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Extracurricular Activities, an Alternative for Interdisciplinary Learning

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Abstract

Extracurricular activities include multiple measures of education and training. They are characterized by a greater variety and flexibility, providing better options for folding the particular skills and interests of students, satisfying the greater needs of children and young people, having at the same time a strong band. As extracurricular activities are not unequivocally associated to content, they may be an opportunity for interdisciplinary learning, which is much closer to learning to life than learning school subjects, which is strictly divided. Interdisciplinarity as a way of organizing learning content, with implications for the entire design strategies curriculum provides a consistent view of phenomena and processes proposed for study and facilitates contextualization and application of school knowledge in different life situations. Interdisciplinary approach to learning leads to the achievement of learning objectives of a high complexity. Children learn to make decisions, to think critically, to solve problems. Learning is achieved mainly through cooperation, teacher and students become partners in learning. The student is asked to solve various tasks and make an active contribution to his own development. The assessment focuses on the qualitative elements and targets the learning progress. In this paper we propose a way to achieve the design of an extracurricular activity – the trip in an interdisciplinary manner, in terms of Bloom's taxonomy and of the theory of multiple intelligences - Howard Gardner. The tasks approach the interdisciplinary learning, differentiated, based on the eight types of intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical-rhythmical, kinesthetical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, following step by step the six levels of Bloom' s taxonomy: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Keywords:

extracurricular activities, interdisciplinary, learning for life, multiple intelligences, Bloom' s Taxonomy

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Conceptual distinction

It is known that the school must provide each student the opportunity to form his own trajectory, according to individual capabilities, with doors open to all who need training and social integration, education for life, trying to fill in some cases isolation and low parent education and in others to develop and build outstanding skills.

The task is done responsibly and effectively, the more school approaches consistently this responsibility, the less the negative influence that informal education can have is reduced.

Extracurricular activities refer to shares belonging to the interference of formal non-formal education. We can consider that they include a mix of educational actions influences structured and organized in school or out of school, with the support of teachers and other educational institutions, approaching content and objectives of the national curriculum but outside the pursuit of educational goals and ideal.

They can be coordinated, guided by teachers or other educational professionals: coaches, entertainers, librarians, actors, artists or by specialized teams.

Extracurricular activities thus include multiple education and training activities, the actions situated in this context being characterized by a greater variety and flexibility, a strong formative character, providing a better possibility of matching the skills and interests of the particular choices of students, satisfying the greater needs of children and young people, leading education closer to what training for life (Chisiu, 2012).

Extracurricular educational objectives are:

- enriching and broadening the horizon of knowledge;
- ensuring the framework of practicing and cultivating of some skills;
- relaxing the participants and spending organized leisure time;
- professional perfection.

The relationship between school and extracurricular education is complementary in terms of content, forms of organization and accomplishment

In Europe, the initiative to promote extracurricular educational activity belongs to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe which has resulted in the recommendations made in this area to the

member states. The most relevant document is the Recommendation of 30th April 2003, which states the courses of action related to curricular and extracurricular activities, in terms of equal contribution to a child's personality development, his social integration, of learning for life.

Through its specificity, to stimulate cognitive, spiritual, interpersonal and social development, extracurricular activities are able to adjust to the individual requirements, different for all children in the interests of knowledge and potential. The contexts created by various means to realize this type of education: projects, thematic applications and trips offer the possibility of interdisciplinary approaches, practicing skills and life skills in an integrated, holistic development of personality.

Together, children, teachers, parents and other education stakeholders (librarians, coaches, curators, animators, trainers) can make out of the educational institution a pleasant place for everyone involved in the educational process, an environment based on trust, communication, respect and flexibility and conducive to genuine learning. To highlight the learning process, it is important to know what is appropriate to teach. Activities should have learning objectives. It is equally important that we should set ourselves learning objectives, on a longer term or specific learning experiences, in our case extracurricular activities. It indicated that they respect the natural course of long-term learning, of good and useful learning, starting from learning concepts to their integration in systems of larger and larger knowledge their use in practicing and training skills.

Bloom's Taxonomy is a classification of educational objectives, conducted by a group of specialists in education, coordinated by Benjamin Bloom.

For the *knowledge* level, the student recognizes and reproduces information, the main ideas in an approximate form in which they were learned.

The understanding asks from the student implementing, explaining, summarizing and interpreting information, based on prior learning.

On the *application* level, the student selects and uses data transfer and principles to solve a problem or a practical situation.

