

SUMMARIES OF THE SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

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*for participation in a competition for the occupation of an academic position
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MONOGRAPH

*Basic habilitation thesis for holding the academic position
"Associate Professor"*

Dimitrova, Zl. 2023. Digital transformation – competence and creativity in kindergarten and school. EKS PRES – Gabrovo. pg. 232. ISBN 978-954-490-767-9

The monographic work explores the pedagogical aspects for the formation of digital competence and digital creativity in kindergarten and primary school, because they are a major part of the started process of digital transformation in world education. Thus, the study is linked to the key competences in the European reference framework and the skills of the XXI century.

In the era of Education 4.0, digital competence and digital creativity are among the priority areas of knowledge in the modern education system. This makes the topic of the monographic study extremely relevant and significant for pedagogical science.

Education for the purpose of forming digital competence and digital creativity of preschool and primary school children is an unexplored scientific field. Regardless of the technical support and the achievements regarding the digital literacy of adolescents, the analysis of the current scientific literature and the pedagogical practice in our country shows that the native education system does not pay enough attention to this problem. And the formation of digital competence and digital creativity is an important aspect of the development of the child's personality in the modern technological world. They are dictated by society's needs for technologically literate and creatively thinking individuals, capable of making non-standard decisions and quickly adapting to conditions in this rapidly changing, sometimes unstable, world.

The exposition consists of an introduction, four parts and a conclusion, with the first and second chapters having a predominantly theoretical character, and the other two being practically oriented. The total volume is 232 pages. The study covered

187 parents of children from 1 to 11 years of age and 70 kindergarten and elementary school teachers. In order to get a more complete picture of the level of digital literacy of students in the primary educational stage, 77 students from 1st to 4th grade participated in the empirical study.

In the first chapter, an analytical overview of the main concepts of new literacy and the key skills in the digital world is made, as a basis for the competence approach in education. On this basis, the theory of literacy and its modification in the XXI century has been enriched. The modern regulatory framework and educational documentation regarding digital transformation, key competencies and educational content in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as their unification with the requirements of the European Commission, have been analyzed.

In the second chapter, an in-depth analysis of the generational characteristics of the "Alpha" children and the peculiarities of their digital socialization is presented, based on the author's research among elementary school students, parents and teachers. Special attention is paid to *the specifics of parental influence on children's digital development*, which is a relatively new dimension in the parent-child partnership and in family and public educational interactions. It has been established that Bulgarian children enter the world of technology already in the first three years after their birth and almost immediately become active users. *The readiness of children's and elementary teachers for the digitalization in education has been investigated* with the aim of critical selection and competent use of digital resources in the educational process. *The modern trends and requirements for the competencies of educators* based on the European framework for the digital competence of educators, known as DigCompEdu, and the standards of the International Association for the Development of Information Technologies in Education /ISTE/ have been examined.

In the third chapter, various aspects of pedagogical interaction for the formation of digital competence and digital creativity in kindergarten are analyzed. *An overview of the existing experience in the application of digital technologies in preschool education* has been made. *A justified model for a digital kindergarten as an educational ecosystem* is proposed, as well as options for the application of digital technologies in cognitive work with children of preschool age.

The fourth chapter offers pedagogical approaches for the formation of digital competence and digital creativity in primary school. Models for digital transformation in school education in Finland, South Korea and Singapore are examined, as the education systems of these countries use digital tools, media and learning resources to meet new challenges and demonstrate a consistently high level of success in their students. Technology training programs have been successfully

implemented in these countries, so studying their practices leads to an understanding of how the right strategies could be built.

Next, *new technologies and formats in digital education (distance and mixed)* are presented. Emphasis is placed on *project-based learning in a digital educational environment*. By carrying out projects, students gain experience, on the basis of which a set of universal competences, demanded by the digital age, is formed. Along with the current trends in the development of modern education, the last chapter also examines the *gamification of the learning process*, which is based on the deep attachment of the children of the XXI century to computer games. *Some new forms of experiential and collaborative learning* are also described, which are increasingly entering pedagogical practice. They are implemented in a face-to-face format and support the development of competencies such as creativity, teamwork skills, communication development and collaboration in the digital world.

One of the main conclusions of the monograph is that *digitalization allows modern educational institutions to make the learning process more flexible, adapted not only to the realities of today, but also to new technological challenges in the future*. The responsibility for the formation and improvement of the digital skills and the digital culture of the modern generation falls on the whole pedagogical community. That is why it is important for modern kindergarten and school that teachers know what is interesting for children of the "Alpha" generation, how to manage the process of wide introduction of digital technologies in the educational process, without which technologies it is impossible to form a developing digital educational environment.

