

INTERACTION BETWEEN PEDAGOGUE AND CHILD TO PROMOTE PLANNING SKILLS

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Abstract. *The goal of the pre-school competence-based education lies in the promotion of all areas of development – physical, social, emotional and cognitive, as well as helping children to acquire core competencies, including the ability to plan own activities. The research aims at theoretical and empirical study of opportunity to promote planning skills within interaction between child and pedagogue.*

When dealing with both daily and teacher-created problem situations, children are involved in decision-making, are trusted to be co-responsible for the decision made. By working together with an adult, child acquires planning skills, ability to achieve the goal set.

To reveal the pedagogical problem of the research in full, it is also important to look at it from the point of view of a preschool teacher. To find out opinion of pre-school pedagogues, surveying was conducted; it was aimed at studying principles of child development and upbringing taken into account in practice when organizing pedagogical process promoting planning skills of pre-schoolers. The experience of pre-school teachers was analysed by frequency and interpretation using descriptive and analytical statistics method (IBM SPSS Statistika-v19.0).

Keywords: *pre-schooler, planning skills, interaction between pedagogue and child*

Introduction

The goal of competence-based pre-school education lies in the promotion of all areas of development – physical, social, emotional and cognitive, as well as helping children to acquire certain transversal skills, “which lies in the basis of mandatory pre-school education content” (Regulations for National Pre-School Education Guidelines and Pre-School Education Programme Examples [NVPIVPIPP]), 2018). Ability to finish what has been started – one of the achievements of self-directed learning – is closely related to the ability to plan own activities.

The research is aimed at theoretical and empirical study of opportunity to promote planning skills within interaction between child and pedagogue.

To reveal the pedagogical problem of the research in full, it is also important to look at it from the point of view of a preschool teacher. Within the context of the problem to be researched, by studying the principles of child development and upbringing taken into account in practice when organizing pedagogical process promoting planning skills of pre-schoolers, surveying was conducted. In total, research covered 102 pre-school teachers from various Latvian pre-school education institutions and having differing experience in pedagogical work. The experience of pre-school teachers was analysed by frequency and interpretation using descriptive and analytical statistics method (IBM SPSS Statistika-v19.0).

Results

Traditional education system requires child to learn and know. Learning process is regarded as the flow of information from the subject to child, hoping that child will perceive, learn and remember as many from what teacher has told as possible. Passive fulfilment of tasks, performance of different activities without seeing the interconnections does not form understanding of the way we think, reach our goals – being the priority of modern education.

Modern view to education, learning and learning process is different today. Implementation of education reforms in Latvia emphasizes necessity to have a learning skill (Hattie & Donaghue, 2016), ability to lead own learning process, as well as ability to plan – think ahead (Fišers, 2005, 48). It is important for child to be able to set and reach own targets as well as those of society. To achieve this goal, changing attitude towards the child. Adhering to the principles of child development and learning (refer to the Figure 1) in daily work of pedagogue, planning and implementation of learning process play an essential role in the acquisition of planning skills, which is one of the learning phases.

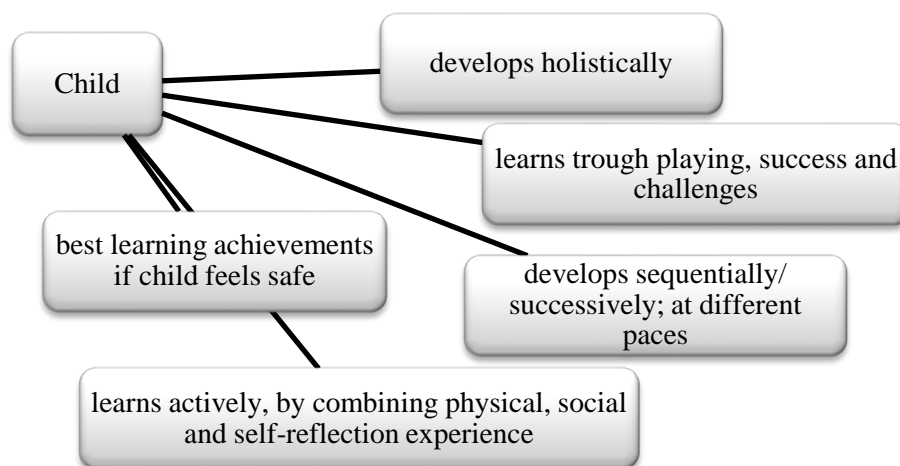


Figure 1 Principles of child development and learning (Kostelnik, Rupiper, Soderman, & Whiren, 2014)

Studies (Bronson, 2000; Perry, VandeKamp, Mercer, & Nordby, 2000) show that pre-schooler can lead his own learning – plan, monitor and evaluate learning process. Pre-schoolers develop their ability to plan own activities by working together with an adult, by getting involved in the preparation of materials needed for the lesson, by cleaning the workplace after the activities are completed, by discussing the “daily routine and works” (Fisher, 2005, 55), by solving problematic situation both daily and those created by teacher.

