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**RESEACH FOR CONTINUITY OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION  
FROM PRESCHOOL EDUCATION TO PRIMARY CYCLE**

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***Abstract***

Teaching activity specific to scholar physical activity and has reached a level where is no longer seen as a way to shape the physical condition and body position, but also as as an active process of social interaction. The consideration taken into account when elaborating this paper was represented by the identification of the way in which there is or there isn't continuity in forming the behaviour of social interaction, creation of interpersonal relations, of a group, of a corresponding social behaviour, in the transition from the preschool education to primary education. From the analysis of the valid curricular documents it was noted a discrepancy in the planning of the curricular documents, due to the fact that in the preschool education there still are frame objectives and of reference, whilst the curriculum of the primary education is centred on general and specific competences. The curriculum of the preschool education dates back to 2008, still having in its structure the preparatory grade, which claims the absence of an objective/competence that deals with the socialization aspect. The framework objectives and of reference are formulated for the psychomotor field and are not compatible with the continuous flow that must exist regarding the transition towards primary education. We consider that in order to satisfy the spiralled concentric character of education, it is necessary a specific approach for early education in relation to the students' acquisitions, social requirements and efficient transition towards a superior step of education.

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**Keywords:** Continuity, discontinuity, social integration, educational gap, competence.



## 1. Introduction

”Early childhood represents the most important period in an individual’s life through sustainable consequences that it has on his future development” (Guide of the teachers, n.a ..., p. 6).

”Early education represents the totality of the experiences individually realized and socially existent or organized, of which the child benefits from/receives in the first years of life, with the role of protection, growth and development of the human being through endowment with specific capacities and physical, psychical, cultural acquisitions, that offer him own identity and dignity”. Early education offers the base of a healthy physical and psychical development, of a social and spiritual formation and development. The first years of storage of educational-information represent more than half of what they will be able to learn all throughout their lives (Early education 2018, paragraph 1).

In Romania, early education is presented as being the first training step for formal education, ensuring the entrance of each child in the obligatory education system, starting from kindergarten , as service of formal education, environment that offers safety and health to children, environment that takes into consideration the psychological characteristics of their development (Curriculum for preschool education, 2008, p.3).

Preschool education, in the vision of the authors Camelia and Eusebiu Munteanu, must “adopt high standards and must be oriented towards scientific research; must be compatible with the European systems; must be oriented towards values; to turn into an education predominately reproductive into a creative one” (Munteanu & Munteanu, 2009, p.12).

Early education, as educational activity performed in a formal framework, must begin with the moment when the child feels itself prepared (how he developed, what emotions does he have, what need does he have). This decision, this step regarding the entry into the community belongs to the child and concerns only the child. The moment expresses for the child (Why the early education is important, 2016, paragraph 4):

- Socialization;
- Autonomy;
- Relating;

Socialization represents “that part of the complete influence of the environment that leads the individual to participate to the social life that teaches him how to behave according to the applicative norms, that teaches him to understand the culture that makes him capable to support himself and fulfil certain social roles” (Szczepanski, 1972, p.77).

The process through which the individual develops himself, as result of the cultural-specific adjustment for satisfying his needs and daily necessities, illustrated by the various relations or behaviour suited to other persons characterises everything that involves the process of socialization (Schaub & Zenke, 2001, p.251).

“Knowing in-depth the world’s social aspects, development of physical and mental particularities of the individuals concomitant with the technico-scientific and cultural evolution of the society correlates to the placement of the individual within a society”. Thus the individual develops himself through the group, but at the same time also the group influences the individual’s behaviour. This reciprocity, this

social interaction completes the individuals' action manner, thus offering the necessary base of a social integration time appropriate (Tudorache, 2017, p.59, 65).

Development of the interpersonal relations, as well as the group cohesion, includes everything that sums up and summarises social integration. Interpersonal relations represent the connections that are formed between different individuals, and not only, but it also represents the connections between certain groups. Group cohesion expresses the group's nature, the way they concentrate their interactions for a unified goal.

The common ground of the individual's development is represented by the group. The group is defined as "an ensemble of persons that are in an integration and participate to a commune activity" (Abric, 2002, p.102). from the traditional pedagogy point of view, the group is made of a plurality of individualities, but from a psychosocial point of view, the group is viewed as a whole, as a collective unit, thus influencing the prospective and productivity of its members (Cuznețov & Călăraș, 2008, p.18).

