoming a good fellow and a respected person. The point of strong will and stamina is to learn how to think, consider and set the virtues and/or goals on the life path (according to Collodi, 1968). This is exactly what the educators in the Trnovo Kindergarten have in mind. The dynamic multi-layered kindergarten curriculum that we offer and implement with a great deal of pedagogic eros encourages the youngest to discover the world.

Keywords: project, co-existence, story, conundrum, puppet(-eer), Didactical Map, construction, discovery, limitless knowledge, education that rejoices, open education, formative assessment with feedback for feed forward, the puppet as an experience that stays within us, dynamic multi-layered curriculum imposed by a pedagogic eros that encourages us to discover the world



Terminology

Didactical Map	a mutual dynamic plan for implementing education (kindergarten programme) representing a holistic image of pedagogic communication in a kindergarten (see Antič, Pedagogical innovation. Didactical Map, 2013)
Communication in puppetry	communication with the help of a medium - puppet (according to Korošec, 2014)
Beauty	a fundamental human need (according to Maslow in Ferruci, 2010) that constructs human intelligence
Literary-didactical story	the kindergarten curriculum of the Trnovo Kindergarten
Puppet laboratory	an environment for research and simulation
Mental struggle	a form of mutual support
Pedagogical story	the spiral process of upgrading (pre-)knowledge, a spiral curriculum according to Bruner (1996)
Thread	a subject of research
Self-control	one of the most important life goals of Socrates
Learning co-existence	the pedagogy of community
Conundrum	pedagogical challenge

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