

SURVEY ABOUT INCLUSION OF SOCIAL TOPICS TO PUPILS OF 4TH AND 5TH GRADES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

The political-administrative structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina is unique and extremely complex. Its administrative architecture has defined different teaching plans and programs at different level of state organization. This brings us to the fact that there are large numbers of textbooks that teach classes from different thematic areas.

The textbook is still the most frequently and most widely used teaching tool for pupils to acquire knowledge and skills. As a compulsory source of knowledge in teaching and schooling, the textbook represents a fundamental point of encounter between the teacher's professional competence and student expectations and the privileged channel through which teaching communication is realized. Items like content, structure, graphic and visual artwork of the textbooks have undergone a considerable qualitative developmental path, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to choose a suitable textbook that would be culturally and scientifically valuable, methodically well-structured and adapted to the pupils' interests and abilities and the context in which they live. The subject of research of this paper is to consider the characteristics of the constructivist approach to the textbooks "My Environment" in the 4th grade and "Society" in the 5th grade of the elementary school with a focus on social content. Also, in this paper we will try to highlight all the elements that favour the pupils in order to be able to effectively use the textbook and self-directed learning. The focus analysis of the textbooks, in addition to the mentioned segments, will also focus on the didactic-methodical foundations of individual forms of teaching that are integrated within the same framework, and encourage pupils to stand alone research work and self-directed learning.

This paper will analyse the possibility of creating textbooks and written materials that would support the self-directed learning of pupils as well as the development of social and civic competencies. Through the outline of the results and findings of the action-based survey, there are guidelines for further improvement of the subject area.

Keywords: Survey, Inclusion, Social Topics, Pupils, Elementary School.

1 INTRODUCTION

The textbook is still the most frequently and most widely used teaching tool for pupils to acquire knowledge and skills. In addition to textbooks, other sources similar to textbook (work volumes, worksheets, task collections, etc.) are also used. In modern school, the textbook is part of a small educational technology. Although considered a lower category of technology, it is not left out as medium; on the contrary, it has its place within the multimedia sources of knowledge. As a compulsory source of knowledge in teaching and schooling, the textbook represents a fundamental point of encounter between the teacher's professional competence and student expectations and the privileged channel through which teaching communication is realized.

In Western European countries, over the past decades, the textbook has been the subject of discussion and dispute for a long time, especially if it has been used as an exclusively fundamental basis for organized teaching. For its replacement were proposed textbooks prepared in collaboration with pupils during classroom work, various books from the school or class library, then the curricula set out on the topics discussed, but no adequate replacement has yet been made. Items like content, structure, graphic and visual artwork of the textbooks have undergone a considerable qualitative developmental path, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to choose a suitable textbook that would be culturally and scientifically valuable, methodically well-structured and adapted to the pupils' interests and abilities and the context in which they live.

In the contemporary theory of teaching, for a long time, theoreticians advocate for the teaching concept that starts from the student as an active subject in the classroom. Active learning methods are the forms of learning that stimulate complex mental processes such as: creativity, connectivity of knowledge, application of knowledge, independence, initiative and freedom of choice and expression of pupils.

The subject of research of this paper is to consider the characteristics of the constructivist approach to the textbooks "My Environment" in the 4th grade and the textbook "Society" in the 5th grade of the elementary school with a focus on social content. Also, in this paper we will try to highlight all the elements that favour the pupil in order to be able to effectively use the textbook and self-directed learning. The focus analysis of the textbooks, in addition to the mentioned segments, will also focus on the didactic-methodical foundations of individual forms of teaching that are integrated within the same framework, and encourage pupils to stand alone research work and self-directed learning. This action research will be conducted in the elementary School "1. mart" Jelah, Tešanj, Bosnia and Herzegovina in classes of 4th and 5th grade, and for the purposes of qualitative analysis will be used data from scalar questionnaire for teachers concerning the variability of social content, the way of introducing pupils with social content and the forms of teaching in textbooks "My environment" for the 4th grade and "Society" for the 5th grade of elementary school. The paper will analyse the possibility of creating textbooks and written materials that would support the self-directed learning of pupils as well as the development of social and civic competencies.

2. THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

2.1 The position of the company's teaching in elementary school curriculum

Subject "Society" takes a central role in programming and integrating the teaching contents of other subjects in the lower grades of elementary school. In its program content and forms of work, it provides inexhaustible educational strategies that encourage active learning and the art of critical thinking so that education at the initial stage reflects the democratization needs of education in which a learner can describe and judge the world.

The subject "Society" in its development has arisen based on the knowledge of the child's need for the full experience of the immediate reality and the participation of the school in supporting the child in his readiness for increasingly complex requirements of the living environment as well as the need to acquire basic knowledge that guarantees successful learning of social subjects in higher grades of elementary schools. Realization of the complex issues of understanding causative and consequential relationships in social phenomena and processes envisioned by the curriculum, pupils are necessary to be encouraged and develop curiosity and questioning of the art of critical thinking, which puts in place more mental processes.

If we proceed from respecting democratic processes through quality teaching of subject "Society", it is important for pupils to think independently in the envisaged curriculum and settings and to act in accordance with their thoughts, and to use certain information from different points of view, to judge their values on the basis of personal needs and goals. In order to effectively influence pupils, critical thinking must become a

constant of their immediate experience, and rightly systematizes the role of teachers as a responsible person in creating quality teaching of society.

The teacher in this subject should guide pupils through learning processes and their benefits by activating pupils' thinking, determining the purpose of learning (motivation), actively involving pupils in the process of learning different techniques, encouraging reflection (diversity of thinking, stimulating self-study) facilitates information processing in the learning process, and It facilitates critical thinking. Teaching of "Society" is represented in the 5th grade of the elementary school with one class per week, while the social contents from the 1st to the 4th grade are studied within the subject of "My environment".

2.2 Social contents in teaching "My environment" in the 4th grade of elementary school

"My environment" as a teaching subject in the fourth grade of the elementary school is based on a sensible experience of nature and the social environment. It represents the continuation and directing of spontaneous child research and the discovery of the interdependence of phenomena and processes in the natural and social environment. These findings are deepened and expanded in the classroom. "My environment" unites the contents of various scientific fields. Basic goal is to experience and appreciate the complexity, diversity and interaction of all factors acting in the child's natural and social environment, the development of a proper relationship to the social and natural environment, the development of a proper attitude towards people and events, a tolerant and open acceptance of different attitudes and opinions, and encouraging curiosity for discovering phenomena in the natural and social environment. Teaching contents/topics related to social contents within the framework of the subject "My environment" in the fourth grade of elementary school (MONKS ZDK, 2006) are the following:

- Cultural, public and educational institutions in my settlement;
- Wider country area - canton; natural features;
- Traffic connections in wider country area - canton;
- The development of wider country area: economy, tourism;
- Mutual relationship of economy and characteristics of home area and
- Natural-geographical characteristics of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2.3 Social contents in teaching "Society" in the 4th grade of elementary school

Teaching contents/topics related to social contents within the framework of the subject "Society" in the fifth grade of elementary school (MONKS ZDK, 2006) are the following:

1. My homeland

- 1.1. My homeland Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 1.2. Geographical features of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 1.3. Bosnia and Herzegovina and surroundings
- 1.4. Capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, centres of cantons and their role

2. Cultural-historical / historical sights

- 2.1. Cultural, educational and religious institutions of the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 2.2. Cultural-historical / historical sights of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 2.3. Significant cultural-historical / historical buildings in the country
- 2.4. Religion - the concept, a religious image of homelands and peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina

3. Geographical features of Bosnia and Herzegovina

- 3.1. Natural resources, geographical features - characteristics of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 3.2. Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina, economy and tourism
- 3.3. Mutual relationship of the economy

