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**ICCS 2022:
RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS**

**BOOK
OF
ABSTRACTS**

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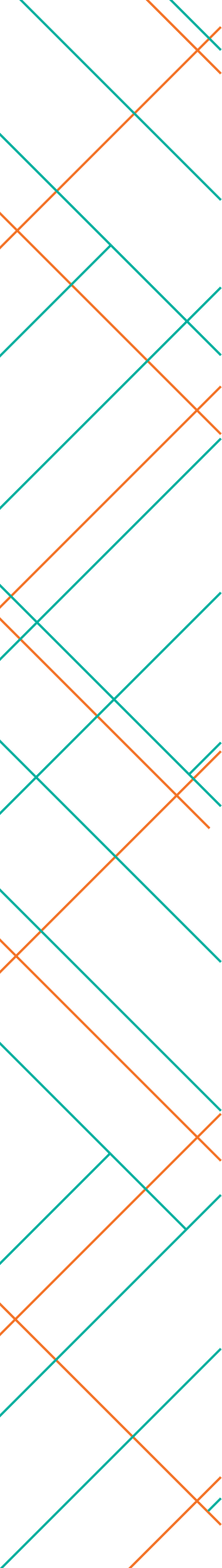
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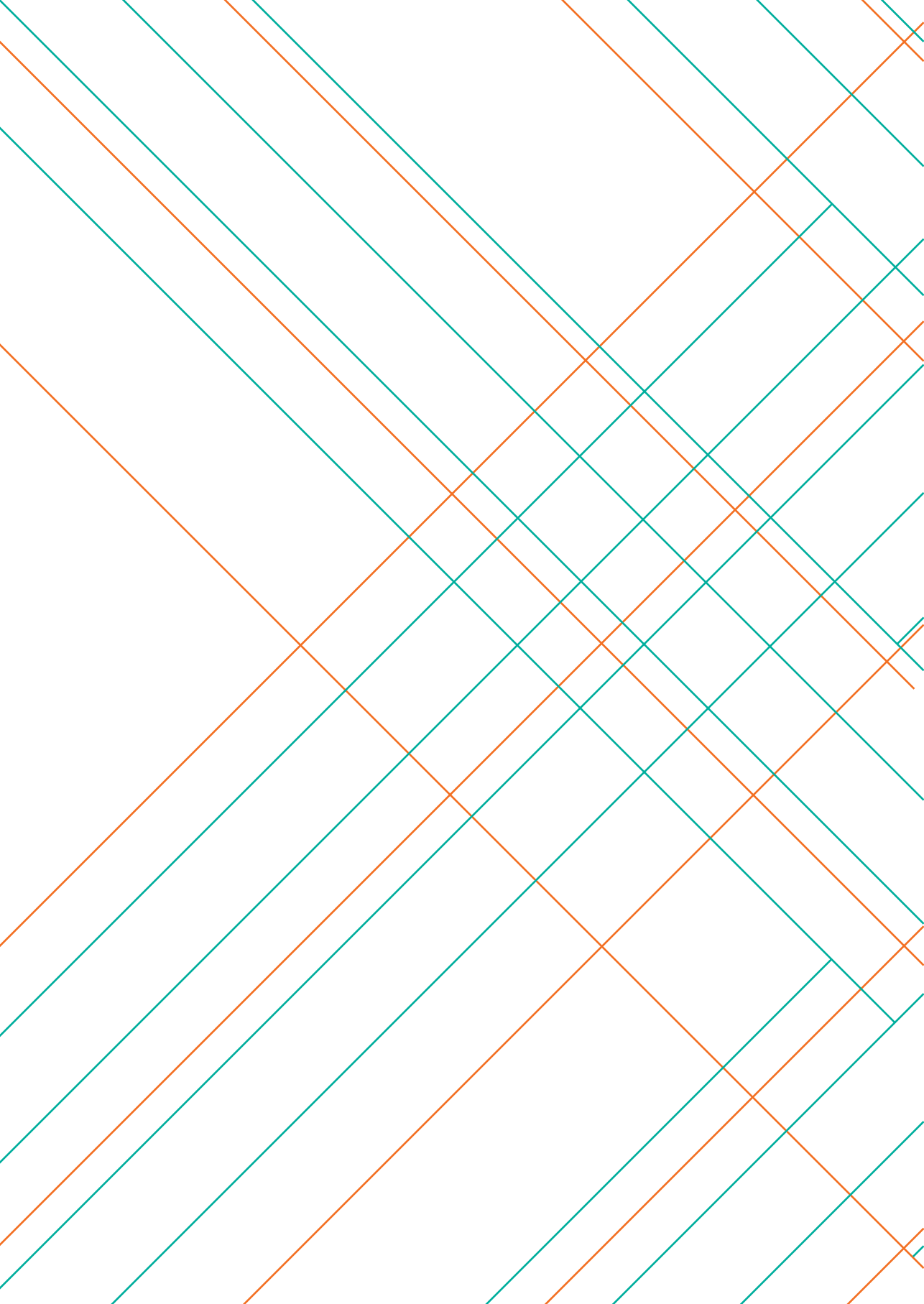
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PLENARY



CONTEXTUALIZATION OF ICCS: IMPORTANCE FOR SECONDARY ANALYSES AND POLICY-MAKING IN EDUCATION

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Contextualizing the International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS) is crucial, not only in its most recent cycle but from the inception of comparative research in this field in the 1970s. It is important to recognize how the evolution of international large-scale student assessments (ILSAs) has been shaped by social factors, akin to those influencing the development of comparative education. The history of international comparative research on civic and citizenship education clearly demonstrates this influence at national and international levels. A pivotal political event at the end of the 1980s was the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, leading to questions about how these countries' education systems prepared students for democracy. Organizations like the Council of Europe began holding meetings with both Eastern and Western European educators. In 1993, a separate international study on civic/citizenship education (not as a part of another research project, such as the Six-Subject Survey from the 1970s) was allegedly encouraged by Eastern European representatives, recognizing the importance of comparative research in preparing future generations for democracy. Concerns about declining political interest and participation among the youth also led some Western European countries to support the study. Contextualization is vital not only for the development and focus of the study's content but also for

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the interpretation of its results. Secondary analyses must consider the complex sampling and study design as well as the organization of civic and citizenship education both nationally and internationally. However, policy-making in education should not rely solely on league tables, which is often the case, especially when identifying the “symbols” of educational excellence to be followed. Unfortunately, league tables often dominate policy debates and decisions, with little regard for the context of teaching and learning. Hence, one of the aims of this paper is to discuss the use and misuse of league tables in reporting results nationally, compared to using data for in-depth analyses to make informed decisions. Another aim is to discuss the possible impacts of ILSAs, especially in the area of civic and citizenship education. However, it is difficult to distinguish the direct from indirect impacts of any ILSA. The measures of impact suggested in the literature include the growth in ILSA participation and ILSA-related discourse, changes in the education policy, the curriculum, teaching, capacity building, and research endeavors as well as global and donor responses. In Slovenia, we have traced these impacts, but the interpretation of the evidence has proved challenging. We do not have evidence to distinguish between the direct and indirect “impacts” of CivEd/ICCS on the development of CCE in Slovenia. However, we can show that textbook preparation, teacher training, and the curriculum/syllabus design revisions undertaken in light of the results have been influential. Finally, the paper summarizes the role of IEA’s civic and citizenship education studies (CivEd and ICCS) in the development of civic and citizenship education in Slovenia. It also discusses the future of ICCS within the European/EU context.

Keywords: CivEd/ICCS, league tables, policy-making, secondary analyses, complex sampling and complex ICCS study design

EMPOWERING FUTURE CITIZENS: OVERCOMING CROATIA'S CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION DEFICIENCIES THROUGH LOCAL INITIATIVES

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The development of democratic political culture and active citizenship hinges on political literacy, understood as the comprehension of political processes, institutions, and one's own rights and responsibilities. However, studies have revealed low levels of political literacy among high school students in Croatia, raising concerns about their preparedness to participate in democratic processes. Young people often lack basic knowledge about the functioning of a democratic political system, fail to develop attitudes consistent with democratic values, and exhibit low levels of political participation. Such trends pose a threat to the long-term development of democratic society. One of the primary causes of this situation is the absence of systematic and high-quality citizenship education in schools. Despite expert recommendations, the national government has continuously refused to implement citizenship education as a mandatory element of the education system. This paper discusses the reasons behind this through the lens of the politics of eternity and the politics of inevitability as proposed by Timothy Snyder. In response to the government's inaction, an increasing number of local communities have recently initiated their own programs to introduce citizenship education in schools. These initiatives often originate from civil society organizations, local authorities, or the schools themselves, recognizing the importance

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of enhancing political literacy among young people. Citizenship education at the local level is frequently conducted through extracurricular activities or elective subjects. Although not formally a part of the national curriculum, these activities allow students to familiarize themselves with the fundamental principles of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and responsible citizenship. This paper focuses on three initiatives, including the introduction of citizenship education curricula in Rijeka, the Community of Active Citizens citizenship education curricula in Zagreb, and the School and Community curricula. These local initiatives offer several key advantages. First, they enable students to acquire practical knowledge and skills that can help them become active and responsible citizens. Second, they are tailored to local contexts and the specific needs of communities, allowing for greater flexibility in implementation and content adaptation. Third, they engage local experts, organizations, and institutions, further strengthening the ties between schools and the local community. However, challenges persist. Local initiatives often depend on the political will of local authorities, which can result in uneven implementation across the country. Consequently, citizenship education is widely available in some communities and completely neglected in others. Moreover, the quality of these programs can vary depending on the availability of resources and experts as well as the motivation of schools and teachers. In conclusion, while local initiatives are a step forward, Croatia must shift away from both the politics of inevitability and the politics of eternity if it is to overcome the challenges posed by the government's failure in citizenship education. It needs a proactive, future-oriented approach that recognizes the importance of deliberate action for fostering political literacy, critical thinking, and civic responsibility. Systematically introducing high-quality citizenship education at the national level is essential to building a democratic society that actively participates in shaping its future, rather than passively accepting a predetermined fate or idealizing a static past.

Keywords: Croatia, citizenship education, local initiatives, democracy

ICCS 2022: CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL STUDY FRAMEWORK

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The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) is an international survey of students' knowledge and attitudes regarding civic duties and active participation in society. It covers areas that are considered increasingly important in modern society, namely: sustainable development and global citizenship education, digital citizenship education, migration and diversity, young people's views on political systems, and individual feelings of freedom and security. The ICCS aims to provide reliable comparative data in critical areas of learning such as civics and thereby assist in the creation of education policies. This study is widely recognized as a global standard. ICCS 2022 is the fifth consecutive cycle that has enabled more than 20 years of monitoring achievements in the mentioned areas. It was designed with the twofold aim of assessing students' knowledge and supporting the strategic planning of future steps in the development of the education system as a final result. Since the issues represented in ICCS are issues of general education and upbringing as well as the part of the curriculum dealing with civic education, the study provides an abundance of data on which to base the revision of teaching and learning programs in many subjects. In this paper, the conceptual and methodological framework of the ICCS

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study is presented with the aim of enabling researchers and readers to follow more easily and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the data presented in the following chapters of this publication.

Keywords: ICCS, civic competences, student achievement, conceptual and methodological framework

EXPLORING THE AFFECTIVE-BEHAVIORAL DOMAIN AS A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE ICCS 2022 ACHIEVEMENT IN SERBIA*

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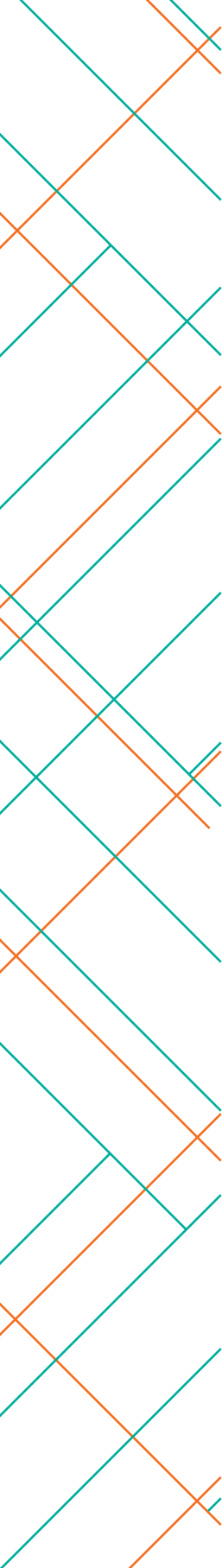
The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) extensively explores not only cognitive but also affective-behavioral domains encompassing attitudes, values, and behaviors related to topics ranging from everyday interactions at school and participation in local communities to environmental problems and global citizenship. Serbia took part in the ICCS 2022, which yielded valuable and alarming results. Serbia obtained a score below the international average and a corresponding position near the bottom of the ranking. Having in mind the importance of the sociocultural context, this study investigated whether and how Serbian students' values, attitudes, and engagement regarding civic roles in society differed from those of their peers from other countries participating in the ICCS 2022. We used data collected by student questionnaires regarding attitudes towards topics such as citizenship activities, individual rights, and willingness to participate in different forms of civic democracy. A t-test was used to compare Serbian scores on these scales to the scores of other ICCS 2022 participants. The results revealed significant differences between Serbia

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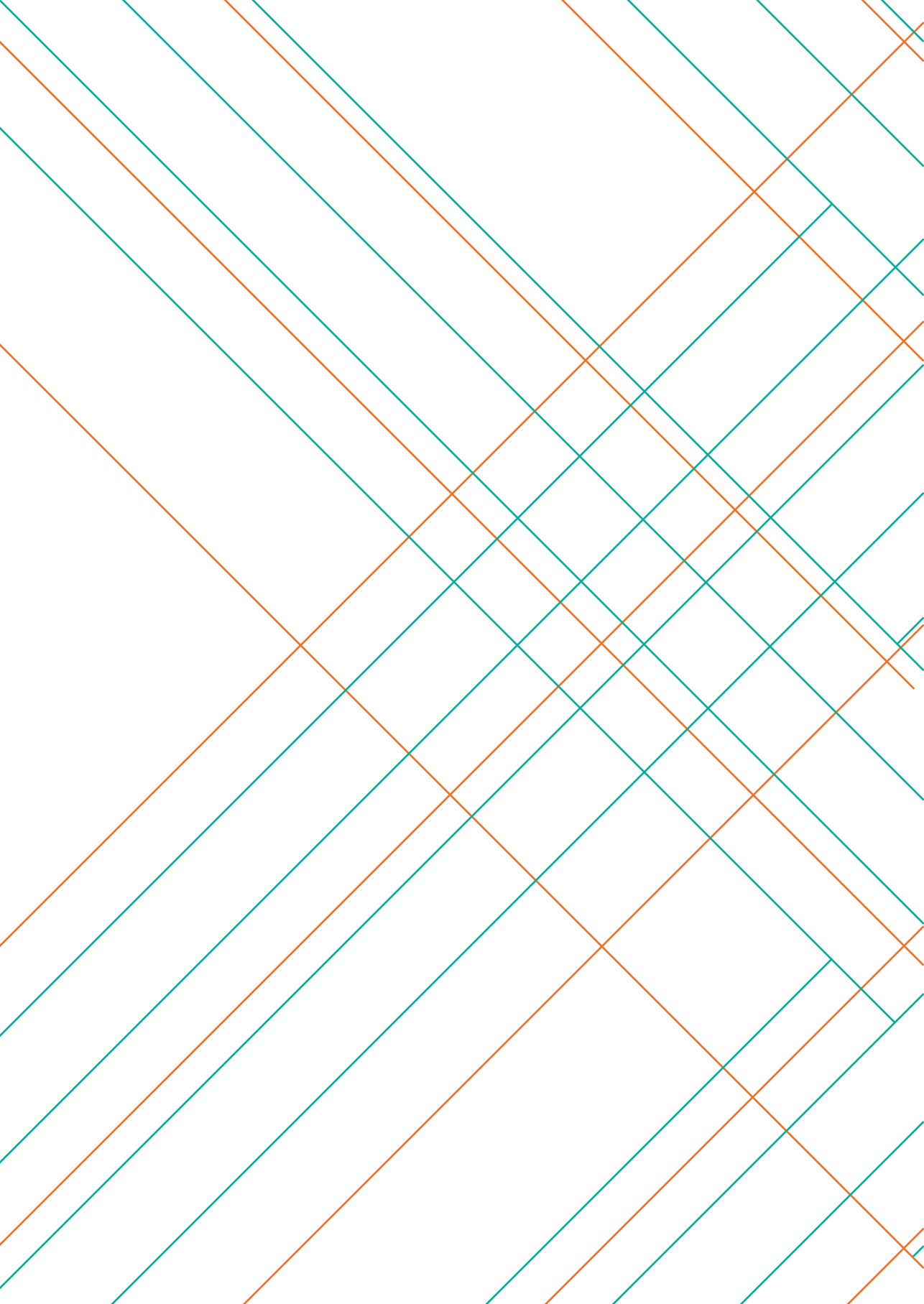
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and the remaining participating countries in terms of almost all examined attitudes towards civic roles. Compared to their peers from other countries, Serbian students expressed lower satisfaction with the political system ($t(2682.127)=-4.933, <0.01$) and lower trust in civic institutions ($t(2684.499)=-6.967, <0.01$). They attributed less importance to conventional citizenship activities ($t(2691.658)=-18.300, <0.01$) and were more likely to participate in illegal protest activities ($t(2630.030)=11.044, <0.01$). However, the most striking differences pertained to gender and religion. Compared to students from other participating countries, Serbian students showed a significantly lower acceptance of gender equality ($t(2792.839)=-25.24, <0.01$) and attributed greater importance to religion, believing that it should have a more prominent role in society ($t(2631.626)=33.162, <0.01$). These results are especially important considering that the scales of gender equality ($r=.51, <0.01$) and the impact of religion on society ($r=-.42, <0.01$) had the strongest correlations with achievement on the ICCS test. It can be concluded that Serbian youth proved to be (1) more patriarchal and (2) less willing to use institutional politics as the framework for their civic activities. These findings can be a consequence of low civic and citizenship competencies as confirmed by the ICCS 2022 results. Nonetheless, these results can be interpreted as a key cause of low achievement since they highlight the situation and values dominant in the wider society. Since the education system is embedded in the wider society, it is necessary to consider both prescribed and actual values, attitudes, and behaviors when organizing and implementing Civic and Citizenship education in order to empower young people with the civic competencies and experience necessary to become active and responsible citizens in their local communities and turbulent modern global societies.

