

**MUSICO-PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING OF STUDENTS – FUTURE
KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS – A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
(BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE PLEVEN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION,
BULGARIA, AND THE ALEKSINAC COLLEGE FOR KINDERGARTEN
TEACHERS, SERBIA)**

Penka Marcheva

St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo –College of Education, Pleven

penka.marcheva@uni-vt.bg

Abstract: The presented publication is part of the work on a scientific research project, related to a comparative theoretical analysis of the curricula and course syllabi of the professional and pedagogical training of students – future children teachers at the Vratsa branch and Pleven College of Education, part of the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo, and the Aleksinac College for Kindergarten Teachers, Republic of Serbia. The conception of this project, and the publications related to the project activities, concern aspects of comparative pedagogy. The comparison of the professional pedagogical qualifications of the pedagogical specialists allows for a good practice transfer and the enrichment of the curricula of the pedagogical disciplines in terms of content. The subjects of research and comparison in this publication are the curricula and course syllabi of the Pleven College of Education, which is a structural unit of St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo, and the Aleksinac College for Kindergarten Teachers, Republic of Serbia. The main aspect of analysis and comparison is the musico-pedagogical training of students-future kindergarten teachers. In the curricula comparison, the ratio between required, optional and elective subjects has been tracked. The comparison of tuition hours allocated to the practical training of students in both institutions has been emphasized. The comparison of the curricula, which are the basis of the theoretical and methodological training of future teachers, has also been allocated a crucial role. The conclusion of the publication highlights the necessity of seeking additional opportunities of extending the practical training of students in a real educational environment.

Keywords: musical-pedagogical preparation, future kindergarten teachers, curriculum, curricula, course syllabus, course syllabi

1. INTRODUCTION

The professional and pedagogical training of future teachers stands out as a pressing live question. The requirements for teachers' theoretical and practical training, according to the dynamics of the contemporary educational process are rapidly increasing. Prof. I. Petkova works on the problems of the professional and pedagogical profile of Bulgarian teachers. In her book *Preparation and Qualification of the Bulgarian Teacher*, she highlights that '*vocational training is a set of knowledge, skills and competences that a person needs to master to practice a certain profession.*'²²⁵ The presented publication is part of the work on a scientific research project, related to a comparative theoretical analysis of curricula and course syllabi of the professional and pedagogical training of students – future children teachers at the Vratsa branch and the Pleven College of Education, part of St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo and the Aleksinac College for Kindergarten Teachers, Republic of Serbia. / Contract No. FDD - 31-653-01 /19.06.2017/.

The subjects of analysis and comparison of the present publication are the curricula and course syllabi of the two higher education institutions, which prepare kindergarten pedagogical specialists in the disciplines 'Education of Professionals, working at Kindergartens' at the Aleksinac College for Kindergarten Teachers, Republic of Serbia and 'Pre-school Pedagogy and English' at the Pleven College of Education, part of St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo.

The aim is to compare the amount of knowledge, skills and competences that future teachers receive during their university education, and to seek opportunities for good practice transfer between the above mentioned educational institutions.

According to E. Topolska, '*the present topic is interdisciplinary. It concerns an analysis of pedagogical skills acquired by students of different disciplines - their development, mutual complementing and formation of a*

²²⁵ Petkova, I., Podgotovka i kvalifikatsiya na balgarskiya uchitel, Universitetsko izdatelstvo „Sv. Kliment Ohridski“, 2012, p.100

*complex structure.*²²⁶. In support of this view, it is important to emphasize that the amount and quality of knowledge, skills and competences that students gain during their studies at the university is a real prerequisite for their future professional realization. This is indeed the starting point for creating the training documents in the two educational institutions. For example, in the title of the curriculum of the 'Pre-school Pedagogy and English' course at the Pleven College of Education, it is stated that *'the course of studies in the discipline is oriented towards achieving a high level of professional training and formation of competencies, adequate to the standards referred to in the European Qualifications Framework, the National Qualifications Framework and Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.* [2] A distinction between knowledge, skills and competences that students acquire in the course of their training is made as follows:

'Knowledge:

- general theoretical pedagogical training in the field of early childhood;
- knowledge of the linguistic specificity of the acquisition of English and the methodological foundations of early foreign language learning;
- knowledge of the psychological development and individual characteristics of children's personality.

Skills:

- using modern methods and approaches in teaching, adequate to the established standards in the educational space and tailored to the individual needs of each child;
- doing work, oriented towards the development of children's abilities;
- communication skills, teamwork skills and skills allowing the optimal realization of pedagogical interactions.

