Protocol and etiquette elements in the primary school syllabus - applications for training the higher education staff -

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Abstract

This survey aims to identify how relevant a transversal type of module can be in the educational syllabus for the primary education (the curricular module regarding the Etiquette and Protocol Elements for children of young school age), given that enforcing a specific methodology could also help gathering information on the establishment of a training program for the education staff, in order to design adapted syllabus materials.

Keywords: Protocol and etiquette elements, primary school syllabus, transversal curriculum module, training the education staff, teacher education, semi-structured interview, etiquette and school attitude, balanced social behavior, good manners;

1. Issue statement

School life has lately determined decision-makers to thoroughly reconsider the syllabus in relation to the social and educational needs identified within society. The shallow level of basic education, as well as the declining social interest towards quality public attitudes and behaviors nicely turned to good account can also be explained by the fact that the school syllabus has a very little unless none of a package of syllabus resources designed to train competences such as good manners at school, in family, and in society.

The contemporary school has been frequently accused of failing to develop transversal skills, which are highly required within the PISA or TIMSS international assessments. Those psycho-social variables need to appear as reflexive and attitude-related complexes (developing the competence of analyzing a relational-level social situation, understanding the behaviors and the attitudes of the social partners in both formal and informal contexts, decoding various gestures and attitudes helping to initiate and support interactions in either simulated or real life circumstances) which cannot be ignored if we consider thoroughly educating the pupils from this education cycle.

2. Purpose of the study

The conclusions of our research are a helpful tool in making decisions about the way public syllabus policies aiming to promote a syllabus package focused on learning etiquette and good manners are configured. Our research was also intended to take the necessary steps to draw up a training program dedicated to the teaching staff and designed to help the latter acquire the range of skills previously mentioned.

The attempts to also propose subject-oriented topics or even modules in this field for pupils in the lower education cycles is not necessarily an absolute piece of news in this domain (here we bring a few examples from the...

What is particularly important for our survey, as added value, is the attempt to design the syllabus depending on the psycho-pedagogical education and training needs of the teaching staff which is to teach the students. What will do that training staff, according to the feature of each school age, will be to integrate the information, to ensure its meaning, and both contextual and interdisciplinary connotations which are the most relevant not only for automatic learning, but also for practicing those data in the everyday school and family life.

The experts drafting a training guide also need to consider the idea of defining some principles without which no attempt to establish a curricular learning material can be successful in a pragmatically educational system in search for easy and quick teaching and learning methods (it is true that this fact challenges the consistency and the sustainability of the learning outcomes, therefore we shall attempt to define especially the principles and their capacity to be tailored for the real school climate of the class, rather than for the working topics).

3. Methods

We have carried out this research using a methodological structure focused on quality methods (we have taken into account the semi-structured interview). The population invited to join this interview is a group of teaching staff from the primary school education, to be inquired regarding the status of the syllabus and the relevance of the subjects making up the transversal module for teaching etiquette to children.

We have chosen this methodological solution in spite of a quantity approach because we wanted to obtain information by also investigating the high level of experience of the teaching staff; the semi-structured interview has been organized for 20 teachers from three primary schools in Bucharest, highly experienced teaching staff, with over 7 years of seniority in the teaching field. We have thus obtained, on the one hand, a general table of training priorities for the teaching staff and a set of general principles able to orient the training of those education-related professional categories, on the other hand.

We have not used much statistic data processing in this approach because we appreciated that the qualitative interpretation had priority, while the generalization value of our conclusions face to large working groups was not a priority for us.

The organization by modules of a transversal training module shall be our further concern on this topic and it shall be performed in compliance with the priorities, orientations, and principles established following this open inquiry-like approach.

4. Findings and results

A large number of the people interviewed have shown their interest in such a syllabus direction focusing on how to train good manners and specific skills. The entire teaching staff participating in the interview was in favor of designing and introducing such a formula able to improve the transversal syllabus aiming to develop the skills mentioned previously – such as etiquette and protocol in school, in-school and social behavior characterized by good manners and open attitudes.

The previous hierarchy set aside, one needs to notice an increased professional appetite for etiquette-related topics, while highly normative topics (both the content and the structure of behavioral rules) were considered less interesting from the previous perspective. It is quite interesting to observe the way this problematic has been tackled comparatively in this survey and the way it has been introduced in our survey conducted last year along with professor Magdalena Platis, intended for the employees from the public administration (a field close to that under analysis).

The Survey completed last year “has started from the idea of exploiting the data obtained in a very flexible way, while focusing not on increasing the generality rate of the information which can be adapted to different
administrative and organizational environments, but mainly on analyzing the development trends and perspectives” (O. Iucu, Magdalena Platis, Deontology and Protocol in Public Administration, Applications for the public officer’s training, World Congress on Administrative and Political Sciences, Turkey 2012). Comparing the findings of the two surveys, since the previous one was the result of a quantity methodology, we could notice that the subsequent content landmarks have been distributed in a relatively different way, as follows: according to the teaching staff, the chapter called Manners in international contexts: Preparing visits abroad; receiving foreign delegations; linguistic customs; translations and the interpreters; Specific behavioral features during visits abroad and are very well capitalized. Informal activities protocol: the regime of invitations, introducing the guests, the way of welcoming the guests, the conversations during the meal, offering presents, and Dress code for specific activities: protocol customs accessories is missing entirely.

Taking into account all the elements presented previously, this is also a particular topic for specific psycho-pedagogical landmarks related to the age of early education the need for rigorously strengthening this syllabus orientation from a psychological and educational point of view may help develop a syllabus axis based on transversal competences. In this sense, there are several topics for the contents related to learning the attitudes specific for civilized behavior at a young age: Greetings and how to introduce someone in various socio-cultural environments / Good manners at school, in family, and in society / Gifts – how to offer and how to receive them / Dress code (at school, during trips, at various cultural events such as theater, opera, at anniversaries) / Organizing school and extra-school events (including how to set the table and good manners at table).

All these syllabus-related landmarks can be considered – according to the teaching staff’s talent to imagine teaching and learning situations aiming to acquire transversal skills, - contents with a high motivational level for the children, as well as a starting point for a future training program intended for the teaching staff involved.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Our survey aims to raise awareness among an education-related category interested in rendering the syllabus more flexible and more social life-oriented (in our case, we propose an etiquette syllabus for children, adapted to the features of the school-aged children and to their capacities of understanding at a symbolic, ethical, and axiological level. Our study was concluded how relevant are the transversal type of module which can be included into the educational syllabus for the primary education (the curricular module regarding the Etiquette and Protocol Elements for children of young school age). All topics previously mentioned were enforcing a specific methodology which could also help gathering information on the establishment of a training program for the education staff, in order to design adapted syllabus materials.

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