The formation and development of a modern digital educational environment will ensure the achievement of such key results as:

- personalization of the educational process, based on the construction of individual educational trajectories and monitoring of the educational opportunities and achievements of children and students, their personal and professional development;
- maintaining sustainable motivation for learning and active participation of each child in the cognitive-educational process;
- ensuring the project nature of the learning activities, integrating theoretical and practical training, expanding the possibilities of using different individual and team forms of organizing the learning process;
- providing access to education for children and students living in remote and hard-to-reach areas;
- creating and expanding opportunities for socialization and education of children and students in disadvantaged social situations;
- provision of quick feedback, quick and objective assessment of learning results during the implementation of learning tasks;

- automation of administrative activities, freeing the teacher from routine operations.



A BOOK BASED ON A DEFENSED DISSERTATION

Dimitrova, Zl. 2022. Media literacy in primary school. Gaiana book&art studio – Ruse. pg. 392. ISBN 978-619-7604-26-9

In 2020, the coronavirus pandemic put the education system under a huge test. Educational institutions were closed, and children and students urgently had to switch to distance learning in an electronic environment through various media platforms. Because of the mandatory virtual learning process, even young students have to spend 4-5 hours a day in front of computer screens and digital devices, without having the necessary knowledge of how to use these media tools and the media information obtained through them. Related to this is the increasingly urgent need to form media literacy among students already at the initial stage of the basic education level.

The book offers an author's model for the formation of media literacy of students in 1st – 4th grade. A curriculum was constructed with exercises, tasks, didactic and developmental games with the application of media technologies. This is the first complex research on the problem in our country, developed after a thorough theoretical justification, tested in a learning environment and introduced into educational practice. 161 students, 113 parents and 109 primary teachers were included in the study. The experimental base for conducting the research is 9 schools in the municipality of Veliko Tarnovo, as well as the "Bulgarche" Sunday School in the city of Naples, Italy.

The book consists of an introduction, four chapters, conclusions and a conclusion, and the total volume is 392 pages. The text is illustrated with 65 tables, 35 figures and 1 diagram.

In the first chapter, after a thorough theoretical analysis, the concepts of "media environment", "media culture" and "media literacy" are defined. Then the relationship between key competencies, media literacy and literacy levels in the Bulgarian school is analyzed. Theoretical studies show that the formation of media literacy in the initial stage is a major part of the literacy process of young students to acquire the key competence "communicating in native language". In this sense, it could be argued that media literacy is a component of literacy.

The second chapter examines the possibilities for the formation of media literacy through formal and informal education in the 1st - 4th grade stage. *An analysis of the global experience of media literacy formation among young students is presented. Models for media education in Canada, Great Britain, Finland and Spain, whose knowledge and experience have been borrowed by other countries around the world, are presented in detail. Special attention is also paid to media training opportunities in Bulgaria. Studies lead to the conclusion that school-age media education continues to occur spontaneously, informally, unsystematically and unplanned. It takes place without educational mediation and is not regulated by documents or institutions.* It is in such a context that media literacy skills and habits are acquired in our country today. **Five author's options for the formation of media literacy through extracurricular forms of work are proposed.** They are described in detail, including sample thematic distributions.

In the third chapter, the theoretical formulation of the experimental work is presented. The basis is the developed author's *diagnostic toolkit, which consists of criteria with indicators and indicators to them and tools for diagnostic examination.* The proposed criteria are a total of 10 and are derived based on the analyzes for the formation of media literacy as an educational approach. Next, fundamental concepts related to the **construction of the theoretical model** are examined. *Its parameters include learning approaches and principles, goals, expected results, learning content, stages, methods, techniques and forms, consistent with the planned learning levels of the learning material.*

In the fourth chapter, an analysis of the results of the experimental research is presented. Through three surveys, the position of students, parents and primary teachers regarding the use of media by 7-11-year-olds has been clarified. **The experimental model was tested** among students in the 4th grade, who once a week attend the classes of the "Observer" Media Club. *A study program was developed with a goal, tasks, methods and forms of work, study content in six thematic sections and expected results.* The activities are aimed at increasing students' media literacy according to all 10 criteria from the diagnostic toolkit. The program is for one academic year and consists of *30 lessons with author's exercises, special tasks, didactic and developmental games with the application of media technologies.*

With the presented model for the formation of media literacy, a basic educational level of media culture of the young student is achieved. The child who possesses higher media literacy can extract maximum information from media sources, correctly perceive media texts and find the leading messages in them, independently and successfully create means of media information and their own media texts, learn to think critically and creatively.