Keywords: affective-behavioral domain, trust in institutions, civic roles, ICCS 2022, Serbia



ICCS 2022
SECONDARY
ANALYSIS



COMPARING CITIZENSHIP COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORKS: SIMILARITIES AND DISTINCTIONS IN SERBIA'S EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT*

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Citizenship competence has gained priority status on the education policy agendas in Europe over the past three decades. The two most influential operationalizations of citizenship competence are the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) by the IEA and the more recent PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) Global Competence by the OECD. While both frameworks focus on students' global and civic participation, ICCS emphasizes national and international civic knowledge and engagement, whereas PISA targets intercultural understanding and critical engagement with global issues. The complementarity of these operationalizations has been underresearched. Therefore, we aimed to test the complementarity of ICCS items and PISA Global Competence items. More precisely, we explored whether citizenship education items used in the two international studies measure the same dimension and, if so, whether they measure the same or different

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levels of the dimension. We set our study in the educational context of Serbia, in which citizenship education has existed as an elective course once per week since 2001. In the most recent ICCS and PISA cycles, students in Serbia were significantly below the overall average on citizenship and global competence. Our sample comprised 620 students from Belgrade general and vocational high schools (aged 16-18). We selected 23 PISA 2018 items and 24 ICCS 2009, 2016, and 2022 items targeting more complex cognitive processes like reasoning and applying. The results confirmed both our hypotheses. Not only did citizenship competence items from ICCS and PISA studies measure one dimension, but they also measured the same levels of the common dimension. Our findings provide further evidence for the factor and convergent validity of the citizenship competence construct and complement other studies showing the measurement invariance of ICCS items. In this paper, we discuss how citizenship competence measured within these assessment frameworks relates to citizenship education aims and the actual school practice.

Keywords: civic competence, global competence, assessment frameworks

UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICAL COMPETENCY OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CROATIA

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Building on a theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of socio-cultural factors for the proper functioning of contemporary liberal democracies, this paper focuses on the concept of political competency as a prerequisite for the adequate functioning of such political systems. Citizens are expected to be motivated to participate in politics, informed about everyday political life, and knowledgeable about politics. Numerous studies have shown the importance of childhood experiences and educational settings for the development of young people's political competency, which should, ideally, form a good basis for their political engagement in later years. However, less is known about the political competency of elementary school students. Therefore, the goal of this study was to analyze the levels of civic knowledge as one of the functional

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dimensions of political competency among elementary school students in Croatia. Furthermore, the paper showcases the predictors of civic knowledge, such as gender, political participation, parents' education levels, and political trust. The data used originated from the ICCS 2022 cycle, which involved 2,759 elementary school students from Croatia. The preliminary results of the conducted regression analysis revealed that children's political knowledge levels were significantly explained by parents' education levels and expressed interest in political and social issues. In the concluding section, the paper contextualizes the results of the analysis, viewing them in comparison to other studies examining the political competency of Croatian youth and in the context of the ongoing debate regarding civic education programs in the Croatian education system.

Keywords: civic education, civic knowledge, ICCS, political competency

EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN GOOD CITIZENSHIP NORMS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION INTENTIONS AMONG CROATIAN STUDENTS

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This paper explores the relationship between the dimensions of good citizenship norms and political participation intentions among the youth. Conceptualizations of *good citizenship* in the academic literature are diverse, but they mostly include three main subtypes: norms of political activity (e.g., voting), civic duties (e.g., paying taxes), and social responsibilities (e.g., respect for other people). Political behavior forms and intentions are generally defined via two main forms of political participation: conventional (e.g., voting) and unconventional (e.g., protest). Premised on the assumption that norms are drivers of political behavior, the present study sought to determine whether and how the dimensions of citizenship norms contributed to the variation of two main forms of political participation intentions. We expected that each dimension of citizenship norms would distinctly contribute to conventional and unconventional participation intentions. We established the structure of good citizenship norms among young people and the structure of political participation intentions. The data analyzed were collected within The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) 2022 on a representative

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sample of 2,759 Croatian eighth-graders. Multiple regression analyses served to explore how each form of political participation intentions was determined by dimensions of citizenship norms, controlling for citizenship education and socio-demographic variables such as gender, parents' level of education, and residential status. In line with our expectations, political activity norms more strongly correlated with an intention to participate in conventional forms of political behavior and social citizenship norms showed stronger correlations with an intention to participate in politics unconventionally. The results suggest that emphasizing a variety of civic norms in citizenship education programs could broaden the spectrum of political participation among young people.

Keywords: citizenship norms, political participation, youth, Croatia

14-YEAR TRENDS IN INTENDED ILLEGAL PROTEST ACTIVITIES: EVIDENCE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIC AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION STUDY

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Protests are perceived as collective expressions of objecting to particular actions or situations and as an indicator of democracy, raising voices, influencing public opinion, and invoking governmental actions. Illegal protests are an effective form of civil disobedience. Expected future participation in protests is related to multiple factors including civic knowledge, self-efficacy, interest in social and political issues, and internal political efficacy. There has been a visible increase in the number of protests internationally. However, about 20% of protests between 2006 and 2020 ended in vandalism, looting, and violence. Using the ICCS (2009, 2016, and 2022) data, this study investigated trends in expected participation in illegal protests overall, by gender, and by migration background. It further examined changes in civic knowledge along with changes in associations between expected participation in illegal protests and trust in civic institutions, self-efficacy, and interest in political and social issues. Expected illegal protest participation increased in most countries, most notably in South Europe. Male students anticipate higher future illegal participation was higher for male students, although a decrease in the gender gap was observed in nine countries. Students with migrant backgrounds had higher anticipation, with the gap widening in five and diminishing in two countries. Expectations of illegal protests

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showed a stronger relationship with student self-efficacy in about half of the countries. The relationship with student interest in political and social issues changed from negative to positive in about half of the countries and remained unchanged in the rest. In almost all countries, the relationship with student trust in civic institutions changed from negative to positive. These contradicting results have to be seen as a whole. As interest in social and political issues and self-efficacy (belief in own capacity to bring change) increase, the anticipation of participating in illegal protests tends to become higher. As for trust in institutions, this could be related to self-efficacy. As potential protestors' belief in their own power increases, the hope for positive change tends to rise and so does trust that civic institutions would hear their voices.

Keywords: ICCS, civic participation, illegal protests, trends

WHO ARE SERBIA'S HIGH ACHIEVERS? A-LEVEL STUDENTS IN ICCS 2022*

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Analyzing high-performing students in civic literacy offers insights into the factors influencing their civic engagement and understanding. In the present study, the sample included 2,638 eighth-grade students who participated in ICCS 2022, with 14.0 percent (57.6% girls) achieving Level A, the highest referent level. A-level students effectively connect social and political processes with legal and institutional mechanisms, accurately predicting the benefits and outcomes of policies and civic activism. They demonstrate an understanding of economic relations and the importance of active participation in a democratic society. Our results revealed certain personal and family characteristics in which A-level students differ from their peers. In our sample, these students had more educated parents, higher expected educational attainment, better socio-economic backgrounds, and greater home literacy resources. They also spent less time using tablets and computers at home. They showed more positive attitudes and higher expectations regarding participation in environmental protection, electoral participation, and concerns about threats to the global environment, along with more favorable attitudes toward immigrants. These students were more willing to participate in civic and other activities at school and discuss political or social issues

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outside of school. However, they were less likely to believe they could influence decision-making at school, reported lower satisfaction with the political system, showed less trust in civic institutions, and interestingly, were less likely to be active political participants. These results suggest that while A-level students exhibit more positive attitudes and intentions toward civic engagement and social issues, they simultaneously express dissatisfaction with the political system and feel less empowered in decision-making. This emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive environment where students are inspired to participate in civic issues. Future research should explore differences among A-level students across countries, as understanding these variations can provide insights into effective educational practices and policies that promote civic engagement globally.

Keywords: civic literacy, civic engagement, political awareness, eighth-grade students, family environment

ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES OF EIGHTH-GRADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS WITH TEACHING CIVIC AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN CROATIA

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Civic and citizenship education (CCE) has been introduced as a mandatory cross-curricular topic within formal education in Croatia. In previous ICCS cycles, Croatian teachers reported insufficient teacher preparation and training related to civic and citizenship topics. To ensure high-quality instruction, it is necessary to recognize and address prerequisites at the school level (recognizing the importance of CCE and providing adequate organizational support) and the teacher level (initial and lifelong education and training, perceived preparedness). This research explored the overlap between teachers' and school principals' perceptions of the importance of civic education aims, along with predictors at the teacher level (preparedness and continuous professional development) as a key determinant of CCE quality. To examine teachers' and principals' attitudes and experiences with CCE, we analyzed the ICCS 2022 data collected from a sample of 2,290 eighth-grade teachers and 141 principals. There was a significant overlap between teachers' and school principals' perceptions of the importance of CCE aims. Both groups believed that the most important aims included *the promotion of knowledge of citizens' rights*

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and responsibilities, the promotion of students' critical and independent thinking, and the development of students' skills and competencies in conflict resolution. Distinctive aims were also determined in both groups. Teachers felt moderately prepared for teaching most CCE themes and their sense of preparedness aligned with students' opportunities to learn about specific topics. The main areas of teacher training and education were identified. The assumption that attending courses on particular themes positively affects teachers' sense of preparedness and students' opportunities to learn the content proved correct for every analyzed theme. The obtained findings provide insight into important determinants of the quality of CCE and can be used to improve teachers' initial training and professional development as well as to advocate the importance of civic education at the school level and consequently ensure the necessary organizational and performance prerequisites.

Keywords: elementary school, teachers, principals, civic and citizenship education

FORGING A CITIZEN THROUGH TEACHING RHETORIC AND ARGUMENTATION: INSIGHTS FROM ICCS 2022 FOR SLOVENIA

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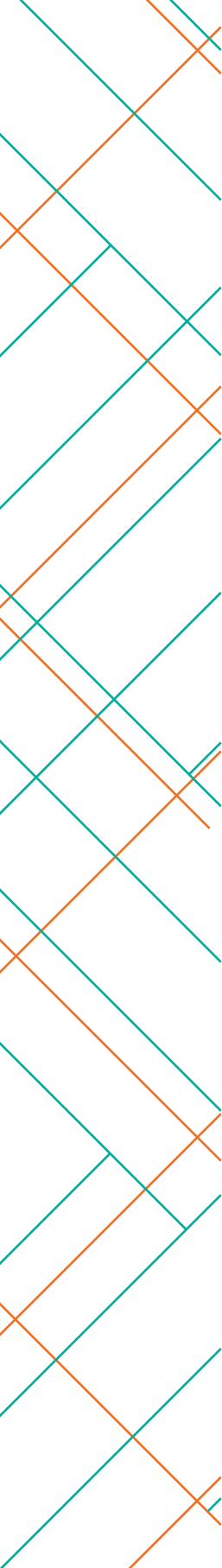
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Both ancient (Aristotle's and Cicero's) conceptions of rhetoric and modern concepts of rhetorical citizenship recognise public discourse and deliberation as vital to democratic functioning. Since ancient times, rhetorical education models have emphasised the crucial role of teaching rhetoric and argumentation (TRA) not only as an academic exercise but as the bedrock of an individual's active social participation, encompassing citizenship education, critical literacy, stylistics, and oracy. However, modern (competence-oriented) educational approaches often overlook the essential TRA skills. This is particularly evident in Slovenia, where these skills are not systematically taught within citizenship education. This study explored the role of TRA in the formation of active citizenship and tested whether meaningful effects of TRA could also be observed in the absence of its systematic inclusion in the curriculum. To this end,

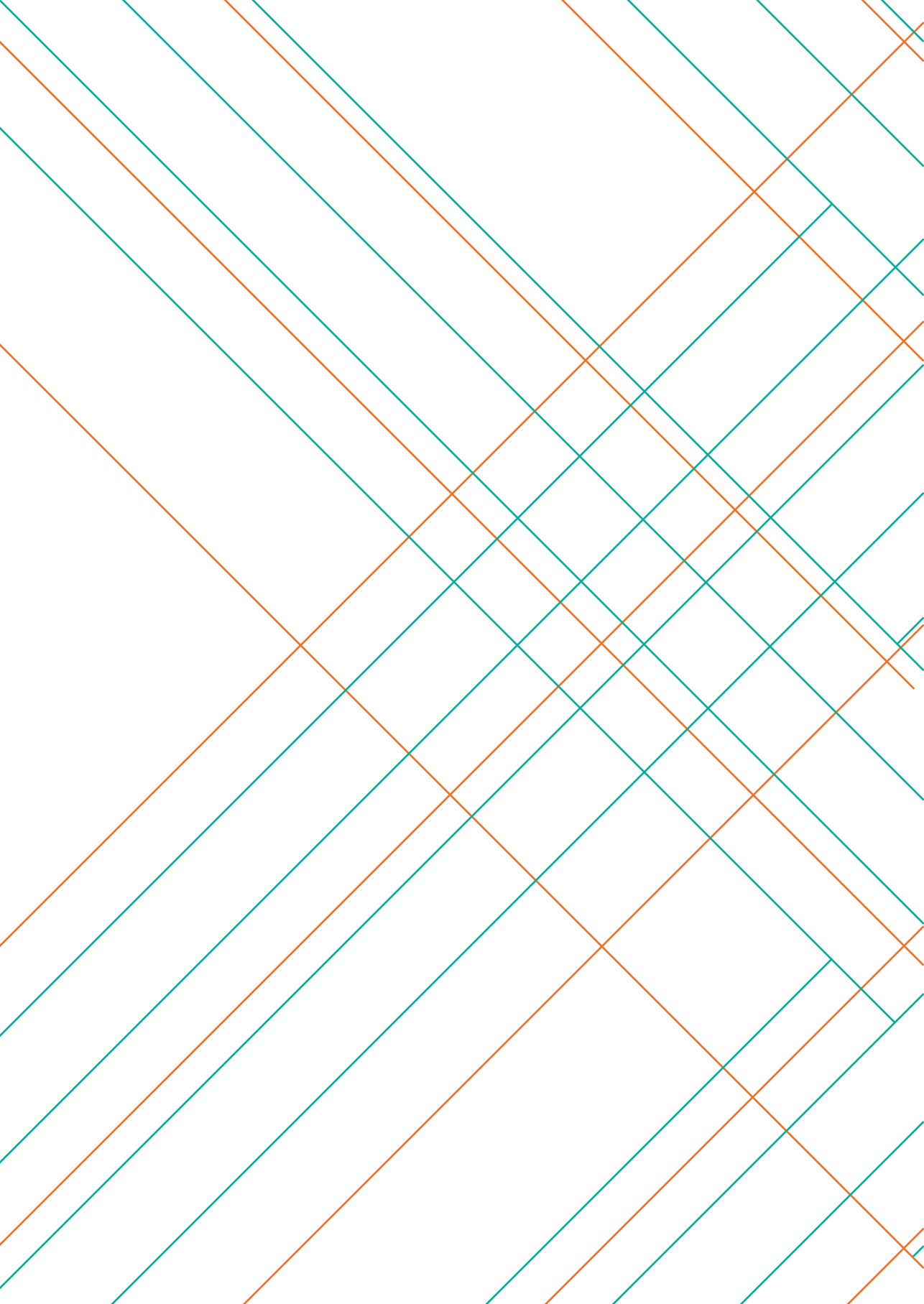
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we analysed Slovenian data from ICCS 2022. Specifically, we used the scales of TRA, civic knowledge, and students' perceptions of openness in classroom discussions as well as a set of indicators of current and future participation in the classroom/school, society, and politics. We expected that TRA would predict more discussions in class and better civic knowledge and behavioural outcomes. We conducted correlation analyses and linear regression in RALSA and tested a path model in which the relationship between TRA and participation was mediated by openness in classroom discussions as a form of "gateway" civic participation appropriate for students. Since TRA is not considered emancipatory in Slovenia, the proposed relationships could highlight the importance of rethinking its role in contemporary citizenship education and forging engaged citizens ready to participate in the challenging world of tomorrow.