Within the framework of the research, with an aim to study how pre-school teachers plan their work and whether they involve children in the planning process, pre-school pedagogues were interviewed and their answers to the questions were analysed. When completing the questionnaire, each respondent was free to express own opinion. The survey results were analysed using descriptive and analytically statistical methods. Analysis of each separate answer and all the answers together allowed finding out the trends present in Latvian pre-school educational institutions.

The first question was aimed at finding out the principles of development and upbringing taken into account by pre-school pedagogues when assigning tasks for play lessons and whether the principles chosen may be related to acquisition of planning skills at pre-school age. The answers provided by the respondents were coded, and nine were created out of the original eleven. Six of the established groups correspond to one of the child development and upbringing principles; the most important of which are: child develops holistically, development of a child takes place sequentially, successively, at different paces, child learns via active motion by combining physical, social and self-reflection experiences, and his learning profile can vary. Answers given by the respondents are shown in the Figure 2.

The answers given by respondents show that majority of them (37 %), when thinking about planning of the educational process, devote attention to the child’s age and level of development, child’s needs and abilities. Smaller proportion (19%) of the respondents give importance to the child’s interests, while even smaller share (11 %) to child’s experience, which shows that pre-school pedagogues have theoretical understanding on individual development of a child to be considered when planning daily activities. Out of the respondents, 8 % pointed out that they plan pedagogical process in a way to facilitate development of a child by respecting aesthetic, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, physical and social development.

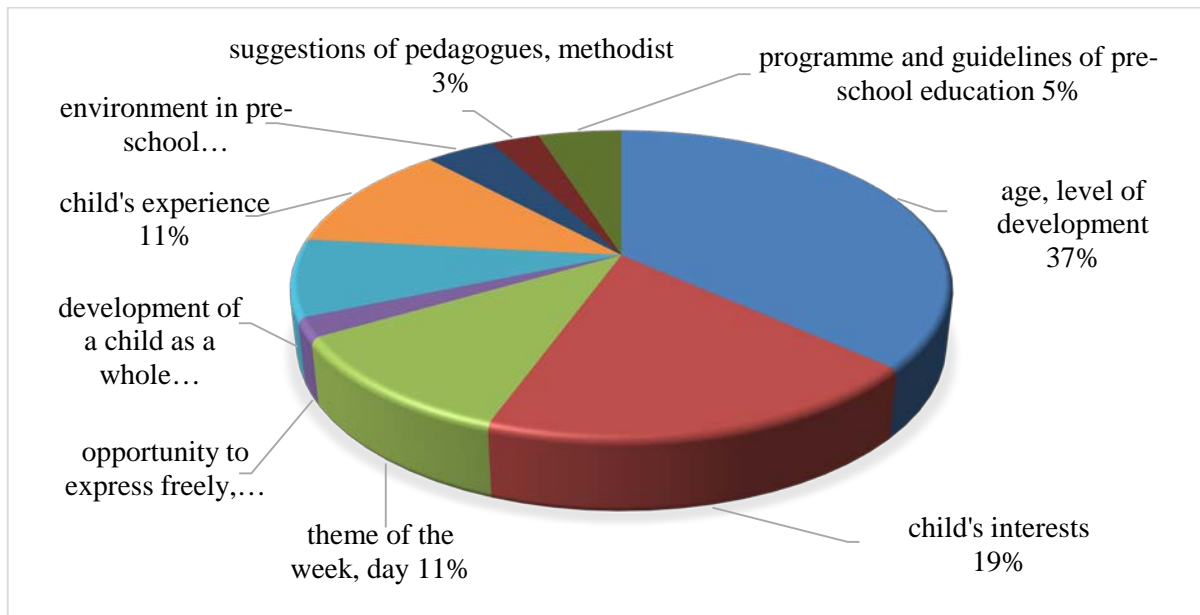


Figure 2 *Pre-conditions taken into account when setting tasks of the play lessons*

The fact that only 2 % of the respondents think that free, independent activity of child is a significant way of acquiring knowledge at pre-school age and 4 % of the pedagogues believe that environment in pre-school is significant factor shows that respondents only partly understand the way how child is learning and what teaching methods and methodologies shall be used to promote child's ability to plan own activities. It would be important for a pedagogue to understand that it is important for a pre-schooler to study, do, and solve cognitive problems on his/her own. When being active, child determines own activity, is free in own choices. When acting passively, child is guided, is not free, and not always has a clear purpose of the activity, however child must know how and why he must do something. It is important to diversify teaching methods and forms of work organization to promote self-expression, independence, will, purposefulness and activity of a child.

