EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF THE TWO AGES UNDER THE FUNDAMENTAL PROCUREMENT CYCLE. DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS IN THE TWO AGES

Emil LAZĂR
Ph. D. Lecturer, University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters,
Department of Communication, Journalism and Education Science
lazaremile@gmail.com

Abstract

Preschool period is characterized by a rapid development at all levels: physical, cognitive and socio-emotional. These levels are closely interconnected and can only artificially be separated, in order to be investigated and easier understood.

The didactic cycles are periods of the schooling including several years of studying, belonging to different schooling levels and having certain aims in common. The primary acquisitions` period has its main goals adapted to the preschool system`s standards and includes initial teaching reading and writing.

Key-words: preschool education, educational goals, experiential domains, didactic areas, synthesis.

Key-concepts: the fundamental acquisitions cycle: curriculum cycle, psychosocial development cycles, formal structure of the education system, curriculum areas

The educational ideal of the Romanian society, according to the 2nd article of the Law of National Education (2011), consists in fully and harmonious development of human individuality, in the formation of autonomous personality and in taking a value system necessary for personal fulfillment and development, for development of entrepreneurship, for active citizenship in society, for social inclusion and employment on the labor market", while the educational finalities by educational stages constitutes a materialization of finalities of the educational system for its various levels, describe the specifics of each level of education in terms of educational policy and represents a reference system for both curriculum development and orientation of teaching in the classroom.

At the level of pre-primary and primary education, the educational finalities seek to ensure the elementary education for all children, the formation of the child's personality, respecting the level and the peace of its development, providing the child with knowledge, skills and attitudes to stimulate the creative and effective reporting to the social and natural environment allowing continuity of education.

Curricular cycles are periods of schooling which bring together several years of study and which have, within each discipline, general objectives/ common specific

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skills. These periods of schooling overlap the formal structure of the education system in order to focus learning on the major objective of each educational stage and to adjust the educational process trough curricular interventions.

The introduction of curricular cycles has generated curricular changes through:

- changes in the educational curriculum framework plans, regarding the grouping of subjects,
- the time of placing in educational curriculum framework plans of certain subjects,
- the share of disciplines in the economy of the educational framework plans
- conceptual changes on the programs and textbooks,
- teaching strategy changes (conditioned by the rethinking of the initial and continuing training of teachers).

The objectives of cycles give various stages of schooling a series of dominants which are reflected in the structure of the curricula. Thus, the structuring of the education system in curricular cycles contributes to:

- creating continuity in the transition from one level of education to another (pre-school - primary, primary - middle school, middle school - high school),
- continuity at a methodical level through the transfer of methods from one cycle to another, establishing explicit connections of curricula through the set of general objectives,
- building a structure of the education system better correlated with the psychological age of students.

The cycles of psychosocial development are:

Cycles	Age level	Class
Early acquisitions	0 - 3	-
The first structured acquisitions	3 - 6	Kindergarten
Fundamental acquisition	6 - 8	PC- II
Development and diversification	8 - 11	III – VI
Thorough study, observation and orientation	11 - 15	VII – IX
Thorough study and specialization	15 - 18	X – XII

The formal structure of the education system shows the relationship between level of education and age, allocating the type of education needed and the correlation with the European vision on lifelong learning:

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Educational stage	Age	ISCED level
Early education • Early childhood educational development (0-3) • Pre-primary education (3-6)	0 - 6	ISCED 0
Primary education • Preparatory class and classes I-IV	6 - 11	ISCED 1
Lower secondary education • Classes V-IX	11 - 15	ISCED 2
A. Upper secondary education • Classes X-XII/XIII **B. Vocational education**	15 - 18	ISCED 3
Non-academic tertiary education Post high school education	18+	ISCED 4

Depending on the curricular cycle, the curricular areas are recomposing under the seven domains of approach. They are grouping different disciplines depending on their educational dominants:

- Language and Communication
- Mathematics and Natural Sciences
- Man and Society
- Arts
- Physical Education and Sports
- Technologies
- Counselling and Guidance