Keywords: teaching rhetoric and argumentation (TRA), civic participation, classroom discussions, citizenship education, ICCS 2022



CONCEPTUALIZING
CIVIC AND
CITIZENSHIP
EDUCATION



THE IDEA OF THE PRACTICAL SUBJECT AS A PHILOSOPHICAL-PEDAGOGICAL ORIGIN OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

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This paper adopts a philosophical and pedagogical perspective to analyze the original idea of the practical subject as it appears in the philosophy of I. Kant, J.G. Fichte, but especially G.W.F. Hegel, K. Marx, and the Praxis circle of thinkers, aiming to establish its relationship with the idea of the subject in citizenship education. Operating in the wider horizon of the modern idea of the practice and the more specific horizon of citizenship education, this analysis seeks to derive general pedagogical implications for the understanding of the pedagogical subject and investigate possible directions for the creation of new pedagogical practices. A special emphasis is placed on the *poietic*, creative character of the practice and the subject's *productive* and not merely *re-productive* relationship to society. The goal of the paper is addressed through critical analysis and understanding of original texts that established the ideas at hand and through thought syntheses between the original idea of the practical subject and the idea of the citizen as well as citizenship education. Some of the central dimensions of the conception of citizenship education that this paper foremost takes into account include the ability of democratic (co)governing (and implicitly intercultural understanding of the world) in all aspects of one's practical (ethical and political) life, the activity and authenticity of educands, the process character of existence, and the importance of directing one's actions towards the public, social good.

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Analyzing the original idea of the practical subject as a theoretical-pedagogical viewpoint for constituting the pedagogical subject, what arises as crucial is conceiving the pedagogical subject as an *autonomous, poietic* subject that is *free* in the sense of *self-production* of its being through historical action. It follows that in a practical-pedagogical sense, it is essential to reshape pedagogical practices so that they co-produce pedagogical subject's theoretical faculty for self-governing as well as faculties for autonomous action. Likewise, it is necessary to revise many existent didactical practices centered around unpedagogical ideas of simply learning and being productive and performative in the context of a presupposed capitalistic environment. In a wider social sense, the principle of democracy as self-governing emerges as a central societal process that needs to be produced and supported. In this inquiry, citizenship education is not treated as an abstracted, separate form of education, but as a possible integral part and character of education in general. The intention is also to reawaken some dimensions of education in general that may not always be in full public awareness, which is why the citizenship dimension of the educational practice may remain insufficiently visible, understood, and active in today's education.

Keywords: practical subject, citizenship education, citizen, pedagogical perspective, poiesis

ADAPTING DAVID KERR'S MODEL OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION CURRICULA FOR THE OBSERVATION OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN A POSTSOCIALIST CONTEXT

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This paper aims to provide a model for observing citizenship education curricula in a postsocialist, post-conflict, and post-Yugoslav context. The methodology selected for extracting the observation model is an adaptation of David Kerr's 1999 review of citizenship education in the UK during the monitoring process published in *The School Field*. Kerr served as an expert at the National Foundation for Educational Research for more than 20 years. Currently, he holds the role of the Head of Initial Teacher Training at the University of Reading in the UK. This study aimed to develop tools for evaluating different methods of curriculum conceptualization, composed of six key aspects of citizenship education: curriculum aims, organization, and structure; teaching and learning approaches; teacher specialization and teacher training; the use of textbooks and other resources; assessment arrangements; and current and future program developments. The adaption of these tools implies a critical, context-based approach. In this context, the curriculum needs to encompass additional elements such as the introduction process, related policy framework and initiatives, and the social and political context. The paper's outcome is a model for observing citizenship education curricula

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in the context of Serbia, but also in the other postsocialist, post-conflict, former Yugoslav countries.

Keywords: citizenship education curricula, observational models, postsocialist context, policy framework

CIVIC EDUCATION IN SERBIA TODAY – WHAT WE HAVE PLANNED, WHERE WE HAVE COME

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It has been 23 years since Civic Education (CE) was introduced into Serbia's education system as a mandatory elective program, with students choosing between CE and Religious Education. We present an overview of the activities undertaken to develop and improve this program in terms of strategic documents, teaching and learning programs, teacher manuals and training, didactic materials for students, conducted several evaluation studies, cooperation between the state and civil sectors, participation in the Council of Europe projects, establishing the Association of Civic Education Teachers, introducing courses concerning democratization of society at faculties, and piloting a model of a CE competition for high school students. This review examines the scope and quality of the activities and the material and other resources invested in improving CE at schools, comparing them with the achieved effects. Unfortunately, the negative effects recognized include a major decline in the number of students who choose CE (from 50% to 33%), teachers' decreasing motivation to implement this program, and teacher education faculties' disinterest in enriching their curricula with a mandatory course dealing with the teaching methodology of CE, despite their students implementing

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this program at schools upon employment. The paper explores the factors contributing to the unsatisfactory effects of the invested efforts on the present status of CE. It further considers possibilities for improving the position of CE and thus honoring the strategic commitment of the Government of the Republic of Serbia to provide quality education in line with the pan-European initiative of the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture.

Keywords: civic education, curriculum, evaluation studies, teacher training, activity effects

SHARED AND DIVERGING PERSPECTIVES: A CASE STUDY OF CROATIAN TEACHER VOICES IN DEFINING AND PRACTICING CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

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In a world of rapid changes and polarization, citizenship education (CE) is proposed as a significant mitigating factor due to its capacity to develop students' resiliency through cognitive and social skill development. In Croatia, CE is a nationally implemented cross-curricular theme, with additional NGO and local government CE initiatives offering it as an extracurricular course. This paper looks to contribute to global CE debates by answering the following research questions: How do diverse Croatian educators involved in CE curriculum development and implementation define and teach citizenship education? What attitudes and beliefs underpin their CE praxis? This paper highlights three case studies from a pool of 17 semi-structured interviews conducted for a larger research project examining Croatian teachers' CE praxis. These case studies were chosen because they exemplify a rich interplay of diverse and shared perspectives. Interview data were coded inductively and analyzed using transnational feminist and postsocialist theories. Study findings indicate that teachers feel an immense responsibility to build stronger communities and believe CE curriculum co-creation and community engagement aid them in this endeavor. The paper describes multifarious pedagogical approaches employed in CE, including student-led projects and inquiry-

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based learning. It further illuminates discrepancies between market-based policy and teachers' student-centered understanding of CE. Finally, it points to positive emotions and open and trusting relationships with students as the key drivers and motivating factors that help teachers overcome barriers and continue delivering CE in the face of complex and challenging social realities.

Keywords: citizenship education, teacher perspectives, democratization of education

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AS A GAME CHANGER: CHALLENGES AND THE BEST PRACTICES FROM SLOVAKIA

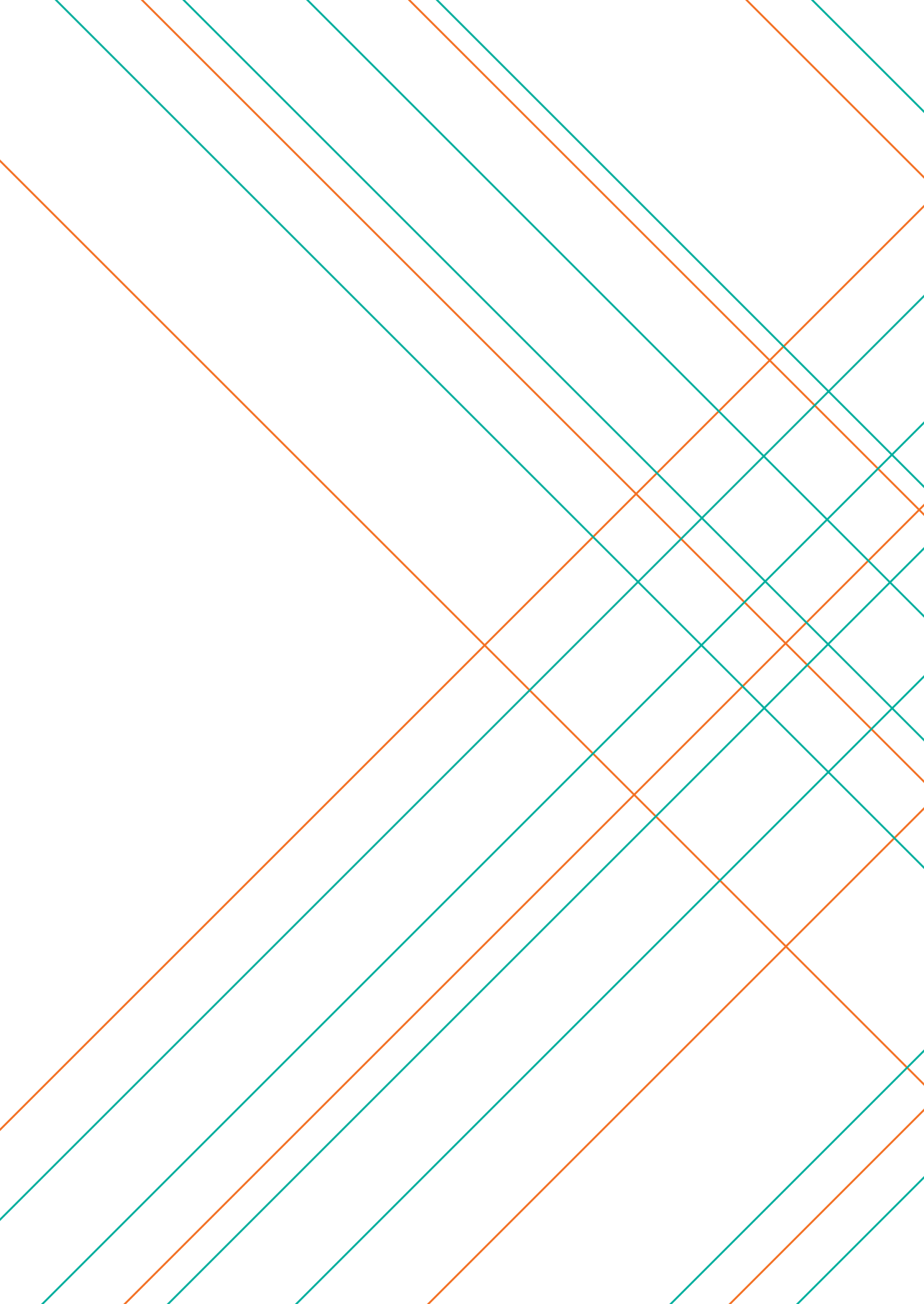
Jana Feherpataky Kuzmova*

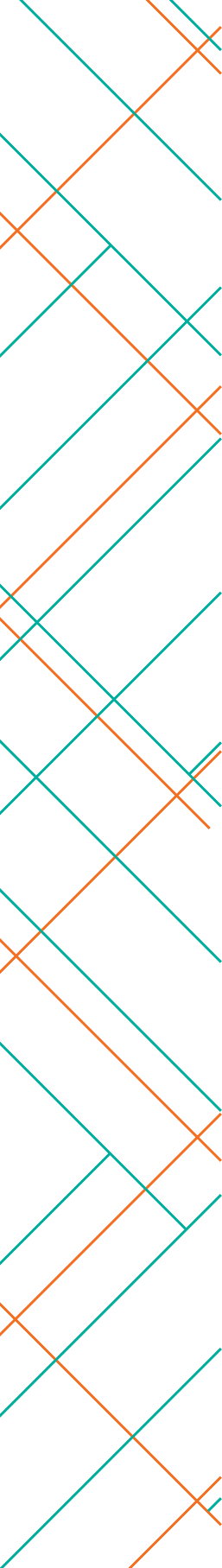
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In 1961, JFK gave a famous speech in which he stated that “[our] progress as a nation cannot be any more rapid than the progress of education. (...) The human mind is our basic resource.” This certainly applies to citizenship education, the quality of which has a direct impact on our everyday civic, political, and social lives as Slovaks, Serbs, Europeans, and global citizens. This paper presents the latest research findings, experimental results, trends, visions, and challenges in the civic and citizenship education of children and young people aged 4 to 20 from the Slovak perspective. Specifically, it delivers the newest results of a representative questionnaire survey among civic education teachers mapping their educational and political views as well as the findings of a 3-year-long experimental study conducted in the school environment. It further provides transformative citizenship education examples from Slovakia based on rigorous criteria combining academic and practical, hands-on experience. The paper also takes a closer look at the *Schools Changing the World* program, the winner of the 2023 European Citizen’s Prize awarded by the European Parliament.

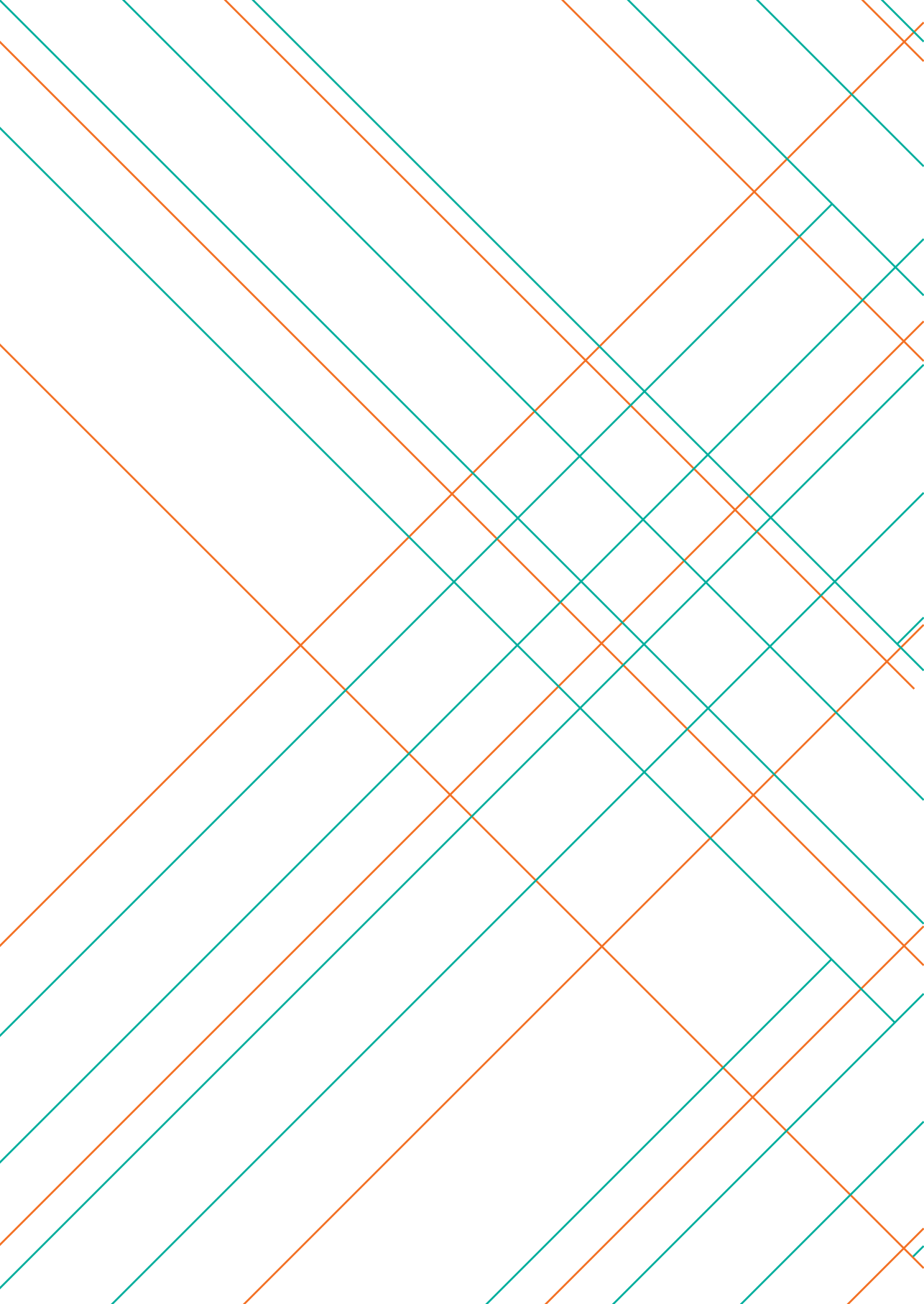
Keywords: citizenship education, early citizenship education, formal education, non-formal education, teacher training

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DIGITAL
TECHNOLOGIES
AND MEDIA LITERACY



IS POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT ON DIGITAL MEDIA A VALID INDICATOR OF THE YOUTH'S POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT?

