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Inclusive Education as a Framework for Changes in Teachers' Work

Extended summary

In the light of traditions in the contemporary society, this paper presents one of the ways in which education (based on relation didactics) can positively influence the development of multiple perspectives, creativity and innovation in pupils. The development of creativity and the production of creative output represent one of the strategic goals and a popular topic of studies in many countries, including Serbia. This paper explores the possibilities and restrictions in the application of the project method as a factor for the encouragement of creativity in pupils. The characteristics of the project method which are in direct connection with the development and encouragement of creativity are numerous: freedom in the planning and organization of learning; pupils find answers through research, they are encouraged to explore their ideas, not only with the teacher, but also among themselves, which implies that the fear of making mistakes is smaller; project tasks are different and new, therefore pupils have a feeling of personal choice and control. Furthermore, the teacher significantly changes his/her role as the dominant participant and takes on the role of the facilitator, partner and helper, which also lowers the stress and opens up the way for expressing creativity.

The goal of the study was to determine to what extent the project method, applied in the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education classes, encourages pupils' creative expressions. The subject of the conducted research is the empirical study of the project method as a factor of encouraging pupils' creativity in the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education

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classes as well as the possibility of forming an efficient system of activities to encourage their interests, fluency, originality, flexibility, elaboration and sensitivity to problems.

The study was conducted by implementing the research method with parallel groups. The sample consisted of six elementary school fourth-grade classes (120 participants) in the town of Vršac. Guilford's and Torrance's batteries of creativity tests were used in the research. The initial and final tests consisted of five subtests (test of word associations, test of elaboration, test of flexibility and originality, test of sensitivity to problems). The independent variable in this study was the project method applied in the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education classes. The effects of using the project method, including the indicators of a more developed creative ability (originality, flexibility, fluency, elaboration and sensitivity to problems), were dependent variables in the research.

The key results of the study are based on the existence of statistically significant differences in the achievements of the experimental and control groups. In this regard, it was concluded that the project method positively influences fluency (the production of synonyms and words with similar meanings), fluency and the originality of ideas (the new and unusual, distant solutions), flexible thinking, i.e., the ability to independently search for new ways of solving the problem. Under the influence of the experimental program the experimental group participants expressed a higher success rate in identifying problems in new situations, the development of plan details and planning studies in their entirety (elaboration).

Taking into consideration the results of this study, as well as other relevant theoretical and empirical results, it can be concluded that it is possible and recommended to use the project method more often in real conditions in which classes are held. Although some constraints exist and the end reach of the project method cannot be determined with certainty, we believe that these results clearly indicate that this way of work has the potential and ability to strengthen the creative functioning of pupils.

Keywords: project method, creativity, teaching Social, Environmental and Scientific Education, students.

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