Currently according to art. 23 (1) a), early education represents the educational activity conducted at the pre-pre-school level (0-3 years) and at the pre-school education (3-6 years). Hereby preschool education includes lower preschool group (3-4 years), middle preschool group (4-5 years) and upper preschool group (5-6 years), fitting in the preparatory class of the compulsory education, containing primary education (preparatory grade – IVth grade), lower secondary school (Vth grade – VIIIth grade) and the first two years of the higher secondary school (IXth grade – Xth grade) (National Education Law no. 1/2011, art. 16.1; art. 23, 1 (a)).

Aiming at the continuity level between preschool education process – upper preschool group and primary education process – preparatory grade, I took into consideration the following curricular documents:

- school curriculum for the discipline physical education and sports, fundamental acquisition cycle;
- preschool education curriculum.

## **2. Problem Statement**

From the curricular documents' analysis specific to preschool and school education for the primary cycle, I have noticed numerous aspects of a discrepancy nature in the transition from kindergarten, upper preschool group, to the preparatory grade, in the context of the early education objectives and educational requirements undertaken through general and specific competences mentioned in the curricular documents of the primary education. This problem is due to the insertion of the preparatory grade in the primary education, which has changed the end and the beginning of the two educational cycles. The curricular documents do not ensure continuity on the direction of children's social integration in their transition from kindergarten to school.

## **3. Research Questions**

Premises of the study have generated the following questions that we would like to answer in our study:

- Which is the continuity/discontinuity level regarding the formation of some competences of social integration of children in their transition from preschool education to primary education?
- To what extent it is complied with the cursivity character, of date and educational innovation along with the introduction of the preparatory grade in the primary education, in the curricular cycle of fundamental acquisitions?

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to identify the continuity/discontinuity level of competence of socialization/integration in an organized group of students, between preschool step and school step and the way the psychometric field from the preschool cycle ensures an efficient transition towards physical education and sports discipline within primary education.

#### **5. Research Methods**

In this study I have used the method of research/bibliographic study with the objective of setting the grounds for theoretical and methodological study and the pedagogical observation method.

#### **6. Findings**

In my attempt to align the present curriculum of the preschool education and curriculum of the primary education, I notice that it is very much visible the fact that this connexion is interrupted, not totally, but it is disturbed by the fact that the current preschool curriculum is based on the old structure, dating back in 2008, that includes the upper preschool group (5-6/7 years) in it.

Starting with 2012-2013, the senior year of the upper preschool group was generalized and introduced in the compulsory education, as preparatory grade, thus modifying the child's debut regarding the scholastic education. Thus, the preschool educational system is structured in three groups: lower preschool group (3-4 years), middle preschool group (4-5 years) and upper preschool group (5-6 years). The gap that exists between current educational requirements of the preschool education regarding the generalization of the preparatory grade and the structure of preschool curriculum, more precisely the upper preschool group, are due mostly to the lack of orientation and update of the curricular documents.

Alongside the discrepancy that exist between the educational structure regarding the upper preschool group and the educational structure regarding the preparatory grade, I have noticed an out of date preschool curriculum that still works on setting objectives and reference objectives, whilst the primary school curriculum is centred on general and specific competences. That is why we cannot dare to talk about cursivity, about a value and practical orientation, if the curriculum the preschool education is based on does not yet have a well delimited and oriented curricular vision. How can it exist continuity between the preschool educational practices and primary educational practices if the evolution of the purposes in preschool education have stopped, are still based on objectives, whilst the purposes of the primary education have evolved towards competences.

**Table 01.** Frame objectives and reference objectives for each integrative theme regarding the preschool curriculum – upper preschool group (5-6/7 years) – psychomotor field (Curriculum for preschool education 3-6/7 years, 2008)