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Research has indicated that young people show limited interest in traditional political spheres and exhibit low levels of political participation. Drawing on extensive literature, we intend to display more contemporary ways of dealing with questions regarding young people's political participation. This study revisited existing methodologies by integrating contemporary digital phenomena such as memes, social networks, and online petitions, which have been commonly overlooked in mainstream research on youth political engagement. Recognizing young people as *digital natives* requires redefining political participation within a digital infrastructure. We used the ICCS data for the Balkans (Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia) to determine whether: (1) digital media engagement (DME) correlates with conventional political participation; (2) DME correlates with civic knowledge (ICCS test achievement); and (3) one factor underlies all political participation variables (including DME). The correlation analysis showed positive relationships between DME and conventional political participation indicators with coefficients ranging from $r = 0.02$ to $r = 0.46$. However, DME correlated negatively with ICCS

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test achievement ($r = -0.15$). This finding suggests that while digital media use may encourage engagement, it may not enhance civic knowledge. We also conducted a factor analysis on all the variables regarding political participation. The factor analysis was valid ($KMO = .877$; $\chi^2 = 2241045$, $p < .000$). Three factors were extracted and DME was a part of the Latent Political Participation factor. We conclude that DME is essential to understanding modern youth political participation.

Keywords: digital media, political participation, Balkans

INFORMATION LITERACY AS AN ADDITION TO THE FAMILY OF LITERACIES*

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Paul Zurkowski introduced the concept of information literacy (IL) in the 1970s and defined information literates as individuals possessing a set of skills for utilizing information sources and tools to *mold* information solutions to their problems. Many authors have since studied IL in an attempt to define it more closely. The same skill set comprising IL is recognized in relevant policy documents such as the European Key Competences for Lifelong Learning adopted by the Council of the European Union in 2018 and the Standards of General Cross-Curricular Competencies in the Republic of Serbia from 2013. Although long present in the theoretical and education policy debate, the literacy aspect of IL has received little attention. The concept of literacy itself has changed from a binary phenomenon to one that reflects functionality in different contexts. Moreover, contexts have served as the basis for introducing multiple domain-specific literacies (e.g., the list of literacies/competencies PISA measures has grown from three to seven and counting), which raises the question of the interconnection between these competencies. This paper aims to offer insights into the relations between information, reading, and digital literacies based on the research of differences between digital and paper-based reading as well as one- versus multiple-source reading. Research findings suggest that although IL intersects with both reading and digital literacies, its uniqueness justifies treating it as a separate

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concept that is highly relevant in the contemporary context of infodemic and information overload.

Keywords: information literacy, reading literacy, PISA, key competences

INSIGHTS INTO THE INTEGRATION OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING AND INFORMATION-COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

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In the evolving landscape of education, the integration of project-based learning (PBL) and information and communication technology (ICT) has become increasingly vital in equipping students with essential skills for the digital age. As education systems worldwide strive to adapt to rapid technological changes, understanding how teachers perceive and implement these approaches is crucial. This paper presents the results of empirical research that analyzed teachers' attitudes and competencies for applying PBL in primary education as well as ICT-PBL integration. The sample comprised 114 primary school teachers from Serbia who filled out a questionnaire specifically designed for this study. The data were processed using the IBM SPSS software and obtained via descriptive statistics and non-parametric tests (Kruskal-Wallis, Mann-Whitney U, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov). The obtained data revealed that teachers with the fewest years of service (YoS) reported the most developed competencies ($p = .039$) and the most positive attitudes towards ICT-PBL integration ($p = .039$). Regarding the level of education (LoE), there was a significant correlation between ICT-PBL competencies and holding

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a master's degree ($p = .039$). Notably, while many teachers reported being competent in ICT-PBL usage, nearly half had not attended ICT-PBL professional development (PD) seminars. The results disclosed that teachers with the least experience attended PD seminars the most ($p = .001$). To enrich the overall teaching and learning experience, strategies for effective ICT-PBL integration should be created in order to enhance students' understanding, promote functional knowledge acquisition, and improve cross-curricular integration, attention, interest, and motivation.

Keywords: attitudes, competencies, information-communication technology, primary education, project-based learning

USING E-LEARNING ANALYTICS TO IDENTIFY ONLINE LEARNING STRATEGIES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Interest in e-learning has led to a rapid growth in online course numbers and the integration of e-learning into the education system. Researchers believe that e-learning success is determined by users' cognitive, motivational, and regulatory characteristics, which constitute the parameters studied in the model of self-regulated learning. This study sought to determine university students' online learning strategies by analyzing their digital footprints. The e-learning data comprised the digital footprints of 2,206 students attending two courses hosted on the Stepik educational platform. The analysis encompassed the number of dropout students, the number of course elements viewed, the number of test elements completed, and the number of students who successfully completed the final test. The data were processed using Ward's cluster analysis method. Differences between the clusters were assessed using a single-factor Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variance for independent samples. Four groups of student strategies were identified: (1) students who signed up for the course but dropped out after viewing the first element (50–60%); (2) students who completed all tasks (30%); (3) students who viewed the first element and completed the final test (5-10%); and (4) students who actively viewed several elements and then proceeded to the final test (2-3%). The findings highlight the importance of including

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web program elements in online learning for maintaining the necessary degree of involvement and fostering self-organization, self-motivation, and self-regulation skills in the learning process.

Keywords: e-learning data, self-regulated learning, online learning strategies, students

PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' SCIENCE PROCESS SKILLS: VIRTUAL VERSUS HANDS-ON CHEMICAL LABORATORIES

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In modern societies, life is shaped by rapid scientific development due to which citizens frequently need to decide on the introduction of new scientific inventions into their daily lives. In such instances, responsible decision-making requires the application of science process skills, which enable individuals to assess the impact of these innovations on their well-being and that of people in their surroundings through the application of the scientific method. Science process skills are best developed through hands-on activities in chemical laboratories, but schools throughout Serbia commonly lack the facilities, equipment, and chemicals necessary for this type of learning. Consequently, the present study aimed to determine whether virtual laboratories could adequately replace hands-on laboratories in the context of developing science process skills. A meta-analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis that virtual laboratories are at least as effective as hands-on laboratories in promoting the above-mentioned skills. The meta-analysis encompassed 12 quasi-experimental studies published within the last ten years. Following the application of the random effects model, it produced a weighted mean Hedge's g value of +0.246. Since this value falls within the range of small positive effect size

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values higher than +0.200, it was concluded that the tested hypothesis was correct. Thus, schools that cannot organize hands-on laboratory activities can turn to virtual chemical laboratories, which are freely available on numerous educational websites and constitute an effective alternative solution for promoting students' science process skills.

Keywords: science education, virtual laboratories, hands-on laboratories, science process skills, meta-analysis

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATIONAL MEASUREMENT: AUTOMATED ITEM GENERATION USING LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS

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Artificial intelligence (AI) significantly impacts many areas of human activity, including education assessment. It has revolutionized assessment methods, enabling automated item and stimulus generation, automated scoring, and personalized feedback. In particular, many studies have emphasized the beneficial influence of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT on their proficiency in creating diverse item types across a multitude of languages and subjects. However, the integration of AI into education also brings up substantial issues concerning fairness and equity. Challenges such as the potential for algorithmic bias and the lack of clarity in AI decision-making processes threaten to exacerbate disparities and influence the fairness of assessment results. Assessment in education should reveal social diversity and not create social inequality. The current study addressed the research gap by examining the alignment between AI-generated items and educational taxonomy. The study used the widely recognized Bloom's taxonomy, which provides a framework for

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designing and classifying assessment items into different cognitive levels, ranging from low to high. ChatGPT (GPT-4) and Gemini were selected as prominent large language models (LLMs) known for their superior capabilities in crafting high-caliber educational content. The research employed varied prompting techniques to generate items (in the domain of secondary school physics) at different cognitive levels according to Bloom's taxonomy. These items were then evaluated using a range of criteria. Both ChatGPT and Gemini proved adept at generating physics assessment items. Nonetheless, their effectiveness differed depending on the prompting method employed. This paper presents the research results and highlights significant ethical concerns regarding validity, reliability, transparency, and fairness.

Keywords: digital technologies in education, item generation, large language models (LLMs), ChatGPT, Bloom's taxonomy

SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE CHARACTERISTICS IN ADOLESCENTS WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF CYBERCOMMUNICATIVE ADDICTION

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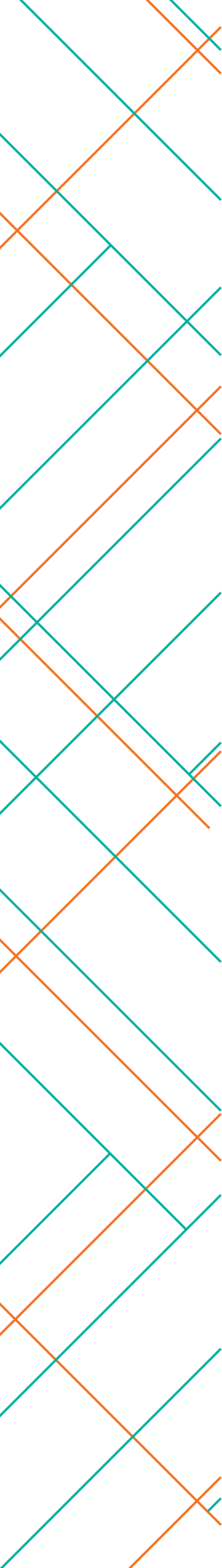
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This study sought to determine the social intelligence features of adolescents with different levels of cybercommunicative addiction. The following research instruments were used: 1) Diagnostics of Cybercommunicative Addiction; 2) Tromso Social Intelligence Scale; 3) Communicative and Organizational Inclinations; and 4) Methodology for Diagnostics of Components of Socially Oriented Activity. The study involved adolescents aged 12 to 15. The diagnostics allowed for the differentiation between two groups of adolescents, one with average ($n=43$) and one with high ($n=53$) levels of cybercommunicative addiction. In the high-addiction group, the social intelligence indicator on the social awareness scale was significantly higher $U=0.008$ ($p<0.01$). However, adolescents in the average-addiction group obtained higher scores on the indicators of the components of socially oriented activity on the cognitive $U=0.008$ ($p<0.01$) and behavioral $U=0.054$ ($p<0.05$) component scales. The correlation analysis showed that in the average-addiction group, the indicators of the social skill scales were positively related to both communicative ($r=0.470^{**}$) and organizational skills ($r=0.543^{**}$) as well as various components of social activity. In the high-addiction group, the indicators of the social skill scales correlated with communication skills ($r=0.329^*$) and the scale of the emotional status component of social activity

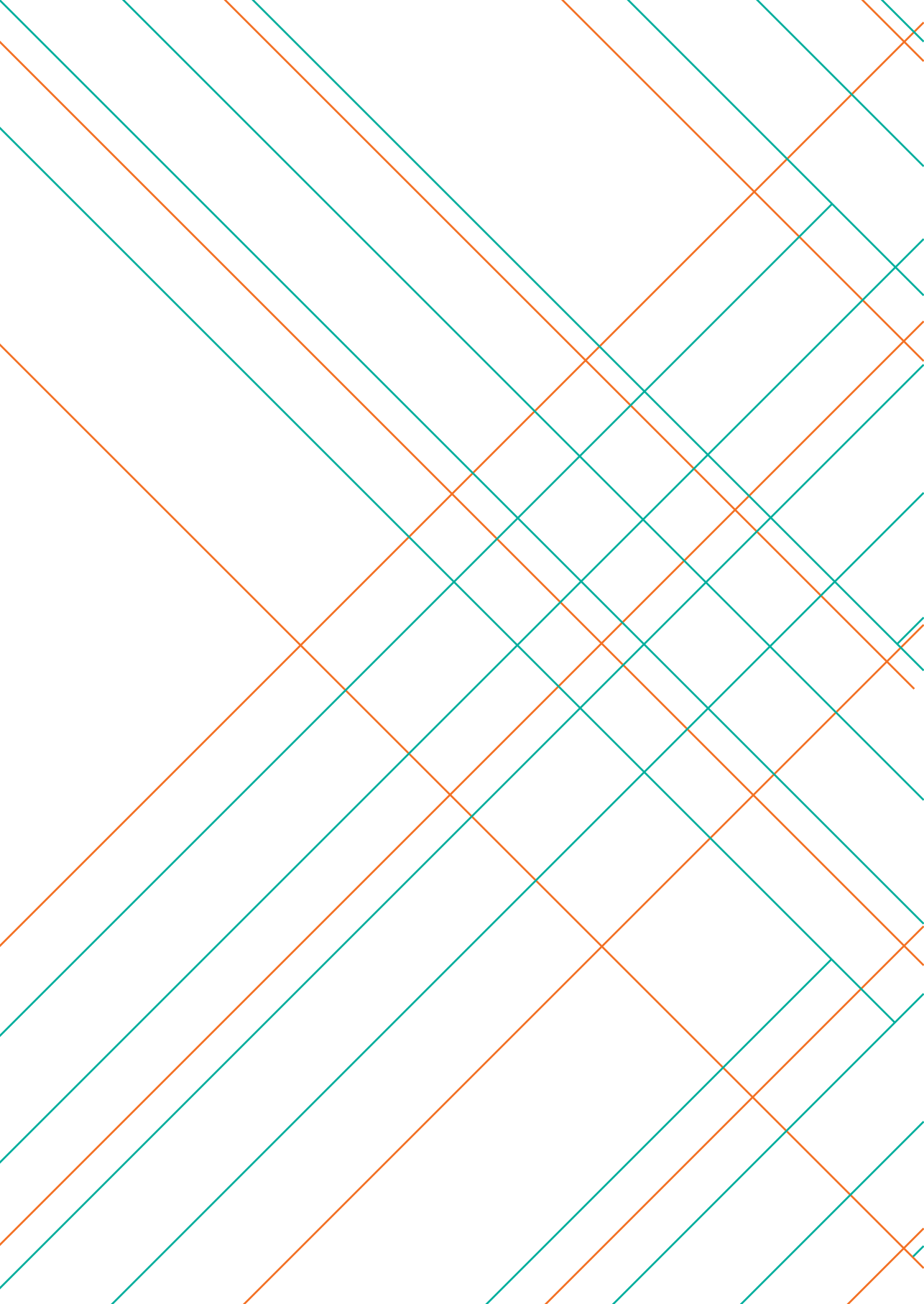
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($r=0.317^*$). Both groups were characterized by significant relationships between the general level of socially oriented activity and communicative and organizational skills. This finding highlights the universal importance of practical social competencies for the implementation of social activities of adolescents in groups with different levels of cybercommunicative addiction.

Keywords: social intelligence, socially oriented activity, cybercommunicative addiction, adolescents



DEMOCRATIZATION
IN SCHOOL
PRACTICE:
TEACHERS'
PERSPECTIVE



CIVIC COMPETENCES OF STUDENTS AT TEACHING FACULTIES

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Students' civic competences (their knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and beliefs) constitute an important prerequisite for their active, responsible, and effective participation in the process of democratic decision-making in social life. These competences are: the cognitive dimension (knowledge, skills, and abilities) and the affective dimension (attitudes and beliefs). Civic competence was defined in the European Council and European Parliament's (2006) Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. This research aimed to obtain teaching faculty students' self-assessments of the key components of civic competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, and abilities) and identify potential differences in self-assessments of these competencies among students enrolled in different study programs. A survey research method was used on a sample of 240 students at two public teaching faculties in the Republic of Srpska. The research instrument employed was the Students' Civic Competence Scale, which contains four subscales including: Civic Knowledge, Civic Skills and Abilities, Civic Attitudes, and Civic Beliefs. According to the results, students believed that their civic knowledge was more developed compared to their civic skills, attitudes, beliefs, and abilities. This could stem from students' insufficient active involvement throughout formal

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education. Students enrolled in Education for Democracy, Democracy and Human Rights and Methodology of Education for Democracy self-assessed their civic competences more highly compared to students who did not attend such courses within their study programs. The paper explains the professional-methodical assumptions, challenges, and possibilities for affirmation and further systematic development of students' civic competences in university teaching, not only through courses focusing on the development of civic competences but also cross-curricularly, through other courses and extracurricular activities.

