

ERD 2017
Education, Reflection, Development, Fifth Edition

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES IN THE
PEDAGOGY STUDY AT HIGH SCHOOL**

Monica-Iuliana Anca(a)*, Muşata Bocoş (b)
*Corresponding author

(a) Doctoral School "Education, Reflection, Development", Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Babes-Bolyai University, Str. Sindicatelor, Nr. 7, Cluj-Napoca, 400029, Romania, moni_anca@yahoo.com

(b) Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Cluj-Napoca, Sindicatelor Street no. 7, 400029, Romania

Abstract

The hereby study, underlines the role of independent activities in the pedagogy study at high school level. The curriculum of pedagogical subjects suggest creating some different situations of training, by the teacher, efficient and which to generate various learning experiences, positive, desirable and appropriate to the established instructive-educational objectives.

The independent activity is an important educational mean and it can be used in different formative and informative teaching purposes, which means the attainment of wide range of fundamental objectives: discovery, fixing, consolidation, thoroughgoing, essentiality, exemplification, application, acknowledgement review, skills shaping and intellectually and/ or practically habits.

Independent activities have an important role in shaping and developing metacognitive competences of students and in developing their metacognitive behaviour. Independent activities imply the concentration of students` efforts with the purpose of using abilities and strategies which would favors the development of strategic learning competences and the achievement of higher learning performance. By getting involved in independent activities, the students settle their learning objectives; they manage their own learning process, as well as the time and strategies necessary for reaching the goals and achieving the learning tasks. It is desirable that the independent activities to value the strategic learning, assuming self-analysis tasks, selection, the adaptation of task approaching and resolving strategies, self-monitoring the obtained performances, as well as the approaching exchange, if necessary. Independent activities valorise personal, collective, cognitive and metacognitive reflection.

© 2018 Published by Future Academy www.FutureAcademy.org.UK

Keywords: Active and interactive pedagogy; independent activities; personal reflection; strategic learning.



1. Introduction

The interactive training promotes independent activities of productive type, finalized with the elaboration of intellectual products – definitions, explanations, scheme, sketches, drawings, posters, ideal models or materials, papers, projects, essays etc. – which to essentializes the new contents and to involve the student with his whole personality. The interactive training gives a special importance to the necessity of assuring high qualities of students thinking, as well, that is active thinking, divergent, logical, critical, evaluative thinking and the manifestation of student's creativity.]

2. Problem Statement

According to “Praxiology Dictionary of Pedagogy”, (coord. M.-D. Bocoş, 2016), the term “independent activity” can be defined as follows: “Intellectual activity or psychomotor, individually or collective, based on the personal efforts of those who are learning and which are not supported by the teacher.” The independent activities can be carry on by the students in formally contexts, no formally or informally, in the purpose of achievement, by self-efforts, of new knowledge, behaviours, competences and finding originally solutions, creative to the problems which they confront. As for the formal and no formal activities, they are made under the surveillance and control of the teacher, who establishes the tasks, content of these activities and evaluates their accomplishment grade, but without his direct participation or support.

The independent activities have a complex character: they assume cognitive/ intellectual involvement, psychomotor, affective and emotionally, a deep interior reflection, an active and motivated learning behaviour, which determines permanent cognitive (re) organizations and facilitates the production of something new, with originally character, creator, in personal plan as well as in general plan. So, the independent activities assume self-involvement, self-information, self-organization, self-learning, self-monitoring, self-management of the activity. The independent activities can be organized for obtaining some various educational finalities, that is of some main objectives: discovery, secure, consolidation, thoroughgoing, essentialization, exemplification, application, recapitulation of knowledge, competences and intellectually and/ or practical skills.”

In the educational current context, in which “the permanence of the permanent education” has become a mark, the independent activity represents a way as well as an educational purpose. This fact has immediate repercussions at the specific activities level deployed by the teacher, who is organizing it, supervises it, values it or makes it right according to the type of formal, non-formal or informal educational contexts in which it produces, so that the pedagogy of independent activity is shaped.

For a long time the phrase “independent activity” was considered as synonym to that of “individual activity”. But the independent activity can be individual or collective/ by cooperation/in group. The independent activities have a complex character: they assume cognitive/ intellectual involvement, psychomotor, affective and emotional, personal reflection, a learning behaviour active and motivated. These determine permanent cognitive (re) structures and facilitates the achievement of a new product, in personal or general plan. At the same time they ask self-involvement, self-information, self-organization, self-learning, self-monitoring, self-management from the involved student/students (M.-D. Bocoş, 2013, pp. 169-170).

3. Research Questions

3.1. Which are the conditions for independent activities deployment?

The deployment of independent activities implies the usage of suitable methods, which favours and promotes this kind of activities.