The work of the first three levels, the cognitive application is reduced. Acquisition is limited to knowing. It does not take much thinking, learning can occur in isolation. Practiced skills are low. These

can be learned directly but not sufficiently in itself. But there are absolutely necessary to achieve functional knowledge.

The next three levels require a high cognitive demand. Acquisitions are in the act zone. Students should think deeply and understand new material and relate it to what they know. Knowledge is fully functional. Acquisitions are of high level, necessary in real life as in many evaluations. They demand full understanding and making connections.

Through analysis, the student divides the material into its component parts, shows the relationships between them, distinguishes, classifies and relates assumptions, hypotheses and questions.

At the summary level, the student creates, integrates or combines ideas in a product or he offer which is new for him.

At the highest level, the student *appreciates*, evaluates or criticizes the standards and criteria, makes value judgments about a particular problem on the basis of consistency, rigor and efficiency (Bloom, 1984).

A defining element in the advancement of knowledge is the interdisciplinary approach.

Interdisciplinarity is a recent orientation of learning, which involves learning approach, beyond the boundaries of imposed disciplines. It involves the intersection of different disciplines, a bridge between disciplines, integrating different fields of knowledge. Interdisciplinarity, conceptual and methodological devices are used in multiple connections to examine an issue or a problem, especially on the development of integrated, cross key skills useful for life.

Interdisciplinarity requires cooperation between different disciplines to solve complex tasks which cannot be captured only by a prudent combination of convergence and multiple points of view. (Cucuş, 1996)

Interdisciplinarity approach involves the rapid and efficient transfer, the ability to synthesize knowledge, skills and competences acquired by studying various disciplines in order to solve problem situations. It is one that responds to useful learning, meaningful learning, learning for life (Nicolescu, 2007).

Interdisciplinarity learning is achieved mainly through cooperation; teacher and students become partners in learning. The student is asked to solve various tasks and make an active contribution

to their own development. The assessment focuses on the qualitative elements and targeting learning progress.

Interdisciplinarity approach to learning leads to highly complex achievement. Children learn to make decisions, to solve problems, to think critically, to choose effective methods and techniques.

Success in life is determined by the ability to get out of the strict discipline, the ability to make connections that lead to solving problems, which are often difficult to subordinate to a certain discipline.

The Multiple Intelligences Theory belongs to Howard Gardner, a renowned specialist in educational psychology, who sees intelligence as the ability to solve problems or to model certain valued products in one or more cultural settings.

In Multiple. Intelligences. New Horizons, the cited author argues that it is not realistic to talk only about one type of intelligence (the logical-mathematical type) and that human individuals are different in terms of "the profile or look" of personal intelligence. He therefore proposes eight types of intelligence:

- Linguistic
- Logical-mathematical
- Visual-spatial
- Musical rhythmic
- Kinesthetic
- Interpersonal
- Intrapersonal
- Naturalist.

These forms of intelligence that vary from individual to individual and from culture to culture are described as follows:

- Linguistic intelligence - the ability to learn easily a foreign language or develop a rich vocabulary;
- Logical-mathematical intelligence - the ability to easily solve problems and feel very comfortable when working with numbers. This is what determines the obtaining of high scores on tests that measure traditional intelligence quotient.
- Musical intelligence - the ability to easily identify and retain a song to recognize the style of a different composer or musical scores;

- Kinesthetic intelligence - the ability to accurately use the body, coordinating the movements very well and at the same time, being able to understand quickly all the nuances of a movement;
- Spatial intelligence - the ability to see structures and forms accurately. Those who possess this intelligence can easily express themselves through drawings, photographs and sculptures;
- Interpersonal intelligence - refers to the ability to help individuals understand their feelings, intentions, motivations, and the desires of others and which enables a successful relationship with those around;
- Intrapersonal intelligence - the ability of a person to understand himself, to correctly assess and predict their own feelings and motivations. This intelligence provides efficient development of a working model of individual perspective;
- Naturalist intelligence - one that allows the individual to recognize, classify and distinguish different characteristics of the environment. This intelligence combines the ability to highlight the essential and characterize valued roles in different cultures (Gardner, 2006).

The first two types of intelligence are those that are traditionally capitalized and valued in school. The next three are usually associated with the arts and the next two are what Daniel Goleman calls emotional intelligence, which is responsible in an overwhelming proportion for the professional success, the success in life in general.

Design work

Design requires a complex selection of operations for choosing objectives, identifying effective training content and conditions. Extracurricular activities design is not easy, especially for the fact that the burden falls entirely on the responsibility of teachers. What we propose is itself an interdisciplinary, in that the teacher must establish connections between the two theories. The role of the teacher in designing and organizing extracurricular activities becomes more important. His responsibility is to identify those areas that can provide the assistance and educational intervention at the same time the natural evolution of the development of each student.