Keywords: civic competences, teaching faculties, university teaching, study programs

UNDERSTANDING OF DEMOCRATIC ELEMENTS AMONG PRESCHOOL TEACHERS AND PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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In educational institutions, democratic culture development hinges on developing each stakeholder's civic competence, which is manifested in valuing human dignity and human rights and nurturing cultural diversity and democracy. A necessary prerequisite to civic competence is a thorough understanding of the concept of democracy, its basic elements, and their significance for both citizens and society. This research aimed to determine how preschool and primary school teachers understood the key concepts of democracy and to detect the dominant attitudes about democratic elements in educational institutions. An analysis of relevant literature revealed 10 fundamental elements of democracy, which include social identity, social justice, responsibility (in the context of a democratic society), feelings of helplessness, empowerment, acceptance of diversity, transformative dialogue, power sharing, the learning process, and the community. The study involved 52 preschool and primary school teachers with different levels of work experience. The participants filled out a questionnaire that required them to formulate descriptions and definitions of the previously selected constructs. A simple content analysis was performed. Regarding the first research question, the analysis centered on two themes labeled Intersections of the Main Elements and Personal

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Responsibility. For the second research question, the guiding themes were Needs Prioritization and Dynamics of Democracy. According to the results, preschool and primary school teachers showed a poor understanding of the main democracy concepts and their intersections as well as personal responsibility. They saw the concepts of democracy as static elements and their explanations focused on individual needs rather than the needs of the entire community.

Keywords: content analysis, concepts of democracy, primary school teachers, preschool teachers

IMPROVING PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA: PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES OF FUTURE PRESCHOOL TEACHERS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF SELF-EMPLOYMENT*

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The improvement of preschool education is a vital social issue that has long piqued the interest of scientists and professionals alike. For years, statistical indicators have recorded steady progress in this area in the Republic of Srpska. Moreover, the current strategic documents and education policy foresee measures and activities for further improvement. Preschool teachers constitute one of the possible dimensions of improving the situation at this level of the education system. Hence, even during initial training, it is important to probe future preschool teachers' assessment of their professional competencies, along with their entrepreneurial tendencies and perception of the possibility of self-employment. The present study recruited preschool education

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students attending two public universities in the Republic of Srpska. A descriptive method and quantitative processing were used to examine the relationship between the respondents' personal characteristics and their future professional competencies, entrepreneurial tendencies, and assessment of the possibility of self-employment. A regression analysis was conducted to identify the most significant correlates of students' inclination towards a certain group of professional competencies. Furthermore, the analysis revealed statistically significant differences in the respondents' assessments of the possibility of self-employment after graduation. This study yielded significant conclusions and implications for the higher education policy and highlighted the need for professional training of in-service preschool teachers.

Keywords: students, professional competencies, self-employment, preschool teachers, education policy

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES ON KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

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In the modern world, change is the responsibility of every individual. Teachers have one of the key roles because they prepare the youngest members of society for future active participation in changes. Success in this process hinges on teachers continuously developing and improving their knowledge, skills and competences. Specifically, the development of key competences for lifelong learning is a prerequisite to actively and effectively dealing with various situations and challenges of the teaching profession. This research aimed to examine and analyze teachers' attitudes about the importance of key competences for lifelong learning. In further sought to identify differences in their attitudes depending on age, qualifications and work experience, and examine their attitudes regarding obstacles to participation in certain professional programs. The sample comprised 279 teachers employed at early childhood and preschool education institutions in seven counties in the Republic of Croatia. The data were collected via a survey questionnaire. The results showed that the average values of all competences were above the theoretical middle range of the scale. In other words, on average, the respondents assessed all the listed competences as at least moderately important. The highest average score

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was obtained for Literacy Competence, followed by Cultural Awareness and Expression, and Personal, Social, and Learning to Learn Competences. The lowest estimates were obtained for Multilingual Competence and Digital Competence. The results also revealed statistically significant associations between qualifications and assessments of the importance of Mathematics and Science Competences as well as Entrepreneurship Competence. No differences were established for the remaining key competences, that is, the respondents assessed these competences as equally important regardless of age, qualifications, and work experience. The findings indicate that it is necessary to introduce certain changes in teachers' initial education and further professional training. Given that the results point to various obstacles to participation in professional training and competence development, early childhood and preschool education institutions need to do as much as possible to motivate teachers to participate. More specifically, they have to recognize teachers' needs and interests and organize professional training accordingly.

Keywords: competences, lifelong learning, teachers

SATISFYING TEACHERS' BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS THROUGH PROFESSIONAL LEARNING*

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The introduction of elective programs (EP) into the grammar school curriculum in Serbia required the preparation of teachers for their implementation in the teaching practice. The Economics and Business elective is taught by teachers with initial education in the field of economics. Hence, decision-makers have provided teachers with three-day training to support the successful implementation of the program, emphasizing research- and project-based learning. This qualitative study explored how Economics and Business teachers evaluated the professional changes they experienced during training for program implementation. More specifically, the study aimed to determine how training contributed to teachers' sense of satisfaction of their basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) during professional learning. The study involved 19 teachers with economics degrees employed at grammar schools in Serbia where this EP was implemented. The data were obtained via three online group interviews conducted during the

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spring of 2023. Using qualitative content analysis and coding, we identified the following response categories: 1) *Teachers' Sense of Freedom* ("The entire training was helpful, we could start independently there... we have this freedom, because you don't know and you have no one to ask"); 2) *Developing Skills in Planning and Organizing Research- and Project-Based Learning* („How to motivate them to ask questions“); 3) *Acquiring Specific and Practical Knowledge in the Domains of Methods and Didactics* ("Everything was relevant and everything we learned then was applicable...“); and 4) *Horizontal Exchange of Knowledge and Experiences with Colleagues* ("I would like to hear other colleagues' opinions... and share these experiences"). In line with self-determination theory, teachers in our study expressed the need for autonomy in decision-making related to the preparation and organization of EP teaching, opportunities to test their competencies and reinforce their knowledge through well-structured learning experiences, and a sense of relatedness with colleagues during training sessions. The results suggest that professional learning during EP implementation training was oriented towards every person's inherent needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Keywords: qualitative study, Economics and Business elective, teachers with an economics degree, basic psychological needs, self-determination theory

TEACHERS' AND PEDAGOGISTS' OPINIONS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF ENHANCING MUTUAL COLLABORATION TO EFFECTIVELY APPLY INTERACTIVE TEACHING METHODS*

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Interactive teaching methods significantly influence students' academic achievement and help them develop the skills and abilities necessary to navigate life in contemporary democratic society. The present study probed teachers' and pedagogists' opinions about the possibilities of enhancing mutual collaboration to ensure the effective application of interactive teaching methods. The data were collected via interviews with the employment of an interview protocol. The research design encompassed a qualitative thematic analysis. The sample comprised 30 teachers and 30 pedagogists employed at primary and secondary schools. According to the obtained results, teachers most often stated that difficulties in establishing collaboration regarding interactive teaching method application stemmed from pedagogists. The issues listed included pedagogists' lack of time, the incompatibility of pedagogists' ideas with the demands of the practice, and the physical remoteness of the school pedagogist's office. Conversely, pedagogists most commonly cited

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difficulties such as teachers' lack of motivation for applying interactive teaching methods and teachers' unpreparedness to introduce innovations into their practice and take on additional responsibilities. Most teachers believed that mutual collaboration aimed at effectively applying interactive teaching methods could be enhanced through pedagogists' increased engagement in the planning and evaluation phases of interactive teaching. The solutions proposed by the largest number of pedagogists included organizing additional teacher training and motivating teachers to apply interactive teaching methods. The results showed that teachers' and pedagogists' perspectives on improving mutual collaboration aimed at effectively applying interactive teaching methods differed in that teachers preferred collaboration directed toward solving specific problems in the application of interactive teaching methods, while pedagogists were more oriented toward familiarizing teachers with the wider context of interactive teaching method application.

Keywords: teacher-pedagogist collaboration, interactive teaching methods, difficulties in establishing collaboration, possibilities of enhancing collaboration, student academic achievement

PSYCHOLOGICAL RIGIDITY, RESILIENCE, AND WORK LOCUS OF CONTROL AS PREDICTORS OF BURNOUT AMONG EDUCATORS

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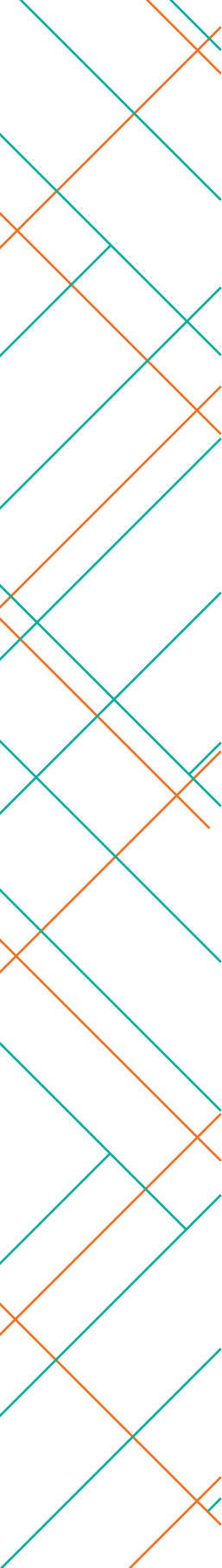
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This research examined the predictive power of psychological rigidity, resilience, and (internal and external) work locus of control in predicting burnout among educators. The study included 324 educators (70% female, with an average age of 40.44 years, SD = 9.40; 51.5% employed at primary schools, while 48.5% worked at secondary schools). The data were collected using the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory, the Brief Resilience Scale, the Serbian version of the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (a measure of psychological rigidity), and Spector's Work Locus of Control Scale. Higher levels of burnout were observed in older participants and educators with more years of work experience. The level of burnout did not differ depending on whether the participants worked at primary or secondary schools. The regression analysis showed that psychological rigidity, resilience, and work locus of control explained 26.9% of the variance in burnout ($R^2 = .276$; Adjusted $R^2 = .269$; $F(3,320) = 40,681$; $p < 0,01$). The findings confirmed the significance of all three variables: psychological rigidity ($\beta = .308$, $p < 0.01$), resilience ($\beta = -.243$, $p < 0.01$), and external work locus of control ($\beta = .122$, $p < 0.05$).

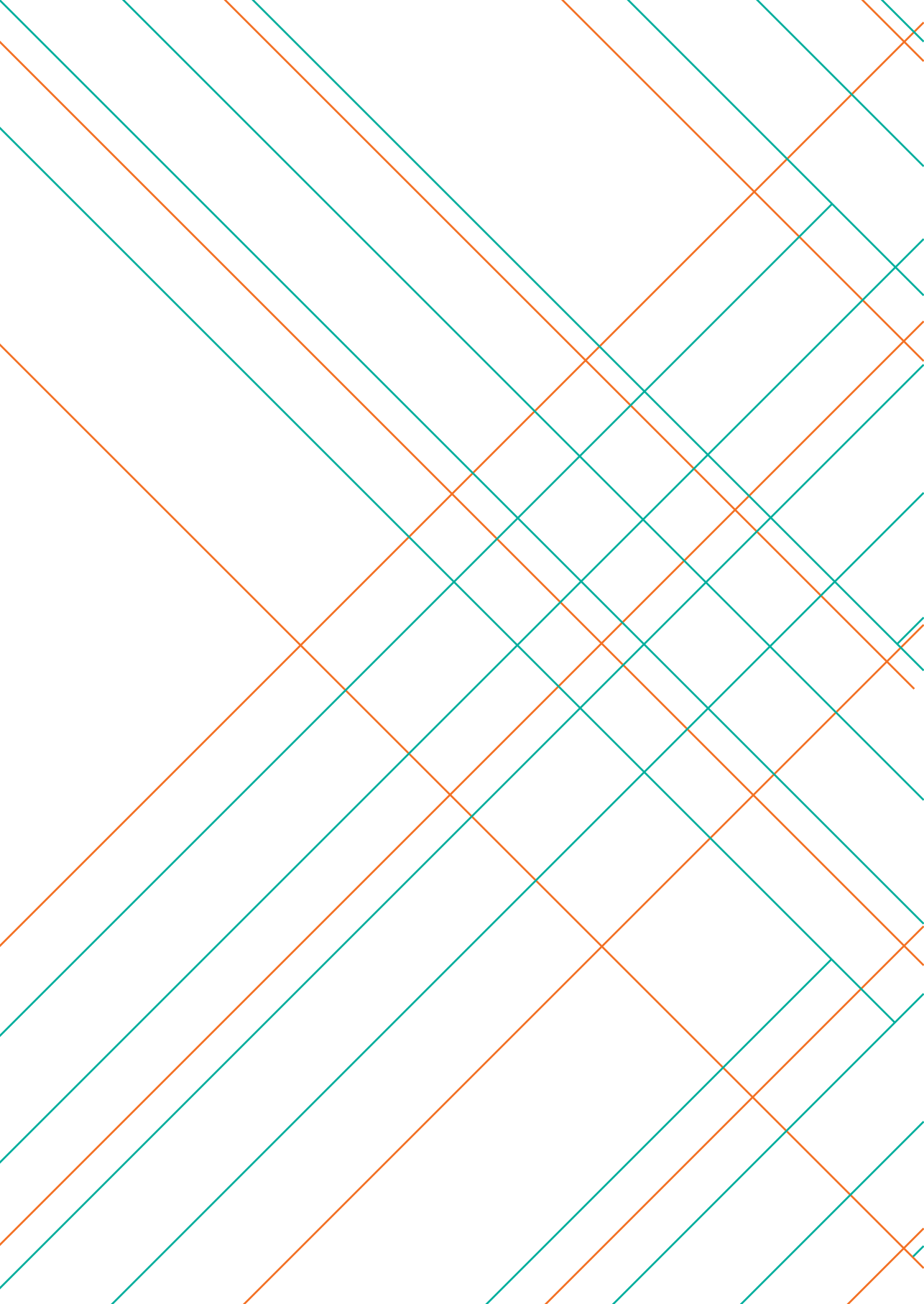
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The results indicate that educators who exhibit greater psychological rigidity, lower levels of resilience, and a stronger external work locus of control are more likely to experience higher levels of burnout. In terms of practical implications, this paper sheds light on some of the causes of burnout among educators and it can inform the development of preventive measures aimed at reducing burnout levels among primary and secondary school staff.

Keywords: work locus of control, burnout, educators, psychological rigidity, resilience



INTERPERSONAL
RELATIONS
IN SCHOOLS,
SCHOOL CLIMATE,
AND SCHOOL
CULTURE



THE EFFECTS OF SYSTEMIC ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

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This paper analyzes the results of the implementation of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) at the level of educational policies as well as the implementation of the Quality Education for All project at the school level. In the data collection process, mentors from 20 pilot schools visited 39 project schools and conducted group interviews with each school's project team. A descriptive questionnaire was used as a basis for self-evaluation of the results through the implementation of a pretest-posttest analysis. The questionnaire was designed to measure 21 aspects of school life across the areas of teaching and learning, school culture, and cooperation with the local community. Assessments were given on a four-point scale (1 – poor condition; 4 – excellent condition). At the end of the project, the mentors employed the Questionnaire on the Action Plan and Changes in the School to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the changes observed and measure the achievement of school action plans (general and specific goals and planned activities) from the perspective of the school project team. The results revealed general progress across all schools, with a general average of 3.40 at the end of the project compared to 2.87 at the beginning. The greatest improvement was observed in the

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area of school culture, with an increase from 2.61 to 3.25, followed by cooperation with the local community (from 2.96 to 3.43) and teaching and learning (from 3.09 to 3.54). The final evaluation of the impact of phase two of the project revealed improvements in the domains of anti-discrimination, participation, democratic culture, and sensitivity towards vulnerable groups. The RFCDC has become a part of the Rulebook on Community Service and Humanitarian Work and should be integrated into the initial education of teachers.

Keywords: Competences for Democratic Culture, school culture, teaching and learning

ENCOURAGING STUDENT AUTONOMY IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS*

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This paper explores different modes of defining and encouraging student autonomy through the lens of stage-environment fit theory, self-determination theory, and educational change theory. Stage-environment fit theory highlights the necessity of nurturing the alignment between students' developmental need for autonomy and the teacher's control, which depends on a) students' age and developmental level and b) autonomy-supportive conditions at home and school. Self-determination theory posits that students have the need to govern their behavior and actions based on their goals, motives, and values, but also that they can be either proactive/engaged or passive/disengaged depending on whether their environment and teacher are autonomy-supportive. Proponents of educational change theory believe that students have the need to be involved and heard in debates on educational changes and thus satisfy their need for autonomy. Based on our analysis, the commonalities between these theories include the following assumptions: 1) "students as scientists" have the need to be competent and contribute to the improvement of their school, family, and wider social environments; 2) students best understand their own experiences and needs, which is why encouraging autonomy hinges on supporting their perspective in the family and school contexts; 3) student-teacher relationship should be based on mutual trust, understanding, and closeness, all of which contribute to the satisfaction

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of students' developmental need for autonomy; and 4) students should have the opportunity to act autonomously at home and school (e.g., have the freedom to express opinions and make choices and decisions). It is necessary to develop an integrative framework that would empirically test the relationship between the abovementioned constructs from different theories. Furthermore, it is crucial to identify factors that could moderate the relationship between student autonomy and its encouragement in the educational process.