4. Traffic

- 4.1. Type of traffic in Bosnia and Herzegovina

4.2. The most important roads and traffic connections

4.3. Traffic connections in the settlement and in Bosnia and Herzegovina

By analysing the Curriculum and the framework program for the subject "Society", it is observed that it has no defined learning outcomes in accordance with the Common Core Curriculum for the Socio-Humanistic Area (APOS0, 2013). Namely, the same was done in accordance with the Framework National Curriculum for the 9-year elementary school program in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FMON, 2011), which was developed according to the Common Core Curriculum that focused on teaching content rather than outcomes. Revision of Curriculum for elementary school in the Zenica-Doboj Canton is in progress in accordance with the documents of the Agency for Pre-school, Elementary and Secondary Education that support learning outcomes.

In the existing Curriculum for the subject "Society", pupils are expected to acquire knowledge as follows:

- pupils on maps know the position of BH and the borders with the neighbouring countries - the position of BH;
- recognize the characteristics of the homeland and can explain them;
- pupils know about cultural and historical monuments of BH;
- have knowledge of the most important monuments from the past of BiH;
- have knowledge of the past of their homeland;
- know the religious monuments of the people in BH;
- know the characteristics of each of these regions in a cultural and economic sense;
- have knowledge of the economy and tourism of BH and their connection;
- they know about the types of traffic that are present in BH;
- know the most important roads in BH and;
- understand the traffic connections in their area.

In this grade, pupils are expected to expand their knowledge of their country, the love for their country, the cultural differences that exist in our country. Also, pupils especially learn about the social organization of their country and cultural and historical monuments that characterize its area. Pupils will renew and deepen their 4th grade knowledge about the type of settlement and the traffic connections of their country. By studying such anticipated content, pupils will acquire the necessary knowledge of their country and thus gradually engage in social subjects that are envisaged in higher grades in elementary school. Applying methods of rational learning and motivating pupils in the process of teaching content, with the active participation of teachers, pupils are enabled to acquire the necessary knowledge from the subject "Society".

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The subject of the action research related to the representation, then the variability, structure of textbooks and accompanying materials in the textbooks of "My Environment" and "Society", which are applied in the 4th and 5th grade of elementary school in the Zenica-Doboj Canton, which are on the list of approved textbooks of the Federal Ministry of Education And Science for school year 2016/2017. The problem of research was derived from the research subject and related to acquaintance with social contents in the teaching of "My environment/Society" from the perspective of their didactic-methodical design, connection with the contents of other subjects, their visualization in textbooks (texts, summaries, pictures, tables, charts, schemes, etc.), roles and functions of content for encouraging independent research work and strengthening social and civic competencies. The main goal of this action research was to examine which models of presentation of social contents in the textbooks of "My Environment" for the 4th grade of elementary school and the "Society" for the 5th grade of elementary school and what are the attitudes of class teachers and pupils of the 4th and 5th grade of elementary school about the current textbooks as the main source of acquiring the knowledge of the mentioned subjects.

The tasks of this research included the following:

- Determine how many teachers adhere to the contemporary requirements of didactic-methodical theory and practice when it comes to the choice of printed materials in classes of "My Environment/Society".
- Examine the extent to which teachers are satisfied with the textbooks of "My Environment/Society" and other print materials that accompany current textbooks.
- Examine the extent to which student competencies have been developed for the interactive use of textbooks and the understanding of its content in the process of self-directed learning.
- Examine the extent to which teachers' competencies have been developed to design additional printed materials in "My Environment/Society".

- Determine the levels of assessment of the textbooks “My Environment/Society” by class teachers with a focus on social content and thematic units in the 4th and 5th grade of the elementary school.
- Determine the level of assessment of the quality of the textbook and workbook elements in the textbooks “My Environment/Society” by pupils of the 4th and 5th grades.