SUMMARIES OF THE REMAINING PUBLICATIONS BY THEMATIC AREAS

A. Publications related to theoretical and applied aspects of digital competence in kindergarten and primary school

Dimitrova, Zl. 2022. The role of the primary teacher for the digital socialization of the young student. *International Scientific Conference "Pedagogical Education - Traditions and Modernity"*. "St. Cyril and St. Methodius" University of Veliko Tarnovo. pg. 264 – 272. ISSN 2534-9317.

Global digitization, which has not left the education system behind, led to a *number of changes and challenges in the "teacher-student" relationship*. **The main goal of the research is to identify the main problems with which the pedagogical specialists are faced in the process of socialization of young students in a digital environment.** For the teacher, this is related to mastering new professional competences and digital skills for life in the digital society. The article presents part of the results of the *author's research on the digital competence of primary teachers* and seeks answers to the questions: "Is the Bulgarian teacher ready for these dynamic changes?", "Can educators form digital literacy in their students?", "Do the teachers have the necessary digital competence and can effectively use ICT in the educational process?».

The article presents in a theoretical plan the concepts of digital competence, including that of the teachers. Moreover, the main factor for the successful implementation of educational innovations and digital transformation in the Bulgarian school is the digital competence of the teachers. The latest changes in the Ordinance on the state requirements for acquiring the professional qualification "teacher" are related to this.

The results of the survey show that *primary teachers are not familiar with the changes in the development of modern children*, as 56 percent of the respondents cannot explain the features of the so-called "clip thinking" characteristic of adolescents from the "Alpha" generation. Emotional intelligence, self-organization when using the Internet, skills to protect personal data in a digital environment are not important for 54% of educators.

At the same time, the research indicates that *teachers have an above-average level of digital literacy*. 80 percent of the respondents admit that they do very well and excellently with the searching for information on the Internet. 50% state that they have excellent or very good skills for checking information in various ways (in other authoritative sources, evaluating the reputation of a site, information about the author

(source) of a material, etc. 61.4% of the teachers claim that they are excellent and very well prepared to work with cloud technologies provided for participants in the educational process.

Dimitrova, Zl. 2023. Pedagogical aspects of the "digital childhood" phenomenon and the digital socialization of children of the "Alpha" generation. *Modern humanities*. 18(1), BFU (in print). ISSN 1313-9924.

The study of the problems of digital socialization of adolescents is among the current tasks of psychology, pedagogy, sociology for several reasons: 1) because of the weak theoretical justification of the concept; 2) because of the lack of a psychological-pedagogical model of this process; 3) because of the insufficient number of large-scale and long-term experimental studies of the digital generation, going beyond the boundaries of "good or bad"; 4) because of the lack of a methodology for researching the digital socialization; 5) there is no significant amount of research on the digital activities of preschool children.

The main goal of the pedagogical research is to present some aspects of the phenomenon of "digital childhood" and to trace the peculiarities of the digital adaptation of the children of the "Alpha" generation according to the assessment of their parents, who are the main agents for the socialization of adolescents. The study reveals interesting details related to the specifics of parental influence on children's digital development, which is a relatively new dimension in the parent-child partnership and in the family and public educational interactions.

The research methodology is based on the theoretical analysis of scientific literature dedicated to digital childhood, the characteristics of different digital generations and digital competences in education. *The main method of the empirical research is the anonymous and voluntary survey. The study covers 187 respondents from all over the country who are parents of children from 1 to 11 years of age.*

The first part reveals the gradation from digital childhood to digital generation. Then the generational characteristics of the "Alpha" children are traced. By formal standards, it will be the most educated generation, as its representatives begin to accumulate knowledge, skills and competences at an early age, and their educational, work and social activities will continue after 70-80 years of age.

Empirical research determines the level of digital skills and competence of parents, and the goal is to understand if its increase is an effective way to reduce their anxiety and to increase the confidence in the need to use new tools in education.

The study is also looking for an answer to the question *"Do children need digital literacy training in kindergarten or at school?"*. Digitally literate families have been

found to have a clearer position on many issues and feel less afraid of the brewing digital transformation in education. Their concerns are primarily related to the readiness of the educational environment and teachers for these changes, rather than their negative impact on children and students. It turns out that the less competent the parent feels in the information and digital environment and the less experience he/she has interacting with it, the more significant his fears are.