Keywords: autonomy, motivational and developmental theories, students, teachers

ENHANCING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT SERBIAN SCHOOLS*

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A cross-curricular approach to English language teaching (ELT) provides plenty of room for teachers to go beyond linguistic competence, helping develop students' civic awareness and engagement. This paper explores how ELT can serve as a tool for fostering active and responsible citizenship in the context of Serbian secondary education, in line with the broader goals of Civic and Citizenship Education (CCE). English classes provide an opportunity to introduce and reinforce democratic values, critical thinking, and participation in both local and global civic contexts. Aiming to assess the current integration of civic themes into ELT at Serbian schools and explore the potential for further embedding civic education elements into the English language curriculum. The study combines qualitative and quantitative data to analyze the extent to which the current English language textbooks and materials in Serbia include themes related to civic education: democratic values and principles, environmental sustainability, social diversity and inclusion, participation in civic life, media literacy and digital citizenship, and global citizenship. Embedding civic themes within ELT allows students to gain language skills while also developing critical competencies needed to navigate and contribute to an increasingly globalized world. While data collection

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and analysis are still ongoing, preliminary results will be shared at the conference. The findings are expected to reveal the current practices and opportunities for further embedding civic themes within the ELT curriculum at Serbian schools, contributing to a deeper understanding of the cross-curricular links between language learning and civic engagement.

Keywords: cross-curricular approach, English language teaching (ELT), Civic and Citizenship Education

AESTHETIC CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCY IN CIVIC EDUCATION: PERFORMATIVE ARTS AS A WAY OF LEARNING ABOUT CIVIC EDUCATION

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Cross-curricular competencies integrate different areas of learning in and beyond school subjects, converging through all school subjects according to a particular subject-specific context, combining different situations, tasks, and problems. They are essential for comprehensive personal development, social integration, and professional orientation. Specifically, aesthetic cross-curricular competency is fundamental for developing creativity in all areas of education. Like other cross-curricular competencies, aesthetic competency should be actively elaborated in all domains of the curriculum. Civic education (CE) promotes civic activism as a way of engaging in social transformation and the theoretical foundations of performative arts emphasize social engagement and activism as one of their key dimensions. As performative artworks often present a form of socio-political activism, they are suitable for application in CE. How is aesthetic competency integrated with the competence for responsible participation in a democratic society, which is fundamental for CE? This study aimed to determine the didactical status of aesthetic competency in CE. A content analysis was conducted to examine a

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sample consisting of actual CE curriculum and teaching manuals. The units of analysis were terms and propositions referring to art, creativity, or aesthetic competence. The categorization criteria were frequency and didactical meaning. The findings indicate that cross-curricular aesthetic competency is not explicitly integrated into the CE curriculum, although CE integrates all other cross-curricular competencies. The analysis of CE teaching manuals yielded similar results. For implications, we argue for the application of performative arts in CE as a form of teaching about social engagement and civic activism, since CE provides numerous topics suitable for performative arts. Furthermore, considering that film-based learning once showed valuable results in the Free Zone Junior project, we advocate further application of this (or similar) project. All of the above would also support other cross-curricular competencies in CE. For instance, combined media in performances provide support for digital, information-use, and problem-solving competencies. Likewise, joint preparation of art performances can support cooperation or even entrepreneurial competencies.

Keywords: civic education, art, creativity, activism

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN THE USE OF ART MATERIALS AND THEIR IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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This paper addresses modern tendencies in the use of art materials and their influence on children's artistic expression and creativity in primary education (8-11-year-old students) in North Macedonia, with a special emphasis on program definition and implementation in teaching at state and private primary schools. Based on the Art course curriculum with two classes per week (90 min.) provided by the Bureau for the Development of Education, research methodology was developed in coordination with art teachers and implemented in five schools. The sample comprised 200 students. The study analyzed stimulating and limiting material factors affecting the implementation of modern tendencies in the use of art materials. Special attention was paid to opportunities provided by the application of the integrated curriculum, the implementation of modern trends, the use of art materials, the problem of teachers' initial education and professional development through various workshops, and the influence of the art teacher. The teacher-assessment method was used to assess students' creative work. Student portfolios served as a pedagogical tool used for collecting and showcasing students' creative work over time, allowing them to demonstrate their learning and growth. The findings indicate that contemporary trends in the use of art materials

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affect the development of creativity among students, with a wider range of art materials used leading to higher levels of creative output.

Keywords: contemporary tendencies, art education, art materials, art expression, integrated curriculum.

USING DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES TO CREATE A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE*

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Discipline techniques include a variety of teacher approaches to creating a positive school climate that promotes students' academic, social, and emotional development. Although often understood as a method of dealing with inappropriate behavior, discipline allows students to understand the impact of their behavior on others and develop self-management skills. This study aimed to identify the most frequently used discipline techniques among 62 teachers employed at mainstream schools (n=34) and special schools (n=28). The majority of the sample was female (93.5%) and 53.2% percent of participants had up to 10 years of professional experience. The instruments employed included the Disciplinary Techniques Questionnaire and a questionnaire designed to gather relevant socio-demographic characteristics of the teachers. The data were processed using the IBM SPSS Statistics software and analyzed via descriptive statistics, the Mann-Whitney U test, and the Independent Samples t-Test. The results revealed that teachers used positive discipline techniques and socioemotional learning strategies to a greater extent, while punishments were used much less frequently. No significant differences in the use of disciplinary measures were observed between teachers at mainstream and special

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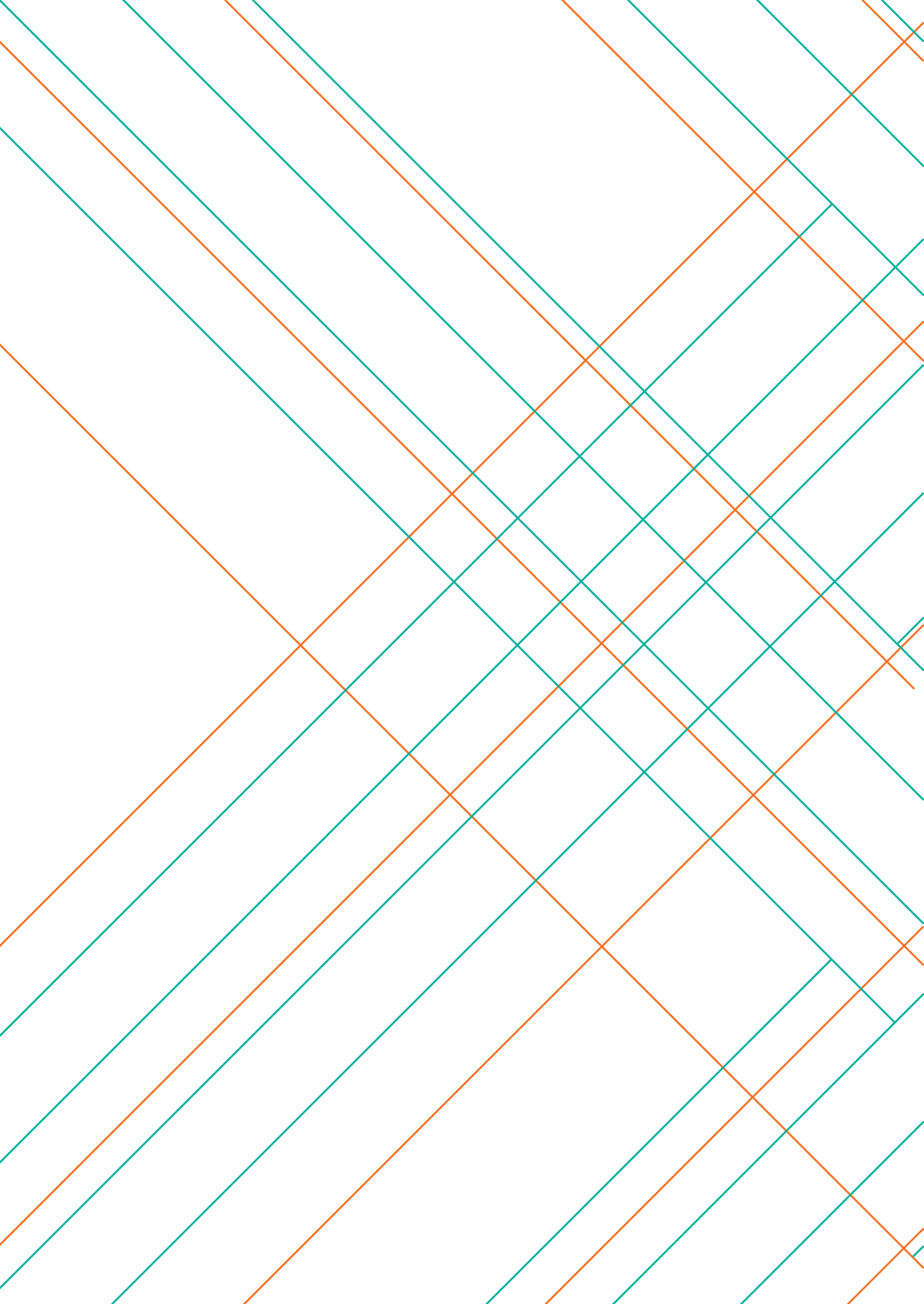
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schools. However, it was found that the entire subsample of teachers with up to 10 years of professional experience used positive discipline techniques significantly more frequently than their more experienced colleagues. We can conclude that teachers were much more likely to use positive disciplinary measures such as rewards, praise, and recognition as well as socioemotional learning techniques that encourage students to develop responsibility and empathy. These practices are essential to creating a supportive environment and a positive school climate. Therefore, teacher training is crucial for a deeper understanding of the importance of these techniques as well as active collaboration with parents and regular monitoring and evaluation of the approaches used to identify the most appropriate practices for students.

Keywords: discipline techniques, teachers, mainstream schools, special schools, school climate



PARTICIPATION,
ENGAGEMENT,
AND CIVIC ACTIVISM
INSIDE AND OUTSIDE
SCHOOL



PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL CORE CURRICULA IN POLAND

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European documents present citizenship participation as unquestionably important and an amalgamation of different citizenship concepts ranging from liberal to critical. How does this translate to formal education? The results of the ICCS 2022 survey showed Polish students to be more critical of opportunities for participation at their schools than their peers in the other countries surveyed. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate what learning outcomes are assumed in Poland's general education core curricula. In this paper, I present the results of a content analysis aimed at identifying and describing the social and civic competencies formulated in the general education core curricula for all compulsory school subjects and at all stages of school education. The paper focuses on the results pertaining to knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to citizenship participation (including student participation). The main research questions were as follows: What knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to citizenship participation (including school student participation) are formulated in the general education core curricula? What is their frequency of occurrence across different educational stages and school subjects? The results indicate that competencies related to citizenship participation (including school student participation) are poorly represented in the general education core curricula, concentrated in the knowledge area, and mainly limited to one school subject. The underrepresentation of competencies

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related to participation (including student participation) may indicate that these competencies are also not exposed in the implemented curricula, resulting in students being critical of participatory opportunities at their schools.

Keywords: participation, school, citizenship competencies, core curriculum

PARTICIPATION AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM – THE REPRODUCTION OF AUTHORITARIANISM

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In Serbia, the democratic decision-making culture and the participation of children and the youth are conspicuously low. Although many domestic studies have recognised this phenomenon, few have attempted to explain the institutional causes of low participation and the reproduction of authoritarianism. The author argues that the education system at all levels constitutes a key mechanism for reproducing authoritarianism, given that adults and school structures largely influence decision-making processes during schooling. These structures exercise effective control over decisions and often discredit or prevent autonomous decision-making by children and the youth in areas specifically intended for this purpose. School is the first institution children and young people encounter during their upbringing and the way decisions are made at school serves as a model for participation later in life. Using the results of several qualitative domestic studies conducted among high school-aged youth, the author provides examples of how this control occurs, contributing to the political socialisation of children and the youth in an authoritarian context. How they elect their representatives and make decisions in homeroom classes and within student parliaments indicates a low presence of participatory culture, democratic decision-making, and awareness of their interests

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and needs, along with low tolerance for differences and either atomised or rare informal, non-institutional strategies for defending their interests.

Keywords: youth, participation, secondary education, student parliament, democratic decision-making

SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS COORDINATORS AS PROMOTERS OF SUSTAINABILITY CITIZENSHIP CHARACTERISTICS AMONG THE YOUTH

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This paper presents a part of the findings of a qualitative case study aimed at describing and understanding the role of school volunteer programs (SVP) in cultivating sustainability citizenship characteristics in high school students in Croatia. The research involved 38 student volunteers (focus groups) and 7 coordinators (interviews) from six high schools. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. SVPs are defined in the literature as a driving force for creating an active and responsible society. Through volunteering, young people develop a lifelong civic identity that increases the likelihood of future community engagement. SVPs provide a safe space for students to practice their civic role. They are usually run as extracurricular activities in collaboration with the civil sector, with coordinators playing a crucial role in the organization and delivery. This paper focuses on the role of coordinators in creating a supportive environment for developing sustainability citizenship characteristics. The thematic analysis highlighted the significant influence of coordinators on

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initiating programs and connecting schools with the wider community. Coordinators also act as role models for students by demonstrating their commitment to social change. They are instrumental in fostering a positive atmosphere that promotes trust, equality, and democracy. Despite the positive contributions of SVPs, what remains a challenge is engaging other teachers and professional associates, whose support is often limited to nominal involvement. Schools that actively support SVPs create an environment that encourages student participation, strengthens school cohesion, and connects the school to the wider community.

Keywords: school volunteer program coordinator, school volunteer program, sustainability citizenship, qualitative case study

HOW TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE THE YOUTH IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY OF FIREFIGHTING PLAYGROUND IN IVANIĆ-GRAD

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In rural settlements of Ivanić-Grad, firefighters are still the bearers of all social activities considering that they are the only active associations in those settlements. Nonetheless, the popularity of the profession has steadily decreased and led to a shortage of firefighters. To solve this problem, the Firefighting Association of Ivanić-Grad has launched the Firefighting Playground project, which encompasses a system of polygons organized by volunteer and professional firefighters during local festivals. It was initiated in 2018 and designed as a set of obstacles for children with no additional assistance. In 2021, the aim of the project became twofold: to actively engage young firefighters in the project and to motivate the children who participate in Firefighting Playground to become more involved in their local communities through firefighting. Firstly, young firefighters participated in the process of creating, implementing, and evaluating the polygon through dialogue, decision-making, and participation. As a result, more than 30 young firefighters helped their communities each day of the project. Secondly, the polygon design was based on the principles of symbolic play and an individual approach. Dressed as a firefighter and in the company of one, each child was encouraged to share impressions of the polygon. Through constant interaction with both groups of young

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people, it was concluded that Firefighting Playground has become a platform that strengthens their values, beliefs, specific skill sets, and engagement in local communities. The project has shown that to engage the youth in local communities, it is important to create a safe space, ask for feedback, and offer them activities that are tailored to their interests. These are the principles that will form the foundation of further youthwork within firefighting associations in Ivanić-Grad.

Keywords: motivation, local community, Ivanić-Grad, firefighting activities, youth

AGENTS OF CHANGE: FOSTERING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND DEMOCRATIC CULTURE THROUGH SCHOOL CLUBS OF CRITICAL THINKING AND VALUES & THE METHODOLOGY OF MULTIPURPOSE LEARNING SPACE CREATION

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This study investigated the impact of school clubs established within the project entitled School at the Heart of the Community implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, aiming to enhance critical thinking and value-based learning. Project schools have been recognized as key agents in creating positive changes, fostering a supportive environment and inclusive culture. Sixteen clubs were established, creating a space where students could engage in dialogue, explore their interests, question personal and social values and norms, and implement collaborative activities. Grounded in the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture by the Council of Europe, the clubs aimed to increase student agency, participation, and ownership of school space, culminating in the creation of Sobičak, a multipurpose learning space designed and built by students, with the help and support of sponsor teachers and the local community. Using a mixed-method approach including observation and mentorship processes and reports, focus groups, and surveys, the study analyzed

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student participation, engagement levels, and educational outcomes. The results suggest that such extracurricular models can play a significant role in student engagement, both inside and outside of school, increasing a sense of civic responsibility and motivation for civic activism. This initiative fostered a collaborative learning environment where students, educators, and communities worked hand-in-hand to achieve positive change while promoting democratic culture and active citizenship within educational settings. Hence, it would be beneficial to integrate student-guided activities and student-led spaces into school curricula, thereby supporting a holistic approach to student development and teacher agency and centering the school in the heart of the community.

Keywords: democratic culture, critical thinking, value-based learning, student-led spaces, student/teacher agency

ARE MUSEUMS TRULY NEUTRAL? STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF MUSEUMS' ROLE IN SHAPING SOCIETAL VALUES

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Museums are crucial societal institutions that not only preserve cultural heritage but also have the potential to influence public discourse and promote socially valuable principles. The present research examined andragogy students' perceptions of museums' value neutrality and role in shaping societal norms and values. Conducted at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, the study involved 24 undergraduate students divided into four focus groups, providing a comprehensive view of students' perceptions across different levels of study. The results highlighted the shared belief that modern museums are not and cannot be value-neutral. Rather than merely preserving the past, museums are viewed as spaces that should actively promote socially valuable principles, encourage critical thinking, and foster societal reflection. Despite museums' efforts to present their exhibits impartially, students recognized that political, ideological, and cultural influences inevitably shape museum content and interpretations. Given that andragogy students are trained to support the educational role of cultural institutions, their views offer valuable insights into how museums can better serve as spaces for critical reflection. Students argued that museums should adopt more dynamic educational methods such as workshops, panel discussions, and public

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lectures that engage visitors in interactive learning, thereby fostering democratic and critically engaged societies. These findings suggest that museums should move beyond static presentations and become spaces for critical dialogue and reevaluation of societal structures, helping shape a more informed and reflective public.

Keywords: museum value framework, value neutrality, focus group, andragogy students' perceptions, educational role of museums

MEASURING HOW CHILDREN CAN MAKE CITIES BETTER

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Understanding the level of interaction between modern 12-year-old children and urban environments is crucial for assessing their preparedness to navigate the complexities of city life. This study aimed to develop a valid and reliable instrument for measuring the construct of *pro-social involvement* (PSI) among children. The instrument was designed for students to demonstrate their capacity to use their knowledge and skills to engage in more meaningful learning experiences and interactions within urban environments. Validity evidence was obtained by assessing the instrument's psychometric properties, primarily focusing on internal structure validity. The study relied on the theoretical framework proposed by Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne, assuming that pro-social involvement focuses on a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow for conscious participation in group or individual activities aimed at positive changes in society. It further drew on the ICCS theoretical framework foundation, that is, Judith Torney-Purta's seminal work and her view of the youth's responsibilities in modern civic society. Assessment tasks were developed using the Evidence-Centered Design (ECD) methodology. The assessment instrument comprised an authentic scenario-based task and a questionnaire measuring children's pro-social involvement. The sample for instrument piloting included 759 students from a large city in the central part of Russia. The psychometric analysis of the results included CFA and

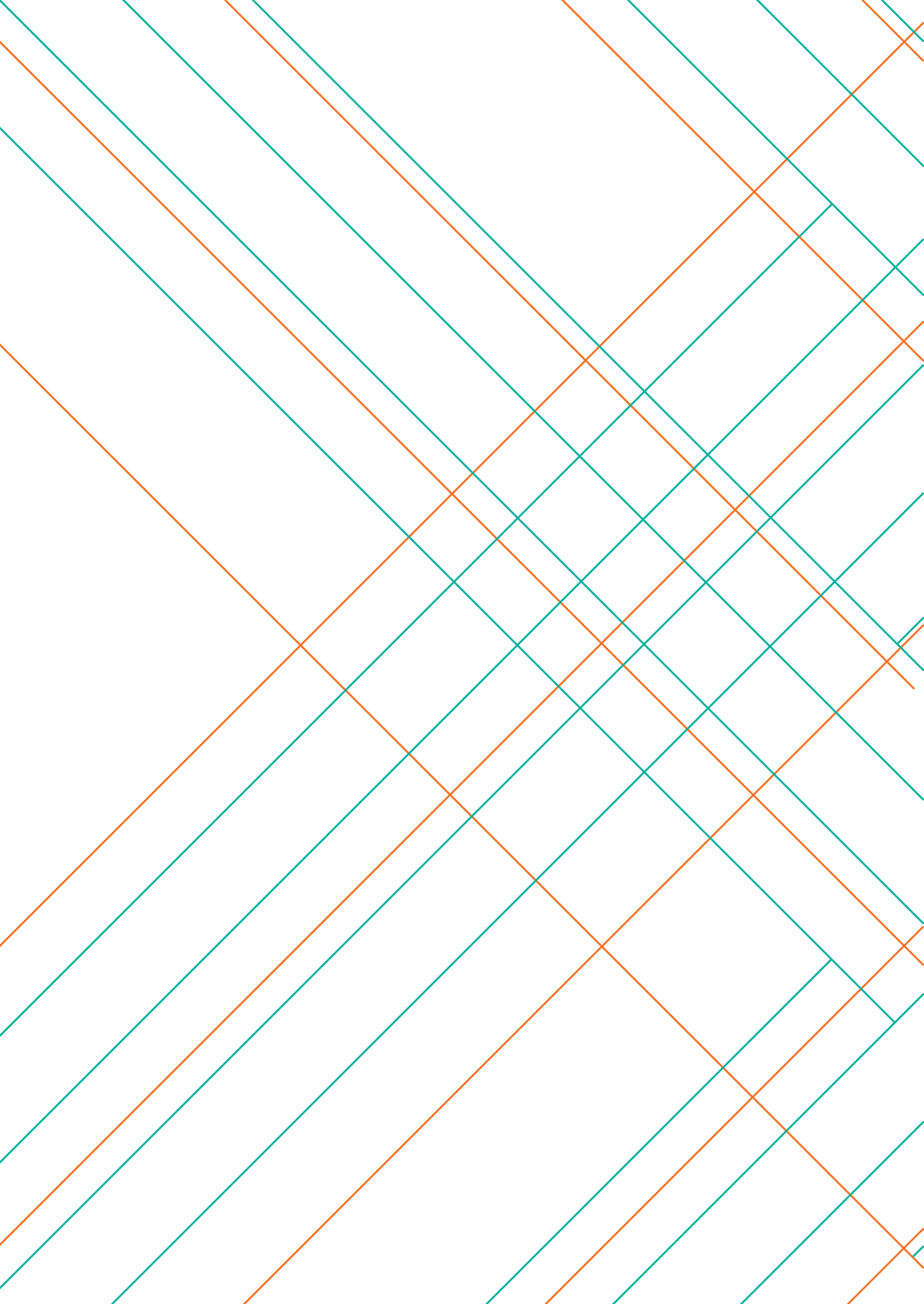
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IRT analyses. Construct validity evidence was gathered. However, the operationalization of pro-social involvement (PSI) is considered preliminary, given the complexity of the construct and assessment time limitations. This study primarily focused on internal structure validity evidence, with further research needed. The paper discusses how children’s skills and knowledge are related to their attitudes concerning PSI.

Keywords: pro-social involvement, middle school, urban literacy, IRT



MIGRATION,
ENVIRONMENTAL,
SOCIAL,
AND ECONOMIC
SUSTAINABILITY



EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS

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In recent years, the integration of immigrants has become a key issue in many societies, with schools playing a vital role in shaping students' attitudes toward these groups. Understanding which socio-demographic factors influence students' views on immigrants is crucial for developing inclusive education policies. This study will utilize secondary data from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) 2022 to investigate how students' attitudes toward immigrants are influenced by various socio-demographic and personal factors, including but not limited to students' gender, immigrant background, language spoken at home, parental education, socio-economic status (SES), and expected educational attainment. The study will explore students' responses to questions about their attitudes toward immigrants and examine how civic knowledge relates to these attitudes. A multiple regression analysis will be conducted to identify the most significant socio-demographic and personal predictors of positive or negative attitudes toward immigrants. The results of this analysis will provide insights into how education systems can better promote social cohesion and tolerance. The initial results indicate a significant association between students' attitudes toward immigrants and variables such as gender and parental education level, along with a modest connection with academic achievement on

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the ICCS test. However, the preliminary results revealed no statistically significant relationships with language spoken at home, socio-economic status, expected educational attainment, or immigration background. This research will contribute to a broader understanding of the role of personal and contextual factors in shaping attitudes toward immigrant communities.

Keywords: immigrants, ICCS 2022, students' characteristics, civic knowledge

PREDICTORS OF STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONS AMONG IMMIGRANT STUDENTS: INSIGHTS FROM SLOVENIA

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Immigration plays a significant role in modern society, with schools bearing the responsibility of promoting positive academic outcomes for students with immigrant backgrounds. According to the ICCS 2022 cycle, individuals with immigrant backgrounds made up 21% of the student sample in Slovenia. Research indicates that these students may face disadvantages in academic performance, accompanied by lower levels of school belonging, with a notable percentage expressing concerns about safety at school. Enhancing student-teacher relationships is one potential strategy for improving these students' academic outcomes. This paper explores the predictors of student-teacher relationships, addressing two key research questions: 1) What factors are associated with immigrant students' perceptions of student-teacher relationships based on variables from the ICCS 2022 database? and 2) How do these predictors vary among different student groups (native, first-generation, and non-native students)? The study involved 4,958 students from the Slovenian ICCS 2022 sample. Linear regression analyses were conducted using data from the student background questionnaire. Findings highlight the significance of classroom context variables (e.g., student interaction at school and civic learning at school) in shaping immigrant students' perceptions of student-teacher relationships, with distinct differences observed across different

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student groups. The paper also discusses the practical implications of these findings in the Slovenian educational context.

Keywords: student-teacher relationships, school climate, immigrant students, ICCS 2022

PERCEPTIONS OF UKRAINIAN AND OTHER REFUGEES AMONG EIGHTH-GRADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CROATIA*

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According to the UNHCR data, there were more than 43 million refugees around the world by mid-2024. Europe hosts one in three refugees and their integration is high on the agenda of every country. Education systems are important agents in this process, welcoming children as the most vulnerable group. Children and young people in host countries should be adequately prepared for changes, but their preexisting attitudes about (willing or unwilling) immigration must not be ignored. As an additional part of the ICCS 2022 survey, some participant countries included a set of questions on the topic of refugees and the Ukrainian war. These questions ranged from expressing attitudes towards different ethnic groups of refugees coming to Europe to assessing the policy of one's country (and the EU) towards refugees. Students were also asked about their willingness to enable the integration of refugees and immigrants into their own (school) environments and certain related political questions. Croatian students expressed positive attitudes toward Ukrainian refugees as well as those from neighboring countries not in the EU. There was far less support for refugees from other areas, such as Africa and the Middle East. Almost three in four (71%) Croatian eighth-grade students

* *Note:* These preliminary results of additional questions on the Ukrainian refugee crisis gathered from Croatian students within the ICCS 2022 study are comparable to Slovenian results on this subject matter (Klemenčič Mirazchiyski, 2024).

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recognized that immigrants were discriminated against in society. On the other hand, students were predominantly worried about terrorism and criminal behaviors related to accepting refugees into their country. As in ICCS 2016, showing more support towards equal opportunities for immigrants was positively associated with higher levels of student civic knowledge in Croatia.

Keywords: students' attitudes, refugees, immigrants, integration

CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS OF JUST TRANSITION EDUCATION*

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Green transition needs to be strategically and consciously planned with social justice in mind in order not to exacerbate inequalities and cause further injustices toward already disadvantaged individuals, communities, and regions. With raised awareness of this issue on the global level, the concept of *just transition* has gained relevance. To illuminate distinct characteristics of environmental education within the context of just transition, we analyzed 49 environmental education practices designed to improve the position of different systematically disadvantaged groups, the majority being migrants, adults with low formal qualifications, and women. Covering a wide range of learners and communities, the practices provided a basis for identifying success factors of environmental education among these diverse target groups. The analyzed practices originated from more than 10 different countries, primarily Cyprus, Sweden, Ireland, and France.

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Due to different national and regional contexts, the practices' success factors were identified considering their specific socio-cultural and political backgrounds. The results highlight the importance of connecting environmental issues to learners' daily lives and holistically addressing their needs through systemic support. They also point to the relevance of civic and community dimensions that empower political participation, all of which are crucial if environmental education is to contribute to making the green transition truly just. The paper is a part of the international JUST4ALL project where national, regional, and global civil society organizations share examples from their countries and regions.

Keywords: environmental adult education, just transition, cross-country analysis, best practices

GREEN PEDAGOGICAL CONCEPTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: FACTS AND POSSIBILITIES

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This study investigated the presence of green pedagogical concepts in the education systems of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The research aimed to highlight the role of education in addressing ecological, economic, and social responsibility. It further sought to emphasize that green pedagogy is reflected in several dimensions, including biological, ecological, economic, sociocultural, and political sustainability, all of which should be taken into account in learning process. The study analyzed the application of green pedagogical concepts by examining policies, curricula, and teaching practices. A qualitative macro-comparison was conducted and the methodology encompassed the use of the descriptive method, the method of theoretical analysis (education regulations, existing academic literature), sociological methods (persistence of green pedagogical concepts within the framework of the education systems of Bosnia and Herzegovina), qualitative analysis (survey of education workers), and Beraday's comparative method (for examples from the practice). The paper addresses the questions of the education of the future and education for a sustainable future, examining what they are and what they can be. It presents an analysis of teachers' opinions and attitudes about the concept of education for a sustainable future and the existing practices of green pedagogy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the region, and the world. It

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identifies a need for education reforms, recommending further research and systemic changes based on green pedagogy aimed at ensuring that education can help future generations understand themselves and the world around them and through that understanding, create a life worth living for all.

Keywords: green pedagogy, education system, sustainable development goals, degrowth, crisis pedagogy

EXPLORING LIFE SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS AMONG SERBIAN YOUTH: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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This paper examines how young people in Serbia evaluate their happiness and life satisfaction and how they perceive the state of various aspects of social life (such as the economy, healthcare, and education). The analysis is based on data from the ninth and tenth rounds of the European Social Survey conducted in 2018 and 2021, enabling a comparison of the situation before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The main hypothesis is that young people's sense of happiness and life satisfaction declines during a pandemic and that they become more critical in assessing various aspects of life. The first part of the paper presents the contextual framework of the analysis, including the key data on the legal and socio-economic position of the youth in Serbia. This section integrates data from official statistics and the most relevant studies on the position of young people in Serbia conducted over the past decade. The second part of the analysis encompasses data on Serbian youth's happiness and life satisfaction and their perceptions of various aspects of life. The data for the youth category are presented relative to data for other age groups. The gender dimension is also observed. Furthermore, we compare the available data for Serbian youth with data on the youth from the broader region and Europe.

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Keywords: youth, happiness, life satisfaction, European Social Survey, COVID-19

RISKS OF VIOLENCE AMONG THE ELDERLY IN SERBIA – A POSITIVE DEVIANCE APPROACH

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This paper explores the elderly's vulnerability to various forms of violence. It employs a positive deviance approach as a novel framework for understanding and addressing this issue in Serbia, where this approach has not been widely known and used. From a theoretical perspective, a positive deviance approach contributes to a better and deeper understanding of the emergence of certain behaviors and the circumstances under which these behaviors arise. From a practical point of view, a positive deviance approach represents a tool for identifying, improving, and disseminating specific and particular behaviors that can be used to address certain problems. The field part of our research in the selected municipalities (Plandište, Užice, and Valjevo) started in

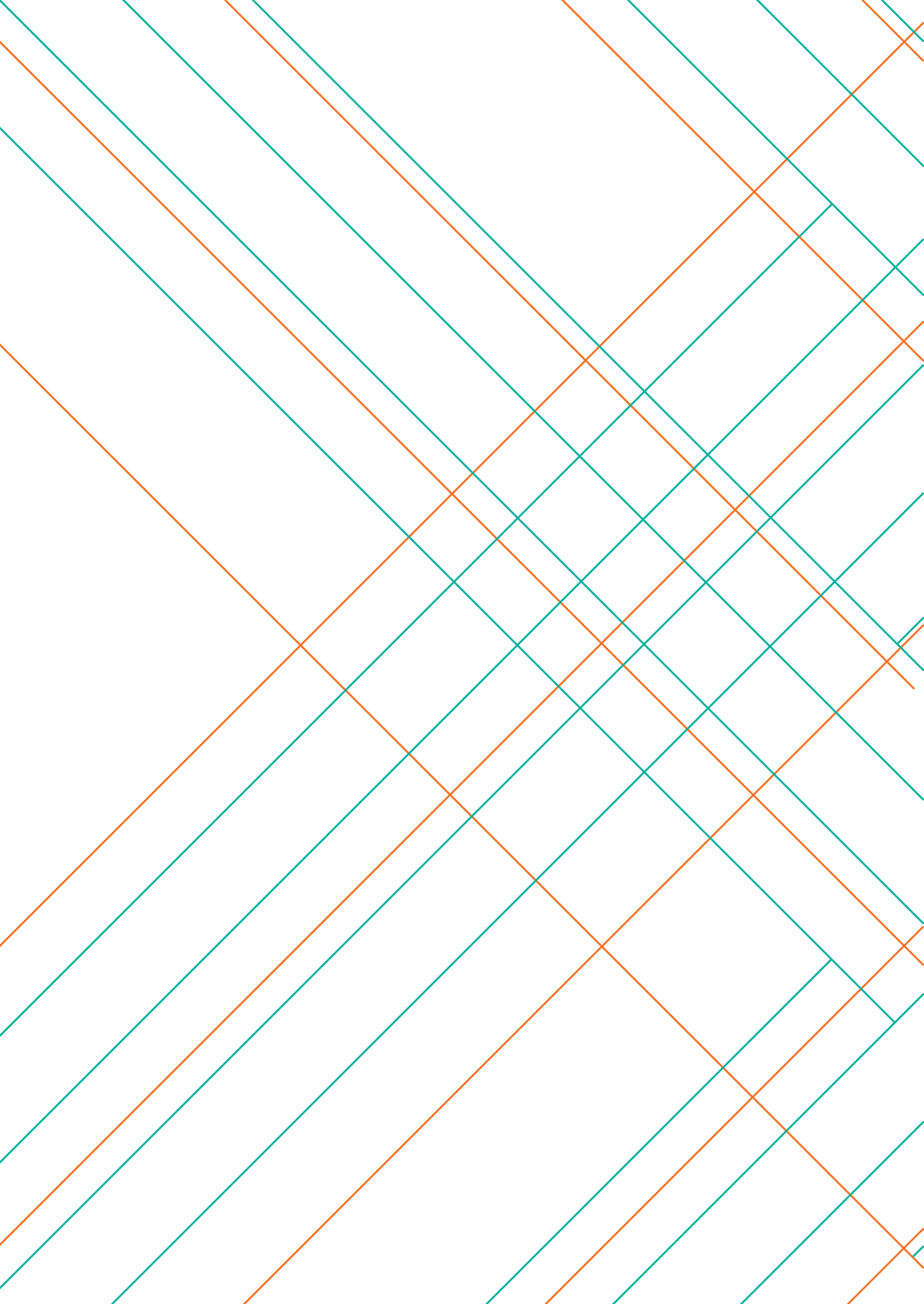
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November 2020 and ended in June 2022. Distinct research methods were used in different project phases, mainly including focus group interviews and semi-structured individual interviews with respondents. The findings indicate that a positive deviance approach provides valuable insights into the elderly's behaviors that can mitigate their vulnerability to violence.

Keywords: positive deviance approach, elderly, violence, qualitative methodology



SOCIAL DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION: INCLUSION AND MENTAL HEALTH



INNER DEMOCRACY: THE DYNAMICS OF THE AGONISTIC SELF AS THE BASIS OF A PLURALISTIC AND OPEN SENSE OF SELF*

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The Model of Agonistic Self (MAS) views the self as pluralistic, fragmented, tense, and socially saturated. The MAS introduces the functions of voices, relationship types, and constellations as the main categories for describing the dynamics of the self. Voices, including Ideologues, Opponents, and Evaluators, engage in different types of relations such as conflict, productive tension, and cooperation, depending on the compatibility of their ideologies. Constellations constitute broad patterns of relationships among voices and include one type (King's constellation) that reflects the dynamics of a relatively stable power order and five others that reflect deviations from it. As the agonistic self reflects interpersonal and broader institutional relations, it can be organized democratically or autocratically. Our research on youth identity aimed to test the assumption that in a democratic organization of the self, power relations are redistributed to empower marginalized voices, with dominance balanced by the pluralism of voices. A total of 13 high school and university students participated in the Interview for the Agonistic Self. The obtained data

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were analyzed deductively, using the mentioned categories from the MAS. In some participants, the main voice in the King's constellation showed *openness* to the influence of other Ideologues, while voices creating a monologic atmosphere (e.g., powerful subversive Evaluators) were absent. Furthermore, these participants were also more likely to find ways to accept some silenced voices in their sense of self. These findings confirm our initial assumption and suggest that it is possible to contribute to democratizing the relationship between different actors at school by encouraging the described dynamics of the agonistic self in individual and group work with young people.

Keywords: Model of Agonistic Self, democratic self, youth identity, democracy at school

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES: WHAT IS THE LINK WITH MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY?*

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While there are scarce data about the relationship between mental health disorders and mental health literacy in Serbian youth, research worldwide has shown the preventive effect of promoting mental health literacy among the young population, especially within the school community. This study examined the relationship between perceived mental health literacy qualities (knowledge; erroneous beliefs/stereotypes; first aid skills and help-seeking; and self-help strategies) measured by the MHLq-SVa and self-rated symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress assessed by the DASS-21. Furthermore, the study explored the roles of erroneous beliefs/stereotypes, first aid skills and help-seeking, and self-help strategies in explaining the relationships between mental health literacy knowledge and symptoms of youth depression, anxiety, and stress. The sample comprised 344 participants (78.5% female) aged 17–25. Mental health knowledge, erroneous beliefs/stereotypes, first aid skills/help-seeking, self-help strategies, and self-rated physical and mental health explained significant percentages of the variance in depression (45%), anxiety (32%), and perceived symptoms of stress (30%). Mental health knowledge showed

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direct positive links with depression ($z=4.487$, $p<.001$), anxiety ($z=3.658$, $p<.001$), and stress ($z=3.179$, $p<.01$). Self-help strategies mediated the links of mental health knowledge with anxiety ($z=-3.128$, $p<.01$), stress ($z=-2.280$, $p<.05$), and depression ($z=-2.124$, $p<.05$). First aid skills and help-seeking mediated the correlations of mental health knowledge with anxiety ($z=-2.484$, $p<.05$), stress ($z=-2.311$, $p<.05$), and depression ($z=-2.994$, $p<.01$). Promoting mental health literacy in the educational context is recommended as a measure for preventing mental health issues.

Keywords: mental health literacy, depression, anxiety, stress, students, school

MENTAL HEALTH-PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE AMONG SCHOOL STAFF IN SERBIA: A VALIDATION STUDY*

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Mental health literacy is mostly defined as a multidimensional construct that unifies four factors: knowledge related to the prevention of mental health problems, the recognition of signs and symptoms, the identification of available options and treatments, and knowledge of tailored self-help strategies and first-aid skills to support others who are developing or present with mental health problems. Worldwide, researchers have shown an increasing interest in mental health literacy (MHL) among students and teachers. However, the Serbian education system still lacks prevention programs in the domain of mental health and professionals within schools who could help students with mental health issues. To generate interest in this research field in Serbia and initiate work on practical guidelines for promoting MHL, we recognized the adaptation of the existing MHL assessment instruments as one of the first steps. This study aimed to translate and validate the Mental Health-Promoting Knowledge Scale (MHPK-10), which is used to assess participants' level of understanding of how to obtain and maintain good mental health. The sample consisted

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of 556 school staff members aged between 24 and 70 years, possessing an average work experience of about 17 years. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) yielded a satisfactory fit ($\chi^2(36) = 2443.48$, $p < .001$; CFI = .933; RMSEA = .10). Internal reliability values indicated excellent reliability (McDonald's omega and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were both .89). Construct validity was confirmed by significant correlations with personal stigma ($r = -.15$) and social distance ($r = -.17$) towards people with mental health problems and other measures of mental health literacy ($r = .46$). School staff showed a high level of mental health-promoting knowledge.

Keywords: mental health, literacy, school staff, MHPK-10, Serbia

RELATIONS BETWEEN MENTALIZATION AND STRESS-COPING STRATEGIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH

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Mentalizing is the ability to understand the thoughts and feelings of oneself and others and it has been linked to various aspects of mental health and well-being. On the other hand, stress-coping strategies are adaptive behaviors used to manage stress. This study aimed to investigate how mentalizing abilities (self-reflection, understanding others, and motivation to mentalize) predict young people's choices in dealing with stress (focusing on tasks, emotions, or avoidance). The sample was convenient and comprised 291 high school and college students (75% female) aged between 18 and 24 years ($M = 19.19$; $SD = 1.37$). The Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS) and the Questionnaire for Mentalization Assessment - QM were used. In task-focused coping, mentalizing oneself and motivation to mentalize explained 18% of the variance ($R^2 = .18$, $F(2,255) = 27.34$, $p < .001$). All subscales of mentalization were significant predictors of task-focused coping: mentalizing oneself ($\beta = .18$, $t = 3.06$, $p = .002$), mentalizing others ($\beta = .27$, $t = 4.50$, $p < .001$), and motivation to mentalize ($\beta = .35$, $t = 5.91$, $p < .001$). In emotion-focused coping, mentalizing oneself and motivation to mentalize explained 7% of the variance ($R^2 = .07$, $F(2,252) = 8.86$, $p < .001$). Significant

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predictors were mentalizing others ($\beta = .16, t = 2.49, p = .013$) and motivation to mentalize ($\beta = .14, t = 2.13, p = .034$). These results suggest that individuals who are better at understanding themselves and others may be more likely to use adaptive coping strategies like task-focused and emotion-focused coping, which are generally considered healthier than avoidance-focused coping. The findings could aid researchers and practitioners in the development of interventions aimed at promoting adaptive coping and improving mental health outcomes.

Keywords: mentalization, stress-coping strategies, young people

PUNISHMENT IS NOT SUFFICIENT - SUPPORTIVE PROGRAMS FOR MINORS WITH BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS*

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Children who display violent behavior largely belong to the broad and diverse category of children with behavioral problems. The solutions offered by the legal system are varied and defined under different laws in Serbia (e.g., the Law on Welfare and the Law on Juvenile Criminal Offenders) but are not practically implemented. In the school context, while the Law on Educational Foundations does foresee intensified correctional work with students, most schools do not have ready access to child behavior specialists. This study explored the frequency of violent behaviors in the school context, the frequency of stepping out of school and the main reasons for it, and the measures imposed on minors who have committed criminal acts. It was conducted on a sample of 448 regular secondary school students and 174 students placed in correctional institutions for juvenile criminal offenders (male N= 298, female N= 324). A total of

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30% of respondents reported being attacked at school multiple times, while 23% reported attacking others. Out of the 10% of respondents who reported stepping out of school, all were in correctional institutions. Although the measure of increased supervision at daycares for children with behavioral problems has proved highly effective, it was not imposed on any of the respondents. This can be explained by a lack of daycare facilities. This measure is intended to keep minors in contact with their family, school, and hobbies, facilitate proper socialization, and prevent school dropout. As a solution, the authors of this paper have proposed to the City Assembly of Belgrade to include daycares for children with behavioral problems in the social care system to ensure timely prevention of violent behaviors, dropout, and law violations.

Keywords: children with behavioral problems, school violence, stepping out of school, daycare for children with behavioral problems

HISTORY AND MEMORIES: A STUDY OF THE GORNJE PREKRIŽJE CENTER FOR UPBRINGING AND EDUCATION IN ZAGREB

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This paper focuses on the organizational structure and functioning of the Gornje Prekrižje Center for Upbringing and Education in Zagreb during the initial two decades of its existence, namely, the 1960s and 1970s. Both are analyzed in the context of the social and education policies of the time that were relevant to individuals with intellectual disabilities, along with the prevalent stereotypes and prejudices about their socially perceived behaviors. Data regarding the historical aspect of the topic were gathered through research of archived official documents related to the activities of the Center as well as relevant records of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. By positioning the Center within the framework of the social and education policies of the period, this analysis aims to uncover how prevailing stereotypes and prejudices influenced the perception and treatment of individuals with intellectual disabilities. My motivation for delving into this topic stems from my four-year experience as an educator at the Center. Through an autoethnographic lens, I seek to intertwine factual historical data with the reconstruction of my memories from my everyday work at the institution in the early 21st century. By reflecting on my experiences and the broader socio-political landscape of the time, I strive to contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by this population and the ongoing efforts towards deinstitutionalization.

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The paper further touches upon the process of critical examination, thus shedding light on certain negative aspects of this increasingly popular social process. The chosen topic is examined from the perspective of theories that view disability as a social construct or a concept that varies and transforms within cultural, political, and historical frameworks. It is also interpreted in relation to labeling theory, with the paper exploring how intellectual disabilities impact the identity of affected children and young people and how the stigma associated with disability can affect their social relationships and opportunities for social inclusion. The organization of life in institutions is analyzed through the lens of theories that investigate power relations between different groups in society.

Keywords: history of disability, children and youth with intellectual disabilities, Gornje Prekrižje Center, autoethnography

TEACHING LABELING SKILLS TO A CHILD WITH AUTISM – A CASE STUDY

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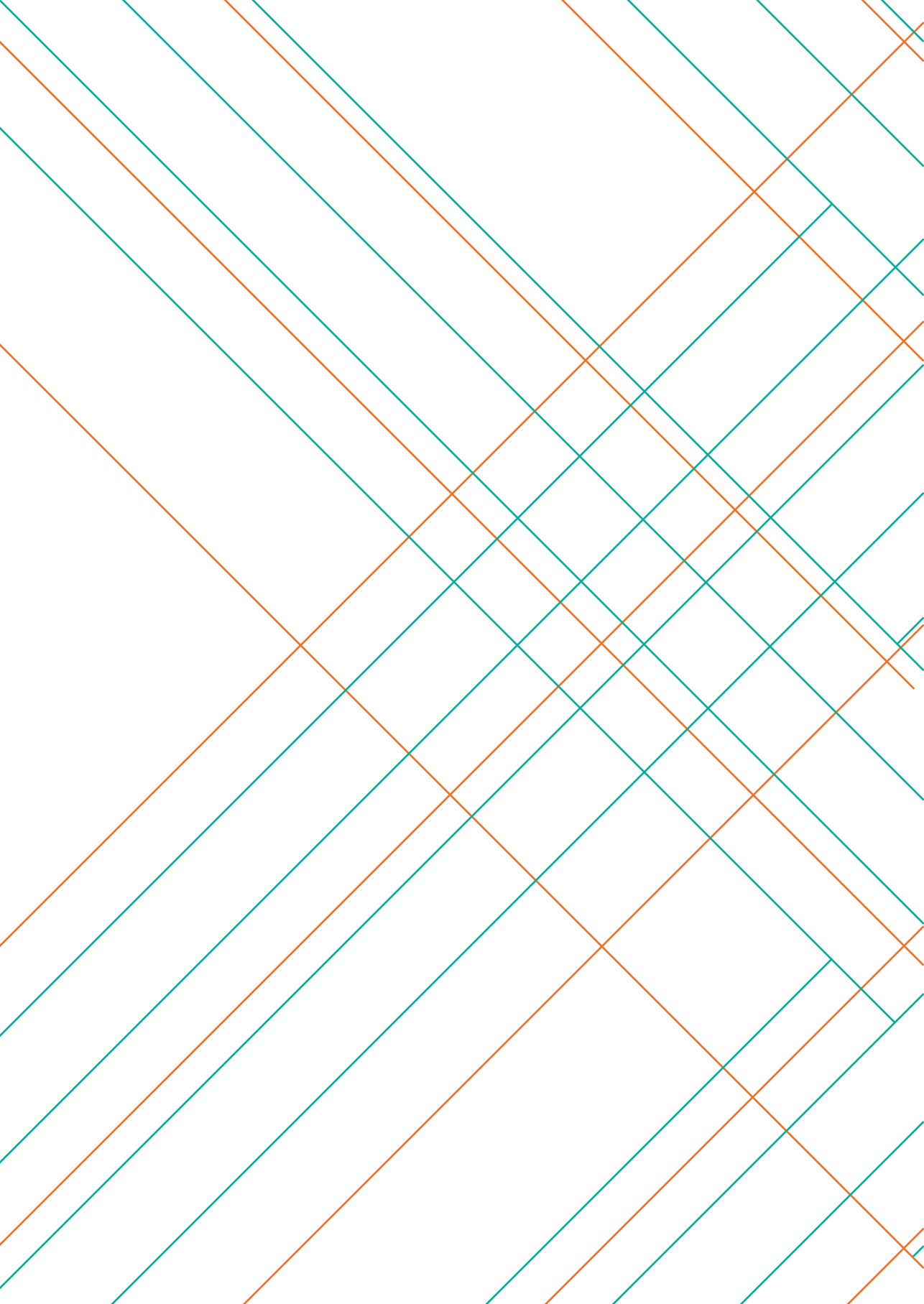
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Labeling is the ability to accurately name items presented on flashcards and constitutes a foundational skill in language development. This study aimed to present the process of teaching a nine-year-old girl with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to label various items presented on a flashcard, including actions, objects, characteristics, occupations, and emotions. The girl had high-functioning ASD, a limited vocabulary, and no additional disabilities. Twelve flashcards were selected from each category and the teaching method employed was errorless learning. The procedure began with full vocal prompts, gradually transitioning to partial prompts, and eventually to independent labeling. The participant mastered all 60 items with 100% accuracy, achieving mastery in emotions in 18 sessions, characteristics in 16 sessions, occupations in 11 sessions, and objects and actions in 10 sessions. Notably, emotion recognition proved to be the most challenging task, consistent with known difficulties faced by children with ASD. Hence, it is imperative to incorporate emotion labeling and recognition into all school subjects to enhance the social and emotional development of children with ASD.

Keywords: vocabulary, autism, labeling, language development

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