At the level of primary cycle, the curricular areas are:

1. Language and Communication
2. Man and society
3. Mathematics and Natural Sciences
4. Technologies
5. Arts
6. Health and motility
7. Counselling and guidance

Fundamental acquisitions cycle. Preschool and school age

Fundamental acquisitions cycle concerns:

- assimilation of the basic elements of the main conventional languages (reading, writing, arithmetic calculus),

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- the stimulation of the child for the perception, knowledge and control of the near environment,
- the stimulation of the the child's creative potential, intuition and imagination,
- the training of motivation for learning, understood as a social activity.

Preschool period is characterized by a rapid development at all levels: physical, cognitive and socio-emotional. These levels are closely interconnected and can only artificially be separated, in order to be investigated and easier understood. For example, the ability to inhibit a response (cognitive function) depends greatly on the maturation of frontal brain areas (physical appearance) and has important consequences at the level of social interactions, for instance waiting in the line (socio-emotional aspect).

Child's education begins at birth. Early education in Romania, as worldwide includes child's education within the age range and birth until their entry to school. Kindergarten, as a formal education service provides the environment that guarantees safety and taking into account the psychological characteristics of child's development involves both the family and the community in the process of learning.

Louis D' Hainaut sees as "focal point of the curriculum must be the student, not the subject and that when talking of the curriculum content we must understand that it is not about enunciating subjects to learn, but aims expressed in terms of skills, ways to act or general knowing of the student".

The framework objectives of the curriculum for preschool education are formulated in general terms and express skills to be developed during the preschool period on the five experiential areas. The reference objectives as well as the examples of behavior, as explicit expressions of learning outcomes (concepts, knowledge, skills and attitudes, but also of skills of the subject) are formulated for each theme and each experiential field.

In their formulation it was taken into account:

- the possibilities, interests and needs of the preschool child, as well as the respect of its own rhythm,
- correlation of each new experience of learning with the precedents,
- encouraging initiative and participation of the preschool child in goal setting, the selection of contents and evaluation methods,
- encouraging independent learning by providing opportunities to build knowledge (both in the educational institution and outside of it), as well as work in small groups on activity centers (areas of stimulation) and, if possible, in groups with a heterogeneous composition,
- stimulation of self-reflection, self-evaluation, self-regulation learning behavior.

The experiential fields which are operated in the curriculum for pre-school education are:

- Man and society field - includes the man, his way of life, relationships

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with other people, relations with the social environment, as well as the ways in which human actions affects events. In the social sciences field it is desired that preschoolers understand human beings involved in building their future. It is also important for preschoolers to understand that present situations are rooted in past situations, to observe similarities and differences between people or events.

- Language and communication field - covers mastering oral and written expression as well as the ability to understand verbal and written communication. It is intended that they speak confidently, clearly and fluently, using appropriate means of expression for different categories of audience.
- Science field - includes the approach of the mathematical domain through practical experience and also understanding of nature, as being modifiable by the human beings with which it is in interaction.
- Psycho-motric field covers the coordination and control of body movements, overall mobility and stamina, motor skills and finesse manipulation, as the elements of knowledge, especially about human anatomy and physiology.
- Aesthetic and creative field covers the abilities to respond emotionally and intellectually perceptive experiences

The curriculum, alongside the presented experiential fields, allows integrated interdisciplinary scrolling through the proposed content and ensures freedom to the teacher in planning the daily activities with the preschoolers. The study level is organized in Early Education, depending on the age of the child: 3-5 years/ 5-7 years.

I.Language and communication field

Study level 3-5 years:

- acquisition of linguistic fundamentals (fruits, flowers, moods, phenomena),
- understanding and transmission of simple messages,
- knows to present himself,
- narrates stories from his personal life,
- learns new words and uses them in games.