The research also focuses on the questions of which digital tools support the socialization of children most effectively and what additional conditions (help and instructions) are necessary for their implementation. The analysis shows that a greater proportion of parents consider the development of their children's digital skills as an increase in their "technical" rather than communicative competence, although adults often complain about their children's over-engagement with the Internet and computer games. In addition, it was found that it was parents' personal observations during online learning that contributed more to their positive attitudes and helped them understand the value of self-education for their children.

Based on the data obtained, **it is concluded that Bulgarian children are immersed in the vast world of technology at an early age and already in the preschool period they become active users.** Ease of learning, quick access to unlimited resources and multi-functionality make digital devices a favorite, even the only toy for most teenagers. This raises the question: are adults (parents, preschool and primary school teachers) ready for this penetration of digital media and the Internet into the child's life?

B. Publications related to theoretical and applied aspects of media pedagogy

Dimitrova, Zl. 2022. Formal education - the basis for the formation of media literacy in the educational process in the 1st - 4th grade. *Preschool and school education*. Sofia: Pedagogical publishing house "Education". no. 1. 110 – 121. ISSN 2535-0692.

The article examines the possibilities for the formation of media literacy of students in the primary educational stage, which formal education in Bulgaria offers. *The proposed analysis of the Bulgarian language and literature curricula in the context of the elements of media literacy that are present in them* leads to the conclusion that it is precisely in the process of studying these subjects that students should be given the basics of the skills for quick orientation in information space.

At the same time *in the Bulgarian school, little attention is paid to the culture of interaction of students with the means of mass communication.* That is why today the

school should set itself a goal: *education of adolescents in a critical attitude towards the media*. Young students perceive the media as a form of recreation and entertainment. The primary school teacher's task is to find an application of these tools in the education and training. In this regard, it is necessary during the lessons for the teacher to teach the children to understand and analyze the received media information, to develop and educate a culture for understanding media texts, to form a critical attitude towards every media production that they hear and see every day. In order to achieve these goals and tasks in the educational process, information and communication technologies must be used. They help the all-round development of the young student and the formation of their media literacy.

Today, the traditional educational paradigm "teacher - textbook - student" is supplemented by a new scheme: "student - media means - teacher". *It reflects the humanistic traditions in pedagogy and offers additional opportunities for education - not the presence of ready, systematized knowledge to be mastered, but a creative approach to the search and analysis of the information offered to solve pedagogical tasks.*

Therefore, *the article also presents the possibilities for the formation of media literacy of young students through media means, which are an integral part of the education in Bulgarian language and literature in the primary stage.* The analysis forces the conclusion that **education based on media means is a process of forming a media-cultural personality**. It has developed abilities to perceive and assimilate basic knowledge, skills and habits, to create, analyze and evaluate media texts, to understand the socio-cultural context of media functioning in the modern world. The formation of media literacy among students at the primary school stage can be done if a special training program is introduced, but at this stage in Bulgaria such possibility does not exist.

Dimitrova, Zl. 2021. Media competence of the primary teachers - reality and perspectives. *Modern humanities*. 17(1). BFU. 27 – 36. ISSN 1313-9924.
<https://www.bfu.bg/uploads/pages/sh-2021-1.pdf>

In the colorful daily life of the small student, the media and media means of communication are becoming more and more permanent. **The new digital reality reveals to the children the "adult world", with which they have little direct contact, but at the same time significantly expands their communication environment.** The instability of the media environment and the simultaneous strengthening of the influence of the media as an agent of socialization creates fundamentally new conditions for the development and upbringing of the future

generations. These are just some of the reasons why the study of the media behavior of children and adults, as well as the study of their media consumption, are among the current trends in pedagogy, psychology, sociology, and journalism.

The main aim of the study is to clarify the position of elementary teachers regarding the consumption of media content and the use of media tools by students in the 1st-4th grade stage, as well as to establish the degree of media competence of the teachers. For the purposes of the research, the methods of survey research, theoretical analysis and synthesis of scientific literature and official documents related to media education are applied.

The study covers 109 respondents who are primary teachers in 10 schools in the municipality of Veliko Tarnovo. Based on the summarized empirical data, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. media and media tools are permanently present in the everyday life of primary school-aged children;
2. a large number of primary teachers use various media tools in the educational process at school;
3. a large number of primary teachers do not possess the necessary basic knowledge, skills and habits for finding, understanding, evaluating, analyzing and interpreting media texts, as well as criteria for practical guidance of adolescents in the modern media space. This speaks of the need for media education of the current and future educators.