<b>Preschool Curriculum – psychomotor field – upper preschool group (5-6/7years)</b>
<p><b>Frame objectives</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Training and development of main motor skills and their practical utility;</li> <li>2. Stimulation of intellectual qualities, of will and affective for the independent application of the obtained skills;</li> <li>3. Knowing the health and hygiene skills for maintaining the health state</li> </ol>
<p><b>Reference objectives</b></p> <p><b>Theme no. 1 – Who are they/we?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To know and apply the hygiene rules referring to the hygiene of the equipment;</li> <li>➤ To form a correct posture (while standing, sitting and moving);</li> <li>➤ To perceive the space-time components (rhythm, duration, distance, localization);</li> <li>➤ To be able to use the skills obtained in different contexts.</li> </ul> <p><b>Theme no. 2 – How is/was and will be on the ground?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To know and apply the hygiene rules referring to the hygiene of the equipment;</li> <li>➤ To form a correct posture (while standing, sitting and moving);</li> <li>➤ To perceive the space-time components (rhythm, duration, distance, localization);</li> </ul> <p><b>Theme no.3 – When/how and why does it happen?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To know and apply the hygiene rules of the physical effort;</li> <li>➤ To form a correct posture (while standing, sitting and moving);</li> <li>➤ To be able to use the motor skills obtained in different contexts;</li> <li>➤ To show during the activity attitudes of cooperation, team spirit and competition, fair play.</li> </ul> <p><b>Theme no.4 – With what and how do we express what we feel?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To form a correct posture (while standing, sitting and moving);</li> <li>➤ To perceive the space-time components (rhythm, duration, distance, localization);</li> <li>➤ To be able to use the skills obtained in different contexts;</li> <li>➤ To use his learned motor skills in order to express his feelings and/or behaviours, as to respond to different stimuli (situations), in different rhythms.</li> </ul> <p><b>Theme no.5 – Who and how plans/organizes an activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To know and apply the hygiene rules referring to the physical effort;</li> <li>➤ To form a correct posture (while standing, sitting and moving);</li> <li>➤ To be able to use the skills obtained in different contexts;</li> <li>➤ To show during the activity attitudes of cooperation, team spirit and competition, fair play.</li> </ul> <p><b>Theme no.6 – What and how I want to be?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To form a correct posture (while standing, sitting and moving);</li> <li>➤ To perceive the space-time components (rhythm, duration, distance, localization);</li> <li>➤ To be able to use the skills obtained in different contexts;</li> </ul> <p>To use his learned motor skills in order to express his feelings and/or behaviours, as to respond to different stimuli (situations), in different rhythms.</p>

As it can be seen in table no. 1, reference objectives are formulated and structured around the six integrative themes. The psychomotor field integrates the activities in which physical movement is used in training and development of the preschoolers, in the same way in which the discipline physical education and sports contains activities specific to training and development of the primary cycle students.

Analyzing the utility of the psychomotor field, it is highlighted a wider/larger discontinuity regarding its educational training. Aside from the fact that the curriculum uses an old structure, in which the preparatory class of the primary education is still included as upper preschool group within preschool education, besides the fact that the psychomotor field operates with frame and references objectives and not with general and specific competences as in the case of the school curriculum (table no.2), I also notice an intermittence upon the orientation of this field regarding social interaction. The frame objectives

of the psychomotor field are still concentrating on aspects that strictly regard motion and posture, without any implication on the social interaction dimension.

Psychomotor field still operates with frame and reference objectives that are not compatible with the continuous flow that they must ensure regarding the transition towards physical education discipline within the primary education, reason for which there isn't present any objective/competence that deals with the socialization part. A higher attention must be given to an extremely essential aspect, that refers to the fact that psychomotor field must not be confused with one of the fields of content mentioned in the physical education curriculum.

**Table 02.** General and specific competences in physical education and sports at the fundamental acquisitions' cycle (Physical education curriculum – preparatory grade, Ist grade, IInd grade, 2013)

Primary school education Curriculum – fundamental acquisitions' cycle
<b>General competences</b>
<p><b>1. Valorisation of psychomotor acquisitions in maintaining the health and harmonious physical development;</b>  <b>Specific competences - preparatory grade:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Recognition of the sun and temperature influence on health;</li> <li>➤ Identification of the main characteristics of the correct body posture;</li> <li>➤ Using, with involvement, different movements specific to the body's segments;</li> <li>➤ Complying with the hygiene rules.</li> </ul> <p><b>Specific competences – I<sup>st</sup> grade:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Recognition of the air and water influence on health;</li> <li>➤ Demonstrating the main characteristics of the correct body posture;</li> <li>➤ Using, with involvement, different movements specific to the body's segments;</li> <li>➤ Complying with the personal hygiene rules.</li> </ul> <p><b>Specific competences – II<sup>nd</sup> grade:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Applying some basic rules in using the natural factors for body strengthening;</li> <li>➤ Maintaining correct body posture in static and dynamic actions;</li> <li>➤ Daily performing the physical development complex acquired;</li> <li>➤ Complying with the personal hygiene rules.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Practicing the motor skills and capacities according to the individual's psycho-motor capacity;</b>  <b>Specific competences - preparatory grade:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Applying motor skills within games;</li> <li>➤ Participation to dynamic games that train the individual motor capacities;</li> <li>➤ Reproducing through body language some actions/personal feelings.</li> </ul> <p><b>Specific competences – I<sup>st</sup> grade:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Performing motor actions specific to some expression forms of motric capacity;</li> <li>➤ Applying the motor skills in games and competitions;</li> <li>➤ Applying the body expressivity skills and the ones adjusted in different sports disciplines.</li> </ul> <p><b>Specific competences – II<sup>nd</sup> grade:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Performing motor actions specific to the combined motor capacities;</li> <li>➤ Combined applying of motor skills in scholar activity and outside the school;</li> <li>➤ Active integration in motor activities with aesthetic components (dance, arrhythmia, rhythmic gymnastics etc.).</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Involvement in the organized or spontaneous games and motric activities;</b>  <b>Specific competences - preparatory grade:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Noticing the necessary rules for conducting the games;</li> <li>➤ Involvement in motor activities organized in group;</li> <li>➤ Showing the cooperation, helping and fair-play attitude during the games.</li> </ul> <p><b>Specific competences – I<sup>st</sup> grade:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Noticing the necessary rules to conducting the games and other motor activities;</li> <li>➤ Involvement in activities specific to physical education, organized in group;</li> <li>➤ Showing the cooperation, helping and fair-play attitude during the motor activities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Specific competences – II<sup>nd</sup> grade:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Applying rules specific to the performance of the organized or spontaneous motor activities;</li> <li>➤ Involvement in activities specific to physical education, organized in group;</li> <li>➤ Showing the cooperation, helping and fair-play attitude during the motor activities.</li> </ul>