Answers to the second question aimed at finding out good practice examples are summarised in the Figure 3.

The greatest share of respondents (27 %) believes that pre-school education establishments ensure emotional well-being of a child. Learning cannot be separated from emotions, as the connection between the sense and emotions is the one that forms the strongest motivation to learn and develop intellectually. Emotional well-being is ensured when child finds happiness in the learning process, is independent, respected, heard and his/her interest in different things is supported by both the teacher and parents.

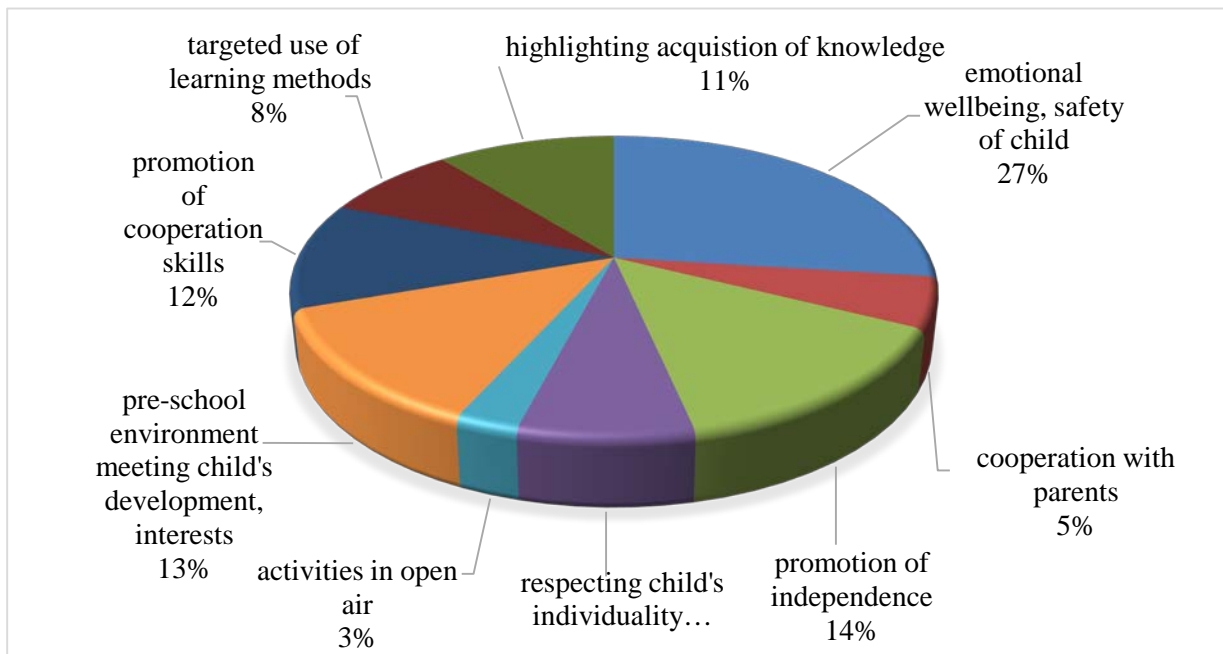


Figure 3 Examples of good practice in planning pedagogical process

Analysis of the answers to the third question (refer to the Figure 4) shows contradiction between the theory and practice.