In this research was applied Universal Model of Action Research A1 n + 8 (Suzic, 2007: 70). This model includes 8 phases as follows:

- Phase 1 Observation and conclusion of what should be changed;
- Phase 2 Conclusion on making changes and what are the improvements;
- Phase 3 Clearly sketch a plan of change and carry out a vision;
- Phase 4 Create an operational action plan to define roles and individual contributions;
- Phase 5 Develop clearly structured leadership and democratic participation;
- Phase 6 Follow the action, record all remarks and ideas and apply everything that is useful;
- Phase 7 Evaluate the flow and effects of the action, evaluate the effects of the original plan and the idea created during the action;
- Phase 8 Make analysis and report and compare it with the initial plan, enter the new cycle A1 n+8.

Research time frame was the second semester of the school year 2016/2017.

The organization and the course of the research took place in the following stages:

- Analysis of pedagogical documentation (Curriculum and framework program for nine-year elementary school - IV and V class, MONKS ZDK);
- Analysis of the document Common core of curricula for socio-humanistic area defined on learning outcomes (APOS0, 2013);
- Formation of sample of survey respondents;
- Creation and selection of research instruments;
- Selecting the textbooks “My Environment” and “Society” for analysis within research;
- Implementation of the action research;
- Data processing and interpretation of research results;
- Writing reports and publishing.

The research variables related to teachers (gender, work experience, level of education) and pupils (gender, success in learning from the relevant subject at the end of the first semester, age) involved in the subject research. The methods used in the subject research included: Servej method, method of theoretical analysis, analysis of pedagogical documentation and descriptive analytical method; while the applied research techniques included: Survey and interviewing.

Research instruments for pupils of 4th and 5th grade of the elementary school included: Student Assessment Scale (SPU) and Student Check-list (KEPM). On the other hand, research instruments applied to teachers were: Teacher Evaluation Scale (SPN); Scale of Quality Assessment of Textbook Elements (PKEU4) and; Scale of Quality Assessment for Textbook Elements (PKEU5). The survey sample comprised of 45 pupils of elementary school "1. Mart ", Jelah with a structure of 15 respondents from each of the following three categories: 4th grade pupils, 5th grade pupils and teachers.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following the application of the proposed methodological apparatus, the results obtained are given in Table 1. From the presented results it is evident that on the claim: Organizing classes of “My Environment/Society” with the independent work of pupils with a textbook helps me to achieve better results, out of 45 respondents, 16 (35.56%) have opted for scale 3, i.e., this way of organizing helps to achieve better results; 24 (53.34%) respondents opted for the option “somewhat”, and 5 (0.2%) respondents for the “no” option. We note that the majority of respondents opted for the “somewhat” option, which means that for better learning outcomes it is not enough just to work independently with a textbook. Teachers need to pay more attention to other forms of work. By using written materials in “My Environment/Society” classes, pupils are allowed to think critically and achieve better results, 33 i.e. 73.33% answered that they agree. No respondent answered negative which implies that the work with the use of written material encourages the achievement of a better learning outcome. The statement: the knowledge that pupils acquire from the textbook “My environment/Society” and other written materials are applicable in everyday life situations; 35 respondents i.e. 77.78% answered “yes”, while the others answered “somewhat”. We can say that the knowledge that

pupils acquire from textbooks “My Environment/Society” and other written materials are applicable in everyday life situations. Our long-term goal is to study this subject. Solving problems and situations is easier with interesting written materials specially designed by teachers.

Table 1 Displaying the results of the research through the scale of the quality assessment of the textbook elements (PKEU4)