C. Publications related to the methodology of teaching Bulgarian language and literature at primary school age

Dimitrova, Zl. 2022. Application of project-based learning in literature lessons (I – IV grade). *Bulgarian language and literature*. 64(6). 654 – 664. ISSN 0323 – 9519 (Print)/ISSN 1314 – 8516 (Online).

The article examines the possibilities of applying project-based learning in literature lessons in the primary educational stage. This innovative method offers a new type of pedagogical interaction with regard to the learning content of the subject, related to the achievement of the necessary basic level of native language communication in the stage I - IV grade. Project-based learning is also applicable in the context of building literary competences by working with a literary text, which is a major part of the formation of language literacy and is associated with students' skills to recognize, understand and interpret the specific information it carries.

In the publication the problem of reading, books and the formation of the student reader is considered, coming to the conclusion that the success in the development of

reading interest in children depends on the various methods that the primary teacher applies in their work. Special attention is paid to the innovative approach in literature education. After that, emphasis is placed on project technology in education, which supports independent decision-making in any difficult situation, forms educational motivation in children, their reading literacy, readiness for self-education, educational reflection, self-regulation and self-organization of the student. **The methodological aspects for application of project-based learning in literature classes in the context of educational content, goals and types of projects are considered.**

With the introduction of project activities in modern literature education, a number of pedagogical problems could be solved. One of them is related to the transformation of the small student into an active reader who imperceptibly, in an accessible, cheerful and interesting way, immerses themselves in the vast and exciting world of the book.

Dimitrova, Zl. 2022. Digital reading as a methodological approach in the teaching of Bulgarian language and literature in primary school age. *Libraries, Reading, Communications: Twentieth National Science Conference with International Participation*. Veliko Tarnovo. ISSN 2683-0981 (online)/ISSN 1313-8138 (Print). <https://www.libraryvt.com/images/conferences/2021/15-Zlatina-Dimitrova.pdf>

The article examines the problems of reading in the new digital reality, forming sustainable reading practices among students in the initial stage of basic education. The relevance of the topic is dictated by the fact that digital reading among children and young people already dominates over the traditional reading. *The change in reading habits requires a new approach in the teaching of Bulgarian language and literature at primary school age.* This is related to the need to systematize the key incentives for strengthening reading activity among the children's audience, as well as the development and introduction of digital formats for mastering fiction that are adequate to the needs and preferences of the 21st century generation.

The new digital reality has changed not only the principles and the ways of disseminating information, but also the traditions of reading imposed over the centuries. The Internet, like Gutenberg's wooden printing press, has created a new world of communication and a different environment for existence, including for young students. In this regard, *digital reading is considered as another stage in the evolution of the written culture of mankind. The relationship between digital reading and functional literacy has been traced, which is also reflected in international research on student achievements.*

Special attention is paid to *the place of digital reading in the teaching of Bulgarian language and literature, which is already widely represented in the curricula in the primary education stage*, and the textbooks for both subjects are also aligned with them. It is proposed **to develop a new format of the electronic version of the textbook, which, unlike paper ones, can perform a number of additional functions:**

- a study diary in the form of a blog, in which completed creative tasks by students could be published;
- chat, in which the student could exchange information and impressions about their educational activity with friends and teachers;
- custom made glossary of terms;
- a portfolio to store student works.

D. Publications related to primary education and modern educational technologies

Dimitrova, Zl. 2022. Possibilities of the research approach to the formation of ecological culture in primary school. *International scientific conference "Black Sea - a door and many bridges". BFU. 372 – 379. ISBN: 978-619-253-017-4. <https://www.bfu.bg/uploads/pages/sbornik-conf2022-chno-more.pdf>*

Getting to know the world through one's own research experience creates conditions for an active process of transformation of scholastic knowledge into an active relationship with the surrounding environment. A person who has made their own practical research and on this basis has drawn concrete conclusions does not forget them throughout their life. That is why **the article seeks an answer to the question "How to organize the research activity of young students in the field of ecology?"**.

In the first part, **the need for an ecological culture of the young student and the possibilities of the research approach in education are considered in a theoretical and practical-applied plan.** Based on the presented theoretical concepts, it is concluded that *modern educational standards require the application of a research approach in the educational work.* But this is difficult to realize in the educational practice, since it is necessary to determine the objects and goals of each study, to develop a methodology for the research approach and to create appropriate educational and methodological materials. This is why the use of this approach is more often declared than implemented.

