



**Daliborka R. Popović<sup>1</sup>**

University of Priština in Kosovska Mitrovica,  
Teacher Training Faculty, Kosovska Mitrovica, Serbia

**Mirjana R. Beara**

University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Philology and Arts and Joint  
Academic Programme of Psychology, Kragujevac, Serbia

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## ***Project-Based Teaching in Building Students' Intercurricular Competencies***

### **Extended summary**

Project-based teaching is an approach belonging to a new paradigm and involves a research-based student orientation towards teaching and learning. In this process, students use previously acquired knowledge, gain new knowledge and develop creativity, self-regulation, and team work skills. In theory, this approach should enable the realisation of the outcomes and standards of different school subjects, as well as the development of curricular and inter-curricular competencies.

The aim of this paper is to explore, by analysing three examples of the project-based teaching used in practice, the potential of the project-based teaching for the development of intercurricular competencies and to offer, through a synthesis of theoretical and empirical data, an instrument for planning project-based lessons which would help the development of inter-curricular competencies.

The starting point in this paper is the reconsideration of the importance of the key (inter-curricular) competencies for life-long learning that are implied in the educational goals and outcomes, as well as our attempt to provide an answer to a key question posed in theoretical assumptions – the possibility of overcoming traditional models of teaching organization and structuring learning in the manner that would develop curricular and intercurricular competencies. Further on in the paper we present the advantages of the project-based lessons, while focusing on the examples from the real teaching practice. Based on the analysis of these exam-

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<sup>1</sup> [daliborka.popovic@pr.ac.rs](mailto:daliborka.popovic@pr.ac.rs)

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ples and theoretical assumptions, we developed an instrument for planning and monitoring project-based classes that can prove useful to teachers in terms of developing intercultural competencies.

The analysis of the contribution of the project-based teaching indicates that this form of teaching enables the development of pupils' intercultural competencies and that more attention should be given to the project-based lesson planning in schools. The focus in project-based lessons is on the process, not only on the product, and, apart from measurable knowledge, pupils also acquire knowledge and skills that are difficult to measure, but they are of vital importance for coping in everyday life and adaptation to change. Activities with implicit autonomy, competence, and belonging can develop intrinsic motivation for the activity itself. In its structure and meaning, project-based instruction includes the factors that impact intrinsic motivation.

Despite the multiple benefits of the project-based instruction, there is a lot of resistance and confusion among modern educators in terms of using this form of instruction, particularly when it comes to its potential as a model for developing pupils' intercultural competencies. One of the reasons for such an attitude, confirmed in the observation of school practice, is that teachers, used to a specific form of lesson planning in which they play a central role, accept with difficulty more varied teaching methods and models, including an integrative and holistic approach to planning in which the contribution of pupils is significant.

In everyday school practice, emotional domain and student motivation, central to the educational and pedagogical role of the school, are neglected. The analyzed examples of the project-based instruction point to another problem: teachers often rely on „visible validity“ for learning the activities that they propose to pupils, and rarely on their pupils' interests and curiosity, given that pupils often pose questions that are more in-depth than the goals set by the teachers.

Bearing in mind these insights, the practical implication of this research stems from the pattern for project-based lesson planning and analysis organized by teachers in which teachers, based on the guidelines provided in the pattern, opt for the types of learning stemming from a constructivist educational paradigm and resulting in a higher achievement, fulfilling pupils' motivational need for autonomy, competence and belonging, and, primarily, in intercultural competencies that become more relevant in teaching practice, in line with legislative rules.

**Keywords:** constructivist paradigm in teaching, interdisciplinary competencies, learning, project-based teaching, self-determination theory

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