TEACHING TOPICS	EVALUATION ELEMENTS	Scale levels									
		1		2		3		4		5	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Wider homeland - Canton (Past, present, geographical features, capital, etc)	Didactic-methodical text formatting					13	86.67	2	13.33		
	Technical text formatting					13	86.67	2	13.33		
	Questions and tasks for pupils					10	66.67	5	33.33		
	Graphs and tables					10	66.67	3	20.00	2	13.33
	Schematics and maps					10	66.67	5	33.33		
	National and other symbols					4	26.67	11	73.33		
	Additional texts for research	2	13.33	3	20.00	10	66.67				
	Advices and important information (key terms, definitions and explanations)			3	20.00	12	80.00				
	Lesson unit summary					15	100.00				
	Correlation with other subjects.			2	13.33	13	86.67				
	Correlation with other contents learned in previous grades.			2	13.33	13	86.67				
Cultural-historical sights (institutions, monuments, peoples)	Didactic-methodical text formatting			2	13.33	13	86.67				
	Technical text formatting			2	13.33	13	86.67				
	Questions and tasks for pupils			1	6.67	14	93.33				
	Graphs and tables					10	66.67	5	33.33		
	Schematics and maps					10	66.67	5	33.33		
	National and other symbols					15	100.00				
	Additional texts for research	2	13.33	3	20.00	10	66.67				
	Advices and important information (key terms, definitions and explanations)			5	33.33	10	66.67				
	Lesson unit summary	2	13.33	3	20.00	10	66.67				
	Correlation with other subjects.			5	33.33	10	66.67				
	Correlation with other contents learned in previous grades.			3	20.00	12	80.00				
Natural-geographical features Bosnia and Herzegovina (Natural resources)	Didactic-methodical text formatting			5	33.33	10	66.67				
	Technical text formatting			5	33.33	10	66.67				
	Questions and tasks for pupils			4	26.67	10	66.67	1	6.67		
	Graphs and tables			3	20.00	10	66.67	2	13.33		
	Schematics and maps			3	20.00	10	66.67	2	13.33		
	National and other symbols					13	86.67	2	13.33		
	Additional texts for research	2	13.33	4	26.67	9	60.00				
	Advices and important information (key terms, definitions and explanations)			4	26.67	10	66.67	1	6.67		
	Lesson unit summary			4	26.67	10	66.67	1	6.67		
	Correlation with other subjects.			5	33.33	10	66.67				
	Correlation with other contents learned in previous grades.			5	33.33	10	66.67				
Development of	Didactic-methodical text formatting					13	86.67	2	13.33		

	Technical text formatting					13	86.67	2	13.33		
	Questions and tasks for pupils			5	33.33	10	66.67				
	Graphs and tables					13	86.67	2	13.33		
	Schematics and maps					13	86.67	2	13.33		
	National and other symbols					15	100.00				
	Additional texts for research	4	26.67	5	33.33	6	40.00				
	Advices and important information (key terms, definitions and explanations)	3	20.00	6	40.00	6	40.00				
	Lesson unit summary			5	33.33	10	66.67				
	Correlation with other subjects.			5	33.33	10	66.67				
	Correlation with other contents learned in previous grades.			3	20.00	12	80.00				
Mutual relationship of economy and characteristics of homeland	Didactic-methodical text formatting					15	100.00				
	Technical text formatting					15	100.00				
	Questions and tasks for pupils			5	33.33	10	66.67				
	Graphs and tables					10	66.67	5	33.33		
	Schematics and maps					10	66.67	5	33.33		
	National and other symbols					15	100.00				
	Additional texts for research	3	20.00	4	26.67	8	53.33				
	Advices and important information (key terms, definitions and explanations)	3		4	26.67	8	53.33				
	Lesson unit summary			5	33.33	10	66.67				
	Correlation with other subjects.			5	33.33	10	66.67				
	Correlation with other contents learned in previous grades.			3	20.00	12	80.00				
Traffic connections in wider area - canton	Didactic-methodical text formatting					12	80.00	3	20.00		
	Technical text formatting					12	80.00	3	20.00		
	Questions and tasks for pupils			3	20.00	12	80.00				
	Graphs and tables			2	13.33	13	86.67				
	Schematics and maps			2	13.33	13	86.67				
	National and other symbols					14	93.33	1	6.67		
	Additional texts for research			3	20.00	12	80.00				
	Advices and important information (key terms, definitions and explanations)			3	20.00	12	80.00				
	Lesson unit summary			3	20.00	12	80.00				
	Correlation with other subjects.			1	6.67	14	93.33				
	Correlation with other contents learned in previous grades.			3	20.00	12	80.00				

For this statement 41, i.e. 91.11%,% answered “yes”, which suggests that good teacher preparation is of great importance for the class. It is notable that the same thinking is shared by both pupils and teachers. On the contrary, “My Environment/Society” textbooks contain difficult research tasks and pupils find it more difficult to solve them alone. Even 36 respondents (80%) answered “yes”. It is interesting that pupils and teachers have similar opinions that the tasks are excessive for self-work, this should be further examined and find the reason for it.