A well done project ensures a high degree of success of the activity itself. Project phases vary depending on the level at which it operates but mainly at each level there are present decisions on three issues:

- prioritizing the aims defined for the activities to be done;
- developing and delivering learning experiences designed to make finalities tangible commitments;
- developing a program for the implementation of the student activity sequences - group - the class - the school as a whole.

Frequently there are teachers who claim that the classroom time does not allow completion of each level of Bloom's Taxonomy to take knowledge of the scope and the integration into a system to ensure functionality. Extracurricular activities are the optimal opportunity to continue learning in a way to ensure those needs, considering it takes place during a period exclusively managed by the teacher, according to needs and availability that the children have (Popa, 2009).

Project activity - Excursion

The proposed activity is appropriate in middle school or high school students. A trip like this I made with teachers who attended a training course on the issue of extracurricular activities.

Preparing the excursion

To prepare the trip activity groups are recommended. Share the following tasks, on the types of intelligence and levels of learning of Bloom . The working groups will be set according to the dominant type of intelligence. Students will present their work assignments for all intelligence, they will decide which suit them, which they want to work. Groups, formed according to the choice of students, will begin work at different stages, some in need of the works, the products made by other groups. Preparing the trip will take at least 4 weeks.

Step 1. First week. Interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence groups.

Step 2. The second week. Groups with verbal intelligence - linguistic and visual-spatial.

Step 3. The third week. Groups with logical-mathematical intelligence, musical-rhythmic, body-kinesthetic and naturalist.

Step 4. The fourth week. All products will be finalized and adjusted (Chisiu, 2012).

Tasks for students with dominant interpersonal intelligence

Students will perform a survey among colleagues, parents, teachers or other knowledge to determine the route of a trip.

Knowledge: Establish a list of people that you interview to identify possible routes of the trip.

Understanding: Formulate at least 5 questions to help you find useful information to determine the route.

Application: the interview and write the answers.

Analysis: Analyze responses.

Summary: Build paths and indicate some sightseeing.

Evaluation: Make a list of pros and cons of each route.

Tasks for students with intrapersonal intelligence

Knowledge: Make a list of activities that you would like to place in a trip or make a list of issues that need to be considered when preparing luggage for a trip.

Understanding: Describe some aspects of the ideal trip, experienced or imagined.

Application: Make a list of rules of the group for a trip.

Analysis: Identify reasons for which the trip was great, perfect.

Summary: Write, to a former classmate, a letter of invitation to take part in the trip.

Evaluation: Make a note listing the strengths of the trip and the issues that could be improved or Make a list where you list the benefits and risks of trips.

Tasks for students with verbal-linguistic intelligence

Knowledge: Make a list of the day's activities and objectives to be visited.

Understanding: Make a presentation up to 10 lines for each objective proposed Application: Interpret a poem, a fragment of a literary work whose author is a representative of the area visited.

Analysis: Rank based on field goals: historical, cultural, leisure, knowledge of nature, etc.

Summary: Make one call for each proposed objective or create at least one stanza in which to present each of the objectives.

Evaluation: Find at least 3 arguments to convince the audience to visit objectives.

Tasks for students with visual– spatial intelligence

Knowledge: Using a map, make a list of places where you go during the trip.

Understanding: Take a mute trip map with its route respecting the cardinal points and conventional signs.

Application: Categorize localities through which the route according to two criteria set by you (example: cities, villages, resorts).

Analysis: Associate sights to the localities that you can visit.

Summary: Create one symbol for each sight viewed.

Evaluation: Choose the most suitable attractions worth to be visited. Please explain your choice.

Tasks for students with logical-mathematical intelligence

Knowledge: Using route trip, write down all important numerical information:

- number of participants;
- total distance;
- distance between the main points of the route;
- estimated average speed in km;
- fuel consumption estimated at 100 km;
- the price of a night staying;
- the price for lunch;
- the price of dinner;
- other expenses.

Understanding: Determine relationships between numerical data noted.

Application: Use this data to find out the cost of the trip per person and for the entire group.

Analysis: Classify costs by at least two criteria set by you.

Summary: Make a table to pass these costs in ascending order.

Assessment: Identify areas where you can make savings, after a review of expenses. Estimate how much it can be reduced.

Tasks for pupils with naturalist intelligence

Knowledge: List the name of the relief that you will get through.

Comprehension: Write at least three characteristics of each form of relief.