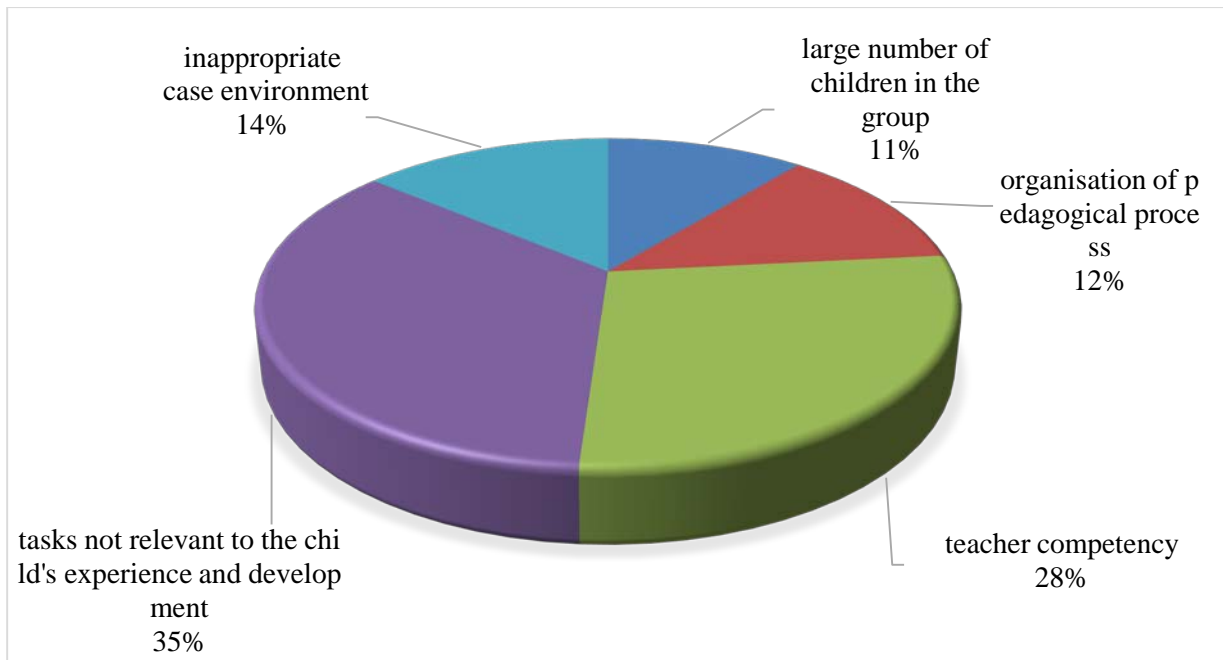


Figure 4 Examples of bad practice in planning pedagogical process

The first question revealed that pre-school pedagogues have theoretical understanding of the child's individual development as an important pre-condition when planning daily activities, while during pedagogical practice respondents (35 %) observed that in everyday activities tasks that are set are not meeting child's experience, interests and stage of development. Implementation of pedagogical process not always takes into account child's topical, individual needs.

Education process must be discursively justified and planned, which means that child also has to participate in the planning thereof (Gudjons, 1998). It does not mean that pedagogue does only what is wanted by children, but that he knows abilities, level of development, interests of each child and plans education process based on this knowledge. Learning process build around child starts with the child's ideas and questions that are further developed and viewed in depth (Geist, 2019). The questions asked by teacher are very important to support child's learning. Properly asked questions can increase child's ability to observe, predict, compare, generalize, evaluate.

There are two main types of teacher–child relations: first – teacher influences child, and second – teacher and child cooperate as equal subjects. Analysis of the practice observations shows that 28 % of respondents have seen problems in the relationship between pedagogue and child. When organizing pedagogical process, teachers often choose “influence strategy” (Šteinberga & Tunne, 1999, 19), meaning that in practice mainly the first type of relations is used, i.e., pedagogue is the one who makes the decisions by ignoring child's ideas, interests, and it can be said that common planning of activities is missing. Although, theory emphasises that interest in learning can only be promoted on the basis of current, topical needs of a child. Cognising, trying, experimenting, analysing, and drawing conclusions by oneself forms the understanding and allows achieving high academic results. Planning skills of pre-schoolers also develop in interaction with an adult when discussing everyday tasks, commonly planning works to be done. Out of the respondents, 12 % pointed out that pedagogues, when planning daily activities in pre-school education institution, forget that children need time to acquire abilities and skills, that children develop at different paces (Kostelnik et al., 2014), and that the best way to acquire planning skills is trough play. Sometimes, in order to implement activity planned by a pedagogue, children are asked to interrupt their play, thus breaking the requirement of the Regulations of the Cabinet No 716 stipulating that child shall have the opportunity to learn by going deeper in a play lesson covering free and independent play off a child and activities purposefully organised and indirectly guided by a pedagogue (NVPIVPIPP, 2018). If child cannot complete activity or play he/she has started, development of planning of skills does not take place, irrespective of the adult-driven activity in which child is engaged afterwards. When answering the first

survey question, only 5 % of respondents indicated that they plan integrated learning process based on pre-school education programme and guidelines, thus, the topicality and importance of the document among pedagogues is questionable.

In pre-school, environment promoting initiative, independence, cooperation and interest is important. Out of the surveyed pedagogues, 14 % pointed out that pre-school do not create a child-oriented learning environment – child-oriented environment encourages children to develop their abilities, skills and be self-confident. Well-arranged and organized environment in which children have access to all the necessary materials allows to avoid situations where teacher is occupied with continuous search for and distribution of materials instead of productively working with children.

Conclusions

Planning skills can be learned from pre-school age through close interaction between child and pedagogue as equal subjects.

Common planning of activities, discussion thereof, taking care not to interrupt activity (play) chosen by child, creating of safe environment directed towards independence and collaboration is the beginning of acquiring planning skills. This is one of the challenges that pre-school pedagogues face when planning pedagogical process.

Attention should be paid to the relationship between the educator and the child. Confidence of pedagogues in the child's socio-emotional development as an important prerequisite for development of planning skills shall be facilitated.

The results of the research show that more in-depth studies on learning to learn at pre-school covering all three parts of learning to learn – planning, monitoring, evaluation – are needed.

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