Competencies (professional qualities and abilities):

- methodological competence of realizing the forms of pedagogical interaction in the respective educational areas;
- adaptability, mobility and skills to make adequate decisions in line with current scientific achievements and the changing educational environment;
- creativity, initiative, responsibility, motivation for development and improvement of professional qualification;
- Competences for organizing and conducting scientific and research work".[2]

Thus formulated, the knowledge, skills and competences of the future kindergarten teachers, refer to the overall training in all educational fields, including their musico-pedagogical training, which is subject to a comparative analysis of the educational documentation in the two higher education institutions.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CURRICULA OF THE TWO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE MUSICO-PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING OF FUTURE TEACHERS – CONTENT ASPECTS

In both institutions the length of study is three years. The curriculum analysis is focused on content. The courses are arranged in succession. According to their status, they are defined as required, optional and elective. Their analysis will be carried out in two directions:

1. in terms of the theoretical training of students;
2. in terms of their practical training

The diagrams that follow represent the ratio of the musico-pedagogical disciplines in the two educational institutions related to **theoretical training of the students**.

²²⁶ Topolska, Evgenia. Developing the Pedagogical Skills of Prospective Teachers for Teaching Languages in an Intercultural Kindergarten Environment - Acta Paedagogica Vilnensia 2017, № 38, p. 102, ISSN 1392-5016

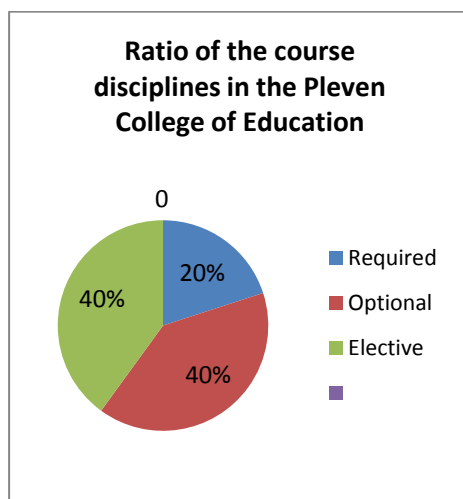


Diagram 1.

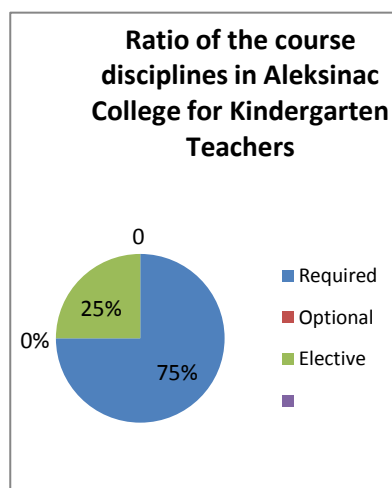


Diagram 2.

The analysis shows that the proportion of required disciplines at the Aleksinac College for Kindergarten Teachers, related to the theoretical training of students, is higher than the one at the Pleven College of Education. The ratio of optional courses is reversed; they are more in the Bulgarian educational institution. The theoretical disciplines in both of the educational institutions are allocated in the third and fourth semesters and are presented in the following table:

	Pleven College of Education	Aleksinac College for Kindergarten Teachers
Required course disciplines	1. Pedagogy of Kindergarten Music Education. (fourth semester)	1. Music Education Methodology, two parts (fourth and fifth semester) 2. Vocal and instrumental education (third semester)
Elective course disciplines	1. Art Pedagogy – theoretical and practical aspects (fourth semester) 2. Music Theory and Solfeggio (third semester)	1. Music Workshop (third semester)

Table 1. Distribution of theoretical disciplines by semesters.

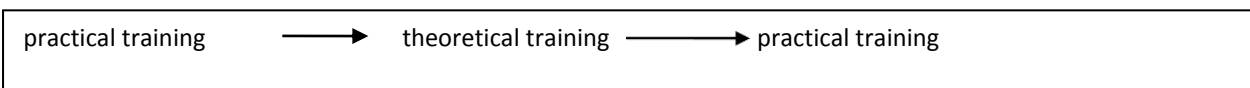
Examining the ratio of the disciplines in the two higher education pedagogical institutions implies the acknowledgement of an existing difference in their curricula. It is represented by the presence of optional disciplines in the musico-pedagogical training of students at the Pleven College of Education. These are Music Instrument (third and fourth semester) and Children's Music Folklore (fifth semester).

In both educational institutions the methodological training related to the specificities of the musico-educational process in kindergarten is done in the fourth semester, in the disciplines Pedagogy of Music Education in Kindergarten (Pleven College of Education) and Methodology of Music Education (Aleksinac College for Kindergarten Teachers). The review of the content of their curricula shows that they have a fundamental role. The difference in this aspect is that in the Aleksinac College, methodological training continues in the fifth semester as it is divided into two parts. In both higher education institutions, training in these required disciplines can provisionally be considered as an end point in the theoretical part of the musico-pedagogical training of the students-future kindergarten teachers. This methodological training is provided and expanded in disciplines that have a facilitative function such as Vocal and Instrumental Education and Music Workshop (Aleksinac College) and Music Theory and Solfeggio, Musical Instrument, Art Pedagogy - Theoretical and Practical Aspects and Children's Music Folklore (Pleven College).