Study level 5-7 years:

- memorizing of two to three strophes,
- characterization of a character,
- continuation of a story with a given beginning,
- recognition, naming and graphic labeling of sounds,
- composes sentences of two, three or more words,
- finds several words that begin or end with the same letter,
- composes short words.

II. Science field

Study level 3-5 years:

- counting acquisition within the limit of 1-5,
- reporting number quantity,
- classification of objects by different criteria: color, shape, size,
- discovering components of the surrounding world by engaging of sense organs,

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- knows the types of daily activities carried out in the community in which he lives (health, education, transport, agriculture, crafts, etc.),
- respect the rules of individual and collective hygiene,
- interprets data and symbols from which he extracts information (nature's calendar, responsibilities table, group's diary).

Study level 5-7 years:

- counting acquisitions within the limit of 1-10,
- composing groups of 1, 2, ... 10 items,
- counts right in ascending and descending order,
- making correspondence from 1 to 1 to show that a group has more or fewer objects than another,
- recognizes and indicates digits,
- understands the relationship digit-number,
- performs addition and subtraction operations by 1-2 units within the limits of 1-10 by manipulating objects,
- knowledge of some elements of the surrounding world (objects, air, water, soil, vegetation, fauna, natural phenomena etc.),
- talks about the significance of national events (traditional, religious, cultural, historical).

III. Man and society field

Study level 3-5 years:

- know and respect the rules required for integration in social life as well as personal security rules,
- adapt their own behavior to the requirements of the group in which they are living (family, kindergarten, play group),
- describe and identify specific local elements of our country and area where they live (relief items, geographical location, socio-cultural, historical, religious and ethnic objectives),
- executes proposed themes both individually and in groups.

Study level 5-7 years:

- compliance with the rules of social coexistence,
- present small stories, stories related to their own family, colleagues, friends, neighbors,
- show tolerance towards other forms of life with which they could come into contact, or that have existed and are presented to them
- knowledge of data related to the country of origin, continent, planet, address details,
- store events and recognize them after certain features,
- makes simple practical operations: cuts with scissors, folds the paper, ties, coils, twines, sits the table etc.,
- express their views to their work and to the work of the others motivating their opinions.

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IV. Aesthetic and creative field

Study level 3-5 years:

- discovers the world around using hearing,
- differentiates the sound of singing from the spoken one and sounds produced by different sound objects,
- correct use of work tools (pencil, brush, permanent marker) to freely express graphic gesture,
- use of plastic elements (point, line, spot color),
- use of new techniques (fusion, overlay, stamp technique, etc.),
- recognize their work and of the colleagues,
- recognize landscapes, images from movies, stories, heroes of stories etc.

Study level 5-7 years:

- differentiates and reproduces high and low sounds in the range G-C,
- sing children's songs alone, together or accompanied by teachers,
- spontaneously improvise short syncretic motives (onomatopoeic text and melody, onomatopoeic text and movement etc.),
- reproduction of specific plastic design topics,
- performs collective or individual works by combining different working techniques: collages, graphic design and painting, modeling and painting etc.

V. Psycho-motor field

Study level 3-5 years:

- knowledge and use of specific equipment to physical education activities,
- learning basic movements: walking, running, jumping,
- utility and applicable skills: crawling on hands and knees, walking in balance between two lines drawn on the ground,
- children motion games or sports games.

Study level 5-7 years:

- give motor response to a given command,
- correct execution of movements of different parts of the body (arms, legs, back, head, neck etc.),
- coordinate their movements with the rhythm required by the teacher,
- relate to a given reference,
- execution of themed dances,
- acquire of the basic rules of sports.

School age

At the primary education level, the goals formulated in terms of competences are designed according to the two specific stages:

- fundamental acquisitions stage-classes: PS, I, II where takes place the accommodation to the requirements of the school system and the initial alphabetization;
- development-stage classes III - IV where takes place the forming of the basic capacities for further study.