The independent activity methods represent that category of learning methods in which, individually or in collective, in formal contexts, non-formal or informal, the students assume, through self-efforts, new knowledge, competences, behaviours and they find original solutions, creator to the problems with which they confront, eventually under the teacher's surveillance, but without his direct participation and support (Bocoş, 2013). For the successfully involvement in the learning independent activities it is necessary that the students to be developed a series of abilities:

- **Cognitive abilities:** refers to the possibility to build informal rules of resolving the problems; to classify objects on the basis of some given criteria; to formulate hypothesis and logic arguments. The authors have suggested that these competences are important to create "prepared students". Up to seven years, with the appropriate help, the students are, in generally, are able to have an intern dialogue using "the thinking language".

- **Metacognitive abilities:** applying the knowledge learned before, using the formal strategies, listening, remembering, the students are able to describe the way they are learning, identify the main key-activities for learning. Referring specifically at the strategy" watch, cover, write, check". The studies have underlined the importance of students metacognition, these being able to reflect over what they had done, to watch their progress and use for self-evaluation, to assume the responsibility for their own learning.

- **The affective abilities:** these competences are bound to the feelings' management. The studies have identified the motivation as being the most important affective attribute according with the independent learning. A study has suggested that another main affective ability, which is bound by the motivation, is "delayed satisfaction". This refers to the capacity of waiting the expected results (Meyer, Haywood, Sachdev, & Faraday, 2008).

The metacognitive capacities are bound by the availabilities and self-analysis abilities of own way of learning, in the purpose of the identification of these styles, strategies, methods, techniques, procedures which make easy the self-learning, which is formed in personal advantages in self-learning. They form through request and gradual training, conscious and selective training regarding the learning tasks (Bocoş (coord.), Răduţ-Taciu, Stan, O. Chiş, Andronache, 2016, p. 226).

The implementation of a curriculum based on learning strategies (learning strategies curriculum) is a kind of problem which revolutionizes the teaching models. The elaboration of some curriculum "has become a high priority in education" (Negovan, 2007), and the author has identified some important principles:

- Students exposure to a greater number of different strategies, not only to a general learning strategy, but to some specific techniques;
- Teaching conditional knowledge about: when? where? and why? are being used various strategies;
- Direct learning in learning through schemes;
- The development of students' wish of using strategies in learning.

4. Purpose of the Study

4.1. Which is the role of independent activities in the development of strategic learning competence?

Strategic learning is that type of learning which is made having as support the nomothetic processes (operative rules generator), selective processes (present in the affective acts), programming processes (molecular elements organizer in molars structures on mental plan) and processes of conscious self-adjustment based on a cognitive feed-back (self-control, self-critic) (Titone, 1974, apud Neacşu, 1990).

According to Butler (1998), the strategic learning involves “a recursive cycle of cognitive activities, including the duty analysis, selection, adaptation or even strategies invention, performance monitoring, as well as the change of the approaches which are necessary”. Therefore, the efficient strategic learning should promote all these cognitive activities as well as the motivational processes and emotional.

The strategic learning fulfils the following purposes:

- Students learn how to learn instead of what to learn. In other words, students learn strategies which they can generalize across the different content domains and different tasks.
- The teaching-learning strategies can help the students to understand the learning process.
- The teaching-learning strategies help the students to pass the weakness areas and to perform at the level at which they are capable.
- The teaching-learning strategies promote the flexible thinking and teach the students the importance of changing the way of approach in different tasks.
- The teaching-learning strategies encourage the independent learning.
- By using the learning strategy helps students to become teachable more efficiently and more ready.

The teacher will promote the active teaching, positive attitude and the attachment to the didactic profession, valorising the educative potential of the subject, creating communication opportunities for the students, of taking decisions and autonomy manifestation in thinking.

5. Research Methods

Throughout the experimental research we used a various range of methods, among which we state: questionnaires translated and adapted by us in order to find out the features of efficient teaching, in the opinion of teaching staff and of students in pedagogic high schools, whether the students use independent learning consciously, as well as reflexive thinking in learning, during pedagogy lessons, the extent to which students in pedagogic high schools use metacognitive strategies in their study. We also proceeded to the study of curricular documents, we analyzed the products of students` activity, and we applied pedagogic knowledge tests to students.

6. Findings

In this regard, for the XI grade, with pedagogic profile, teacher-schoolman specialization, at the subject Students class management, we suggested an educational program formed from a totality of independent activities. We choose to present as example two models of independent activities in relation

with the thematic contents present in the school program approved through The Order of the Ministry of Education and Research no. 4875 from 6.11.2002.

Table 01. Independent activity for the theme “Fundamental behaviors of the teacher in the educative activity with the children group/students class“ (Anca & Bocoş, 2017, pp.16-17.)