The content observation and analyses of the curricula show that in both institutions there is a link between the content of required disciplines on one hand, and the content of optional and elective ones on the other. This is an essential condition for the realization of an effective, compliant with the modern requirements, musico-pedagogical training of future kindergarten teachers,

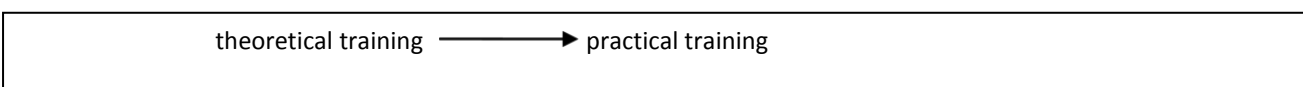
On the basis of a comparative analysis of the curricula **with regard to practical training** of students-future kindergarten teachers, several important conclusions are outlined. The first one is related to the number of

classes, which at the Pleven College of Education are 180 and at the College in Aleksinac - 300. This leads to the logical difference in the number of credits awarded through practical training in the two institutions. Undisputedly, these are classes related to the overall practical training of students in all educational fields, including classes on musico-practical training. The second conclusion, stemming from the comparative analysis, is related to the finding that at the Aleksinac College the educational process of the students-future kindergarten teachers begins with a practical training, goes through a theoretical one, to end with a practical one again. This could be schematically represented as follows:



Scheme 1. Educational process structure at Aleksinac College for Kindergarten Teachers

This scheme is also logically linked to the musico-pedagogical training of students-future kindergarten teachers in Aleksinac. This means that more classes are dedicated to it as part of students' practical training. Students' training at the Pleven College of Education is structured following the educational paradigm from theory to practice and schematically this looks as follows:



Scheme 2. Educational process structure at Pleven College of Education

Practical training in Pleven is carried out in three stages – lesson observation, continuous pedagogical practice and pedagogical internship practice. Its main objective is to build knowledge, skills and competences for the realization of independent practical work, which will prepare the students for their professional realization.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE COURSE SYLLABI OF THE TWO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE MUSICO-PEDAGOGICAL PREPARATION OF FUTURE TEACHERS – CONTENT ASPECTS

Subject of analysis and comparison in the present publication, besides the curricula, are also the course schedules of the disciplines, closely related to the topic. For the Pleven College this is Pedagogy of Music Education in the Kindergarten. The analogical discipline at the Aleksinac College is Methodology of Music Education. The main results of the comparative analysis of the two syllabi are presented in a table as follows:

	<i>Pedagogy of Music Education in the Kindergarten, studied at the Pleven College of Education</i>	<i>Methodology of Music Education, studied at the Aleksinac College for Kindergarten Teachers</i>
Place of the course discipline in the curriculum – status, semester, number of credits	Required fourth semester – 4 credits	Required fourth semester – 3 credits fifth semester – 4 credits
Taxonomy of the aims	Aim: building on knowledge and skills with regard to: - Theoretical and methodological basis of music education; - Modern physiological and pedagogical research on children's reaction to musical activities and the variety of these activities; - Norms of the pedagogical and psychological work aimed at developing children's artistic and musical abilities.	In the first part of the discipline – oriented towards acquisition of knowledge of the methodology of music education in kindergarten. In the second part of the discipline the aim is to apply theoretical knowledge, acquired during the first part, in practical work related to music education in pre-school institutions.
Approach in selecting content	Synthesis Competence	Synthesis Competence

Training organization and mechanics: models, educational methods.	Active methods – discussion, lectures, seminars, demonstration. Interactive methods - case studies, brainstorming, simulation games, SWOT analysis, etc.	Monologue-dialogue method, text-graphical method, demonstrative-illustrative method
Assessing students' accomplishments – aims, types, methods, assessment components.	Continuous assessment of participation during seminars, educational texts, oral exam	Assessment of participation during lectures and seminars, colloquium, written and oral exam

Table 2. Comparison of required disciplines

The comparative analysis of the examined syllabi shows that the basic approaches to structuring the curriculum in both higher education institutions are the synthesis and the competency ones. Through the synthesis approach ‘... *the unity and diversity of the curriculum is simultaneously ensured by including, on one hand, general education (integrated general education minimum) and, on the other hand, differentiated specialized training The subject organization and structure of the curriculum is retained.*’²²⁷

On the basis of the competency approach is included educational content, which facilitates the acquisition of the professional competencies necessary to the future kindergarten teachers, which are essential for their future realization. Both disciplines are narrowly profiled in their specificity.