From the results presented in Table 1 for the statement "I like to design different types of assignments on specially crafted writing material than to use only the tasks in textbooks “My Environment/Society” as many as 60% of respondents answered "yes", 15 of them partially, and only 3 or 6.67% with “no”. Hereby we can

conclude that pupils love to create tasks themselves as well as teachers that are important for the development of their creativity. Entrepreneurs and work queues should have as much space as possible to create questions and tasks as well as practical exercises. Statement: Interesting written materials are present at every class of "My Environment/Society" that I organize. For this statement, 60% of respondents answered "yes", and 6 of them with "no". This is by far the highest percentage of responses with "no". Teachers should make more effort to choose interesting materials for the classroom. Statement: Learners are more active at class of "My Environment / Society" if interesting written materials are used. For this statement 28 or 62.22% answered "yes" and 17 or 37.78% of them said "partially", showing the more interesting written materials are used, that pupils are more active.

Also, the pupils prefer to learn independently from "My Environment/Society" textbook than in the group together with other classmates. In this statement, 39 responded "yes" and only 1 responded "no", which indicate that the pupils prefer self-study more than group. Therefore, group work should be represented, but the teacher needs to evaluate well in which teaching contents.

I look forward to the fact that pupils are able to effectively use prepared interesting written materials (e.g. teaching leaflets, programmed material, etc.). 41 responded to this statement with "yes", what was to be expected.

Classes of "My Environment/Society" are more interesting when different written materials are used. For this statement 32 or 71.11% responded with "yes", and 12 or 26.67% "partially", showing that the level of interest is not affected only by differently written materials but other factors must also be represented. On the statement: In the course of making, choosing and using written materials in the teaching of "My Environment/Society" I respect the interests, needs and ideas of my pupils, 18 pupils, i.e. 60% answered "yes", and out of 15 teachers 100% responded with "yes", suggesting that the pupils and teachers have different opinions about this statement. This should be further examined.

5. CONCLUSION

Taking into account the present results of the research through introducing the social contents of the 4th and 5th grade of elementary school as well as analysing the check-list for pupils, the assessment scale for the pupils, the evaluation scale for the teachers as well as the quality assessment of the elements of the textbook for 4th and 5th grade for teachers we draw the conclusions that are given in the rest of the text.

Analysing the results of the check-list of the characteristics of the efficiency of the printed material we noticed: The most appreciated assertions are that the content of the teaching unit is clear and follows the images as well as that there are enough research tasks in the textbook, and 28 or 93.33% answered "yes". The basic characteristics and tasks are related to the contents of other teaching subjects and the textbook contains additional texts to expand the knowledge of the worst evaluated i.e. 10 or 33.33 respond to "yes." The work volume is on average better rated which can be the subject of additional research. The quality assessment scale of the fourth grade textbook elements shows that most teachers responded well and very well to all teaching topics, as most responded with grades: "good", "satisfactory" and "bad" for additional research tests in all areas, while the part related to charts, tables and schemes is mostly rated "good" and "very good" as well as a part referring to national and other symbols. On the quality assessment scale of textbook elements for the 5th grade, most of the teachers have been evaluated for didactic-methodical shaping as well as technical formatting of the text with grades "good" and "very good", while the section refers to texts for research and questions and tasks for pupils rated as satisfied and good. Graphs and tables are on average worse than the same characteristics for classroom writers.

Finally we can conclude that the tasks in the textbooks need to be more concrete and leaving room for further research to the pupils. The content should be more related to previous learning as well as being relieved of irrelevant information. The users should have more creative and equalizing tasks. Additional research related to the ways and forms of work most suitable for pupils should be conducted.

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