Different forms of educational work for the practical application of the research approach in education are considered. The article emphasizes the place of ecological culture among the key competences of the XXI century. It **offers specific research**

tasks for working with elementary school-aged students. It is concluded that the research approach provides unlimited opportunities for children to learn and discover the vast world of nature. Through different methods, techniques and games, they can experiment with water, air, soil, plants. The aspiration is to learn to develop and maintain respect for nature, to be aware of the results of human activity on it. Closeness to nature can return the sense to simplicity and naturalness, the desire to play outside, to communicate, to be a discoverer in your world.

E. Publications related to higher education pedagogy

Dimitrova, Zl. 2023. Professional and practical training of future teachers - realities and prospects. XXII international scientific and practical conference on "National and international experience of university education in a multicultural society: problems, contradictions, solutions". ISSN 978-954-490-768-6 (in print).

The article examines problems related to the state and quality of professional-practical training of students. *The aim is to establish and analyze the trends in this direction, based on which to form recommendations for the introduction of innovative solutions.* The research is based on a survey among 60 students from the "Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy" and "Primary School Pedagogy and Foreign Language" majors in the "Bachelor" and "Master" programs at the Burgas Free University. Motivation for choosing the teaching profession, difficulties during online learning and satisfaction with the practical training that students receive during their studies at university are just some of the issues raised in the survey. **Based on the data collected, the following conclusions were drawn:**

1. The efforts of teachers and students aimed at building the professional qualification of the teacher (child and elementary school) are yielding results. The majority of respondents admit that they feel sufficiently prepared and have the readiness and desire to realize themselves in the profession.

2. Hours of practical training in schools and kindergartens should be introduced from the first semester of the first year and should be increased with each subsequent year. This allows future teachers to quickly navigate some educational contradictions and look for appropriate theoretical-practical options to overcome them. By regularly implementing learning tasks with children and students, students will begin to master various forms of effective pedagogical interaction and pedagogical thinking.

3. It is known that children with hyperactivity and attention deficit syndrome are increasing, and educational problems with them still remain unpopular. In connection with this, there is also the need to supplement the professional-practical training of

students. In order to acquire skills to work with these children, future teachers need theoretical knowledge and direct work to enrich their professional experience.

4. Working with parents still remains outside the professional-practical training of students. Thus, they do not acquire essential skills for communicating with family members on educational issues.

F. Publications related to non-formal education

Dimitrova, Zl. 2022. Development of the professional skills of future teachers through activities in the Student Club "Mission Teacher". *Pedagogy*. 94(9). 1143 – 1157.

https://azbuki.bg/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Pedagogy_9_22_Zlatina-Dimitrova.pdf

The development examines the theoretical and applied aspects of the student club as a form of informal education in higher schools. In sync with the current trends in education, it is necessary to create conditions for professional and personal development in the chosen teaching profession even in the student auditorium. An example in this direction is *the Student Club "Mission Teacher" at the Burgas Free University*, established in the academic year 2021/2022. The empirical study covers students from the "Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy" and "Primary School Pedagogy and Foreign Language" majors at BFU. Its main goal is to analyze the possibilities, significance and effectiveness of applying non-formal education to deepen the professional training of future teachers.

The article examines current trends in the professional-practical training of future teachers and the opportunities to develop their professional skills through activities in the student club. This is done by presenting good pedagogical practices and giving students the opportunity to communicate with children, students, pedagogical specialists and experts in a real learning and informal environment. In this way, the knowledge obtained in a formal setting is supplemented and "experienced" during non-auditory employment through the work of the "level" - in real situations, valuable for the personal and professional development of the future young teacher.

Based on the research, it is concluded that *the student club embodies the partnership between formal and informal education and fully fits into the educational policy of higher schools that train pedagogical specialists*. The activities of the student club within the traditional educational process at the university provide significant potential for the development of professional skills and professional-personal qualities of the future teachers. This type of preparation corresponds to the new trend of

continuous education, which covers all degrees, forms and units of lifelong learning and education. The student club has another advantage - by applying the methodical instrumental forms of informal education, the following are stimulated: the critical and creative thinking of future teachers; the development of their communication skills and techniques; their skills for working in a team and defending their own positions; higher degree of professional adequacy; application of innovative techniques and strategies in practice (oriented above all to integration between different types of arts), etc.

G. Publications related to improving student-teacher interpersonal relationships

Dimitrova, Zl. 2023. