

THE MAPPING OF FORMAL EDUCATION PARTICIPATION AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE OF A TEACHER STAFF IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN BUDAPEST

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From the formal and non-formal learning, in this paper I would like to present how much the teachers in the given school participate in the formal education as learners. For this I will use the analysis of official documents of the teacher staff, for example the diplomas and other certificates. I would like to map the different tendencies and how many percent of the teacher staff continued his/her studies after getting the first diploma. I would like to analyze the foreign language knowledge, although I can rely only on the language certificates, but I am sure that this data will provide interesting facts.

Keywords: teaching, foreign language, methodology, lifelong learning

I would like to present what role the teachers take in building a personal learning network. In the 21st century teachers should lead and show an example to students how to learn and in this way they should strengthen the commitment towards learning (Richardson, 2011).

In the new interpretation of learning where teachers put more emphasis, on the traditional – but unfortunately wrong – conception according to which the learning process can be considered finished between the ages of 14 and 23 or the new conception which claims that the formal education can help in preparing for the life-long learning (Komenczi, 2009).

The change in the approach of learning and the life-long learning

For a long time, it was considered self-evident that students going to school mean that they learn or everybody can learn because it is an innate skill. But these assumptions can't be handled in the real world. Learning is a real work and we can't achieve results without conscious efforts. Many phenomena together forced the re-thinking of learning approach, mainly social, economical and technological reasons. This way of re-thinking led to the formulation of life-long learning (D. Molnár, 2010).

Life-long learning involves all the forms of learning and training, so beside the formal, school-type learning, the non-formal and informal learning too. Life-long learning covers all age groups and it isn't equivalent with adult education. Non formal and informal learning are already present at the kindergarten, but the role of the primary school remains dominant as the ability of learning is learnt here and students also acquire the demand for learning. The life-long learning system must be able to motivate a broad base of adults for learning and to make them realize the importance and the benefits of learning. The base of the new learning paradigm is to change the teaching-centered approach and to focus on the learning-centered approach. The teacher is not only the expert of the ever-changing and expanding knowledge transfer but rather a helper in the self-organizing learning process. (Kraiciné Szokoly, 2009)

Personal learning networks

The learning-centered approach is at the center of the personal learning networks, where the students take an active role in their own learning. Everyone build his own personal learning network so the self-directed learning is an important characteristic. Due to its structure, its structure is nonlinear and personalized since every individual builds a different network according to their own fields of interests. To be able to build such a system, the students need the assistance of the teachers. The question is whether the teachers are able to give this approach genuinely. Do the teachers have their own personal learning networks? (Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011).

In my research I am trying to find the answers to these questions and I would like to present a part of it, mainly about the formal learning participation of the teachers.

The survey

The survey is based on a teaching staff of a primary school in the second district of Budapest. Besides the usual junior and senior section, there is a special needs section too, where only children with special needs are educated. I received the data without the names from the school with the approval of the school director.

The characteristics of the teaching staff

There are 65 teachers in the school and the gender proportion of the teaching staff is 10,7% men and 89,3% women. Further breakdown of the gender proportion, in the junior section the women ratio is 88,88%, in the senior section the women ratio is 75%, while in the special needs section the women ratio is 100%. The overall gender ratio of the school (89.3% women – 10.7% men) is a little lower the national average, but it conforms to the trend. In the primary schools the national average of the gender proportion of the qualified teachers is 88% women and 12% men. In the OECD countries 77.6% of the teachers of the primary education is women, while 64.7% of the teachers of the lower secondary education is women. (A pedagógusok..., 2009)

The distribution of the teachers according to their jobs is the following: 21.5% of the teachers work at the junior section, 20% of the teachers work at the day-care section, 24.5% of the teachers work at the senior section and 34% of the teachers work at the special needs section.

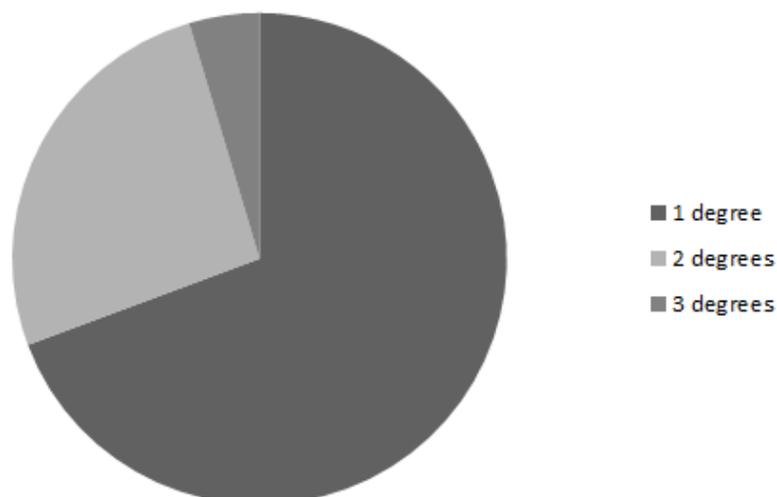
The average age of the teaching staff is 43.4 years, the youngest colleague is 26 years old and the oldest is 65. This value is a little higher compared to the 41 years of national average of the elementary school teachers. (A pedagógusok..., 2009)

Compared to the overall average of the school, the average of the day-care teachers and the special needs section teachers (41.46 years and 41.7 years) is lower while the average of the junior section teachers and the senior section teachers (45.14 years and 45.68 years) is higher. From the above averages it can be seen that the senior section teachers have the oldest average age.

The survey of degrees

In the school statistics only the already acquired degrees and qualifications of the formal education were shown, the on-going participation wasn't presented. In a brief interview with the school director it turned out that this year only one teacher has an on-going formal education of the pedagogical professional examination.

Figure 1. The proportion of the number of degrees



All the members of the teaching staff have at least one degree and there are teachers with more than one degrees, 26.1% of the teaching staff has 2 degrees but 4.6% of the teaching staff (which means 3 teachers) own 3 degrees.

According to the type of the degree, 15.38% of the teaching staff has more college degrees, 12.3% of the teaching staff has a university diploma too and 10.7% of the teaching staff has a pedagogical professional examination.

The comparison of the degrees according to sections

In the junior section, one teacher has more than one college degrees, one teacher has a university diploma too and one teacher has a pedagogical professional examination. In percentage it means that in the junior section 7% of the teachers has more than one college degrees, 7% of the teachers has a university diploma too and 7% of the teachers has a pedagogical

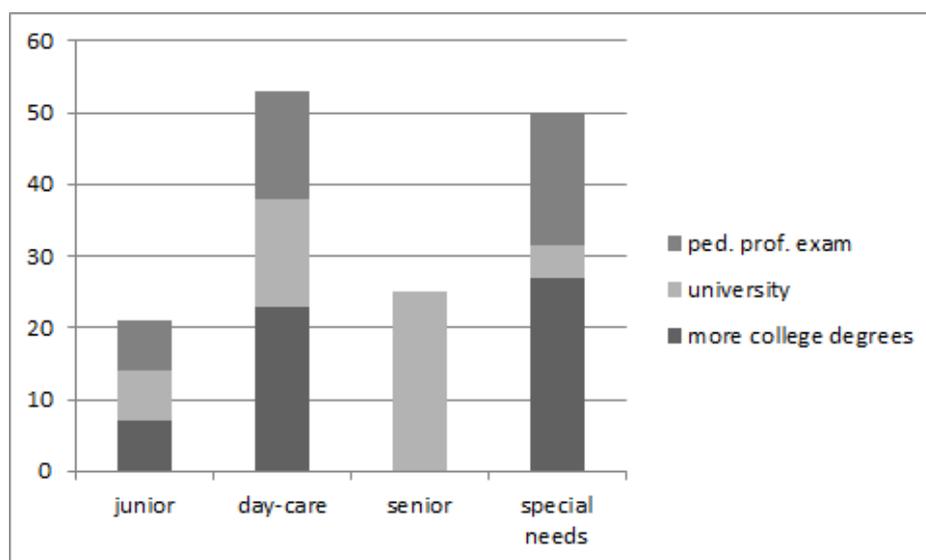
professional examination. Thus, 21% of the junior section teachers has more than one degrees.

In the day-care section, three teachers have more than one college degrees, two teachers have a university diploma too and two teachers have a pedagogical professional examination. In percentage it means that in the day-care section 23% of the teachers has more than one college degrees, 15% of the teachers has a university diploma too and 15% of the teachers has a pedagogical professional examination. Thus, 53% of the day-care section teachers has more than one degrees.

In the senior section, there aren't any teachers who have more than one college degrees, four teachers have a university diploma too and one teacher has an on-going process of getting a pedagogical professional examination. In percentage it means that in the senior section 25% of the teachers has a university diploma too. Thus, 25% of the senior section teachers has more than one degrees.

In the special needs section, six teachers have more than one college degrees, one teacher has a university diploma too and four teachers have a pedagogical professional examination. In percentage it means that in the special needs section 27% of the teachers has more than one college degrees, 4.5% of the teachers has a university diploma too and 18.5% of the teachers has a pedagogical professional examination. Thus, 50% of the special needs section teachers has more than one degrees.

Figure 2. The proportion of degree types according to sections



Based on the data above, the day-care section teachers and the special needs section teachers participated the most in the formal education.

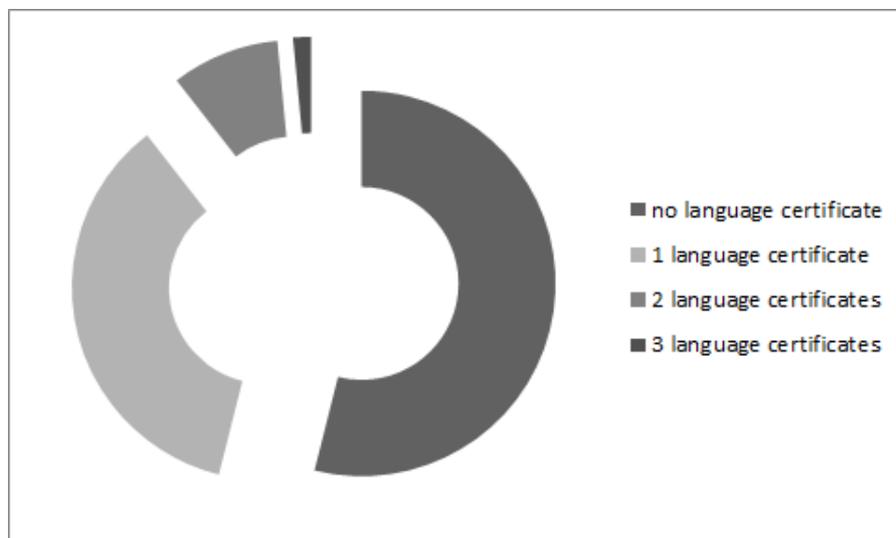
The time interval between two degrees

I examined that after how long time the teachers with more degrees returned to school as learners. In the school statistics I examined the teachers who have more than one degrees and I compared the graduation years. The comparison shows that there are 11.44 years in average between the graduations. The shortest time between the acquisition of two degrees was 3 years and the longest time that a teacher got the second degree was 26 years.

The survey of the language certificates

During my research I examined the already acquired state-approved language certificates which were shown in the school statistics.

Figure 3. The number of language certificates of the teaching staff



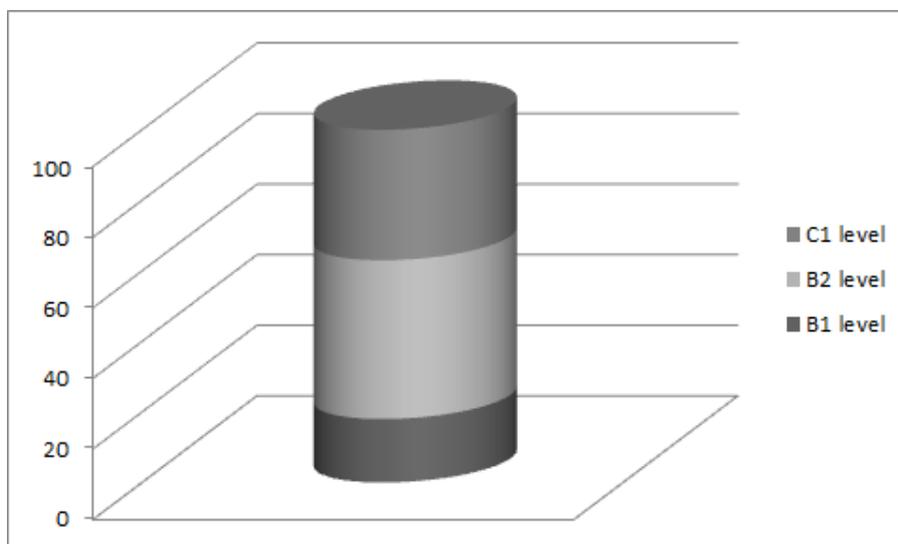
46,1% of the teaching staff has a language exam. There are teachers who have more than one language certificates. 9% of the teaching staff (6 teachers) has two language certificates and 1.5% of the teaching staff (1 teacher) has three language certificates. Nationally, 55.53% of the university and college graduates speaks a foreign language (A néesség..., 2011). But this value can't be compared to the school data because in the school statistics only the already acquired language certificates were shown while in the data of the *Hungarian Central Statistical Office* the question was if they speak a foreign language which isn't directly related to the acquisition of a language certificate. To reach comparability, I plan to survey the non-formal foreign language knowledge within the frames of interviews.

The distribution of language certificates according to sections

The 28.6% of the junior section teachers, the 38.4% of the day-care section teachers, the 50% of the senior section teachers and the 59% of the special needs section teachers have language exams. From these figures, it appears that the average of the senior section and the special needs section is much higher.

The comparison according to the certificate levels

Figure 4. The proportion of the levels of the language certificates



From the language certificates of the teachers, 18% is B1 level (basic), 45% is B2 level (intermediate) and 37% is C1 (higher). In the survey of the higher level language exams, it should be noted that the 14 pieces of C1 level language certificates in the school statistics with one exception are related to language teacher education. It can be concluded that the majority of the teachers with higher level language certificates have the same language exam as their language teacher qualification.

The distribution of languages

I surveyed the 38 language certificates which were shown in the statistics and in this comparison, the language level wasn't taken into consideration. 45% of the language certificates is related to the English language, 16% of the language certificates is related to German, 13% of the language certificates is related to Italian, 13% of the language certificates is related to Russian, 8% of the language certificates is related to French, 2.5% of the language certificates is related to Spanish and 2.5% of the language certificates is related to Esperanto.

Nationally, 47.86% of the university and college graduates speaks English, 29.23% of them speaks German, 2.5% of them speaks Italian, 7.1% of them speaks Russian, 4.6% of them speaks French, 1.7% of them speaks Spanish and 0.5% of them speaks Esperanto.

We can't compare the two data as the school statistics is based on language certificates while the national statistics is based on self-reported language knowledge which isn't directly related to the acquisition of a language certificate. But we can see similarities in the two data, for example the dominance of English can be seen clearly and on the second place German is a popular language. Another interesting similarity in both data that Esperanto isn't a preferred language among people with college or university degrees.

Summary

It can be claimed that approximately 30% of the teaching staff of the surveyed school continued their studies within the frames of formal learning and almost 50% of the teachers have a state-approved language certificate. These data, however, show only a part of the actual learning activities of the teachers. My assumption is that a significant proportion of the teachers have an extensive personal learning network but most of these activities take place within the frames of non-formal learning. Therefore, the next step - after surveying the formal learning of the teaching staff – is that I would like to map the non-formal learning of the teachers.

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