The aim of the training in Music Education Methodology at the Aleksinac College is related to the acquisition of knowledge and its application in practical activities in pre-school institutions.

The subject Pedagogy of Music Education in the Kindergarten, which is studied at the Pleven College, aims at presenting and shaping future teachers’ skills in terms of :

A. Theoretical and methodological foundations of music training;

B. Contemporary psychological and pedagogical research of children's reactions to various musical activities.

C. The norms of the pedagogical-psychological work aimed at the development of the artistic and musical abilities, the formation of performing skills and the creativity in all musical activities accessible to children of pre-school age. Through a comparative analysis of the thus formulated educational aims, their taxonomic levels are determined as application and analysis. (According to B. Bloom’s Taxonomy)²²⁸. This is evidence of the practical orientation of the students' education in both higher education institutions.

The use of active learning methods, as well as of various methods of assessing their accomplishments in each of the courses, is evidence of an active search for different opportunities for an effective educational process in each of the two educational institutions.

The comparative analysis of the following two disciplines - Music Theory and Solfeggio, studied by students at the Pleven College and Music Workshop, included in the training of students from the Aleksinac College, is illustrated in the following table:

	Music Theory and Solfeggio , studied at the Pleven College	Music Workshop , studied at the Aleksinac Collge
Place of the course discipline in the curriculum – status, semester, number of credits	Elective third semester – 3 credits	Elective third semester – 5 credit
Approach in selecting content	Synthesis Competence	Synthesis Competence
Training organization and mechanics: models, educational methods.	Active methods – discussion, lectures, seminars, demonstration	Monologue-dialogue method, group work, demonstration

²²⁷ Todorina, D., Sadarzhane na obuchenieto, V: Uchebnik po Pedagogika ot balgaro-ruski kolektiv, YuZU „N.Rilski“ (Balgariya) – EGU „I. A. Bunin“ (Rusiya), 2010, http://pedagogy.swu.bg/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Todorina_Sadarjanie_obuchenie_2010.pdf

²²⁸ Bloom’s Taxonomy <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>

Assessing students' accomplishments – aims, types, methods, assessment components.	Continuous assessment of participation during seminars, continuous assessment based on tests. Exam	Assessment of participation during lectures and seminars. Written and oral exam
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Table 3. Comparison of elective disciplines

The table shows that similarities between the two disciplines are observed in the approaches to content selection. In both curricula they are synthesis and competence. The latter is connected with developing students' practical skills. There is some difference in their specification. For the students at the Aleksinac College, they are oriented towards playing Orff instruments and arranging simple children's songs. The practical skills in the discipline Music Theory and Solfege are related to musico-pedagogical analysis of music pieces, included in the curriculum of kindergartens.

As to the mechanics of the educational process, there are similarities in the use of active methods such as discussion, demonstration, seminars, which is justified by the practical orientation of the disciplines.

The examination of the methods for assessing students' accomplishments leads to the conclusion that in both higher education institutions this process is carried out in a similar way - through continuous assessment based on participation during seminars, and exams.

The differences outlined as a result of the comparative analysis are related to the different number of credits, which are 5 at the Aleksinac College, and at the Pleven College - 3. These in turn are commensurate with the classes, which presupposes the different tuition hours of each of the disciplines at the respective higher education institution. The conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is related to the search for opportunities in this regard. One of them is a more rational use of the extra classes, related to the musico-pedagogical training of students at the Pleven College.

CONCLUSION

Improving the quality of university education is a task whose implementation is of essential importance for the functioning of every higher education institution. The presented comparative analysis of the curricula and course syllabi of the Pleven College of Education and the Aleksinac College for Kindergarten Teachers, related to the musico-pedagogical training of students, is a real basis for seeking opportunities in this direction and transferring good practices. As to the practical training of future kindergarten teachers, it is necessary to look for other opportunities such as summer internships, joint initiatives between higher education institutions and partner educational institutions related to the participation of students in various activities such as holiday celebrations, participation in regional scientific and pedagogical forms - conferences, round tables, lectures, project work, etc.

LITERATURE:

- [1.] REGULATION No 12 of 01.09.2016 of the status and professional development of teachers, school directors and other pedagogical specialists
- [2.] Curricula of the discipline "Pre-school Pedagogy and English", Pleven College of Education as part of the St. Cyril and St Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo. <http://www.uni-vt.bg/bul/spec/infopack.aspx?sptype>
- [3] <http://www.uni-vt.bg/eng/spec/specinfo.aspx?sptype=1&specname=Pre-school%20Pedagogy%20and%20English>