<p>ANALYSE!</p> <p>Use the method SINELG (The Interactive Scoring System for Streamlining Lecture and Thinking)!</p> <p>This method promotes your active implication and monitoring your own understanding and presumes running over the following stages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before starting the text reading, note down all you know about the theme/that problem, no matter if it is correct or not. 2. Read the text carefully and note down on the edge (or in a table) marks, with the following meanings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “√” - for the known information, for the fragments which confirms what you know; - “+” - for the new information, unknown and plausible which you found out; - “-“ - for the information which is in contradiction with what you know, which disaffirms what you know; - “?” - for the information which requires research, because those fragments contain un clarity, confusions, rises questions. 3. Reflect together with your colleges! 4. If you have questions, ask the teacher’s help! 5. Make an idea inventory and present it to your colleges! 	<p>PRACTICE!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the key concepts! 2. Make a conceptual map/ cognitive organizer, where to point out (inter) relations and (inter) determinations between them. 3. By using the pedagogic practice attainments, present the importance of teacher behaviors for educative activity with the children group/students class. 4. Make an essay with the theme “Teacher’s behaviors in educative activity with the children group/ students class”.
<p>REFLECT AND SELF EVALUATE!</p> <p>Use the 3-2-1 technique! (adapt after Oprea, 2006, p. 268)</p> <p>Mention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  3 terms (concepts) from what you have learned;  2 ideas of which you would like to learn;  1 capacity, perception or ability which you obtained at the end of the activity. 	

Table 02. Independent activity for theme “Student class management and the subject”(Anca, Bocoş, 2017, p. 23)

<p>ANALYSE!</p> <p>Use the reading method based on the model SQ3R which contains the following steps!</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">S (Survey) – cover up/ read the text through skimming!</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Q (Question) – make questions regarding the studied text!</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">3 R (Read, Recite, Reading) – read entirely, describe and synthesize what you remember! (adaptation after I. Neacşu, 2015, p. 133)</p>	<p>PRACTICE!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make a conceptual map/ cognitive organizer, in which to point out the (inter) relations and (inter) determinations between the identified key concepts. 2. Argue pro/ against the permissive/ liberal theory of school subject. 3. Make a short essay with the theme “Positive discipline.” 4. Tell the role of personal/ collective self- discipline in instructive/ educational activity.
<p>REFLECT AND SELF EVALUATE!</p> <p>Reflexive journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ What have you learned new from this lesson? ✚ What feelings have the learning process awake in you? ✚ Which from the talked-about ideas seemed more interested? ✚ What difficulties have you encountered? ✚ How can you use in the future this learning experience? <p>Other considerations...</p>	

7. Conclusion

In a research regarding the development of critical thinking, Dumitru (2000), apud. Joiţa, (2002) deduces that „the metacognitive or strategic learning” is a solution in order that the students to become more conscious by their own cognitive processes, to learn how to learn efficiently. But this thing is a consequence of the way, model used by the teacher in teaching, in resolving the problems.

According to the researches of Brown (1981), apud Cerghit, (2008), an instruction which pretends to be efficient includes a component of own evaluative reflection and own control, in which the students have to be trained, learned to realise their own learning, warned by the way in which the metacognitive strategies can affect their performances, in a positive way. In this way, they become more motivated to sign on in metacognitive activities and they will understand that this kind of activities can transform them in successful students, with high performances. Finally, the forming of the metacognitive skills assume

involving in various activities, training in various contexts and flexible application of the strategies and learned knowledge.

References

- Anca, M.-I., Bocoş, M.-D. (2017). *Students` class management. Support curriculum for pedagogic high schools*, Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă Publishing, Cluj-Napoca
- Bocoş, M.-D. (2013). *Interractive training*. Bucharest: Polirom Publishing House
- Bocoş, M.-D.(coord.). Răduţ-Taciu, R., Stan, C. Chiş, O., Andronache, D.-C. (2016), *Pedagogy praxiologic dictionary*, vol I. Piteşti: Paralela 45 Publishing House
- Butler, D. L. (1998). *The Strategic Content Learning approach to promoting selfregulated learning*, in B. J. Zimmerman, ed. & D. Schunk (Eds.), *Developing selfregulated learning: From teaching to self-reflective practice* (pp. 160–183), New York: Guilford
- Cerghit, I. (2008). *Alternative and complementary training systems. Structures, styles and strategies*. Iaşi: Polirom Publishing House
- Joita, E. (2002). *Cognitive education*. Iaşi: Polirom Publishing House
- Meyer, B., Haywood, N., Sachdev, D. and Faraday, S. (2008), *What is independent learning and what are the benefits for students?* London: Department for Children, Schools and Families Research Report 051, [Original title: Independent Learning: Literature Review]
- Neacşu, I. (1990), *Training and learning*. Bucharest: Didactic and Pedagogic Publishing House
- Neacşu, I. (2015), *Methods and techniques of efficient learning. Fundaments and practices of success*. Iaşi: Polirom Publishing House
- Negovan, E. (2007). *The learning psychology, forms, strategies and style*. Bucharest: Universitary Publishing House
- Oprea, C.L. (2006). *Interactive didactic strategies*, Bucharest: Didactic and Pedagogic Publishing House.