Primary education, compared to the preschool education, was submitted to an educational upgrade process, and this it stands out that the objectives have evolved towards competences. But we can see that neither benefits from the presence of a frame objective/general competence that targets the social dimension. But, both on the fundamental acquisitions cycle of the primary education, as well as the upper preschool group of the preschool education, there are objectives of reference/specific competences that deal with and emphasize the interpersonal relations, the integration of students in an organized group/class (as presented in the tables 1, 2).

The gap between pre-preschool education and primary education is increasing the more as the fundamental acquisition cycle, the general competence destined to scholar physical education in order to emphasize this field, is more and more visible, due to the integration of the content field subjected to learning “Development of the personality traits”, while at the preschool cycle, the psychomotor field is not based on socialization under any form.

Though the fundamental acquisitions cycle has in its structure content oriented towards the socialization sphere, the psychomotor field, besides the fact that it does not present any frame objective that reflects the socialization dimension, it does not contain for any of the six integrating themes a content suggestion that ensures the concretization of the children’s acquisitions regarding this aspect. The only connection between the two educational programs, the preschool curriculum and school curriculum of the fundamental acquisition cycle, is the recognition of the reference objectives/specific competences that emphasize the social aspect.

Just like the reference objectives derive from the frame objectives and specific competences derive from the general competences (School curriculum for physical education – preparatory grade, Ist and IInd grade, 2013, p.2). More precisely, if we have a reference object/a specific competence it is normal and correct to also have a frame object/general competence, in order to ensure continuity and fiability to the educational process. Preschool curriculum must ease the continuity between learning activities of the psychomotor field and the scholar physical education discipline from the first curricular cycle of the primary education, but at present, the requests and requirements of the society, given by its evolution, prove that the utility of the preschool curriculum, as well as the transition from kindergarten to school is not made on all plans. The preschool education suffers from failure of some details that indicate and reflect efficiency, continuity and educational progress.

## **7. Conclusion**

1. Regressive aspect of the purposes of the pre-preschool education system, in the transition towards the innovative purposes of the primary school education system, influence the continuous course of forming a social integration competence. Although the pre-preschool purposes have stopped in their evolution, while the primary purposes referred to the society’s requirements, the discontinuity of the social formation is determined by the lack of orientation destined to this process, in the two educational systems, despite the fact that both educational systems require reference objectives/specific competences that target social integration.

2. The answer to the first question “Which is the level of continuity/discontinuity regarding the formation for a social integration competence of children in their transition from the preschool education

to primary education?" we can formulate as follows: there isn't any continuity in the transition from preschool education at the fundamental acquisitions cycle due to the outdated curriculum for the upper preschool group for kindergarten.

3. Generalization of the upper preschool group in the equation of the preparatory grade of the primary education has changed totally the two educational systems, both from a structural point of view as well as from a cursivity point of view, up-to-date and innovation of the entire educational process. Thus, the upper preschool group (5-6 years) represents the last step of the preschool level, and the preparatory grade, children that are 6 years of age, respectively, starts the compulsory scholar education. Thereby we have also answered the second question stipulated at the beginning of the research.

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