Application: Describe the landform in our area.

Analysis: Compare the relief in our area with one of the common.

Indicate at least two similarities and two differences.

Summary: Create a stanza illustrated by a drawing or painting, through which to eulogize a lauded corner of the area you are visiting.

Evaluation: Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of living in one of the areas to be visited, referring to the natural wealth and natural phenomena characteristic of the area.

Tasks for students with body-kinesthetic intelligence

Knowledge: Make a list of specific dances of the area.

Understanding Record a play of the region that can be danced.

Application: Learn a specific dance area.

Analysis: Play a specific dance of our area and compare them.

Summary: Prepare a pantomime exercise to convey a message about some goals that you will visit.

Evaluation: Establish some characteristics of the learned dance (the dance band that it uses, why it bears that name, what does it mean etc.)

Tasks for students with musical-rhythmic intelligence

Knowledge: Make a list of songs that for specific areas or talk about areas that you will cross.

Understanding: Associate names of the songs to the place, the legend, the tourist objective.

Application: Interpret at least one song which should present or talk about the goals of the trip or should be specific to the area.

Analysis: Explain the origin of names.

Summary: Create a melody for the verse created by fellow linguists group.

Evaluation: What is the link between the content of the lyrics and melody created by you (Chisiu, 2012)?

Development of excursion

During the trip: in the bus, during visits, at the accommodation place, students use the products made in the preparation phase, with the possibility to complete and improve them with new knowledge, as far as crossing the trail. They will recite the prepared poems, they will present biographical records during the visits they made, will perform the prepared songs, they present the prepared dance, will follow the actual distance traveled, will do lists with real expenses, will present the learnt dance, will support using arguments the urge to visit various objectives.

Assessment excursion

The evaluation phase of the activity will take place one week after return. During the week, students will prepare materials needed to write a book, a leaflet, a poster of trip journals, some expenses forms, which will be the product of a common portfolio. Students can use both materials made in the preparation and completions and improvements made during the trip.

The products will be presented to the teachers of the school, meeting with parents and students in the school council.

Conclusions and recommendations

Designed and developed with responsibility, extracurricular activities may be an occasion for the exercise of transversal competences, of recovery acquisitions that students already have by learning various subjects. The theory of multiple intelligences enables interdisciplinary learning. The approach will be interdisciplinary and flexible by extending or deepening or creating curricular objectives that complement the harmonious development of the student. The proposed activities in a relaxed and enjoyable way, students use knowledge gained in Romanian language, history, geography, mathematics, music, physical education, drawing and a variety of skills are practiced both intellectual and communication skills, networking, teamwork. The knowledge is integrated and connected in solid systems, the result of a genuine learning, of a learning with value.

Extracurricular activities can fully meet the wishes, the needs of students, create a school community who knows and shares its traditions, learning through cooperation, stimulate participation and can build a positive self-image.

These actions have an impact on training students. Stimulate and sustain curiosity, interest and enthusiasm of students in the project, provide a rich experience strengthens the relationship with the community, shape public opinion towards personal and social problems.

To enable each student, regardless of ability, motivation, level of social or religious affiliation or ethnic origin, to develop, train and be powerful in society, it is necessary to know and to respect individual peculiarities. Extracurricular activities by their characteristics (time flexibility, the content, the organization, the venue) discussed on the perspective of the theory of multiple intelligences represent educational

experiences that meet everyone's individuality and specificity and can interfere constructively and adjustably throughout the educational path.

The role of the teacher in designing and organizing extracurricular activities becomes more important than school activities as extracurricular activities do not associate univocally content but require interdisciplinary approaches and flexible allocation of time and a certain succession, not without the right of prescription appeal. The role of the teacher in designing and organizing extracurricular activity becomes much more important.

His responsibility is to identify those areas that can provide the assistance and educational intervention, also the natural evolution of the development of each student.

A positive assessment of how the proposed activity is to present the results of the teachers' learning in meeting with parents, the student council. It's a way to give meaning to learning. Certain satisfaction is much higher than if the products of children would remain closed in a cupboard and only they would be the ones who would marvel and enjoy what they have achieved. Shared satisfaction enhances and rewards effort. It surely motivates. We talk about work motivation led to the end, about the need to recognize the effort and results.

This kind of design and development can be used at a variety of extracurricular activities and every time the entire positive contribution of business should be directly proportional to the degree of responsibility and involvement of teachers.

By training school events and festivals, tours, volunteering, children and young people will meet their individual interests and options, they will shape social and civic skills that will guide them to success (Chisui, 2012).

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