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Fundamental acquisitions stage

Preparatory class covers "physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, language and communication development and learning capacities and attitudes, while ensuring the starting point for the development of the eight key competences. It will have a dual role: on the one hand consolidation of the acquired knowledge and, on the other hand, socializing and adaptability to change. In addition, preparatory class will give all children a better start in school life". Preparatory class has the task of developing, through practice, children's mental processes of knowledge up to school maturity. It must create favorable conditions to achieve continuity of the pre-primary education with the primary education.

The purpose of this class is to enable children to acquire the necessary preparation for the start of school and under the formative aspect, to reach the optimal development of mental processes of knowledge. The First Class is important because it represents the beginning. The child learns to write, read and count, the most important skills for all school years.

Learning to read and write, a major objective of the curriculum of primary schools, children are free from the constraints of face to face communication and gain access to ideas and imagination. Once they can transform marks on a page to sound patterns with meaning, children can develop more complex strategies to understand what they read and use written words to express ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Class II ends the curricular cycle of fundamental acquisitions consisting of preparatory class, class I and class II. By the end of it, it is intended to achieve a basic level of performance in the training of key skills in line with levels of cognitive and affective development of the students. Compared with the preparatory class and class I, the study of the discipline in class II is ensuring progressive development of skills, as well as other acquisitions acquired by students in the moral-emotional and action plan.

Progress in development at the two ages

At the basis of this comparative presentation, designed to highlight the progress in the development at the two ages of the fundamental acquisitions cycle are two assumptions:

- Development is a set of transformations involving the notions of "continuity", "finality"

"evolution" and means complex bio-psycho-social changes of the individual ranked time.

- As a comparative presentation method was used explanation, supported by the description, knowing that methodologically the explanation is inseparable from the development study (Neveanu, 1978).

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1. What cognitive processes are developing?	
Pre-school	***School***
• The symbolic function helps children to make judgments. They can make the connection between cause and effect; • Awareness of personal thought processes;	• Concrete operations appear around the age of 6/7 in which they can use mental operations such as reasoning; however, their thinking is still limited to real situations "here" and "now"; • Better understanding of spatial concepts, causality, classification; • Occurs the transition to a logical, flexible thinking;
2. What progress occurs at the memory level?	
Pre-school	***School***
• The sensorial memory shows few changes, but the memory working capacity enhances greatly; • Recognition works better than reproduction; • Episodic memory is erased and is converted into genetic memory;	• Execution abilities, reaction time, speed of processing and selective attention improves; • Children of PC and Class. I / II know that people retain easier if they study more time, that people forget different things; • Around the age of 6-7 years, many children can count in mind;
3. How does the language improve?	
Pre-school	***School***
• The vocabulary increases, they begin to use plural forms, past tense and know the difference between I, you and us; • Sentences become complex, the pronunciation and grammar improves; • Use a polite language, can remain at a topic of conversation more time;	• The use of vocabulary, morphology and syntax becomes more complex, but the main sector of language development is the pragmatics;
4. What progress occur in motor development?	
Pre-school	***School***
• Children are making significant progress; • As they physically develop they	• Motor skills continue to enrich themselves; • Games practiced by children

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manage better to determine their body to execute what they want;	during breaks tend to be informal and spontaneously organized;
5. How is self-concept developed?	
Pre-school	***School***
• Small children do not see the difference between the actual self and the ideal self; • Self-esteem tends to be unrealistic, reflecting adult approval • Understanding emotions is gradually developing	• It becomes more realistic, children form their representation systems; • They can better regulate negative emotions through conscious control; • Empathy and prosocial behavior increases; • Emotional development is influenced by parents' reactions

Defining for the children's progress is the way they connect information and specific mental processes of learning. The involvement of a variety of mental processes enhances the formative character of the education and creates favorable conditions for further learning activity. As a process, learning involves a number of psychological components, different from one child to another.

As a result, the organization of learning situations is to ensure favorable conditions for learning activities as a complex process of information and training, of knowledge assimilation and development of the structural components of the human personality. This involves creating learning situations that will lead to "the child's active participation in the learning process through direct interaction" (Boca, 2009).

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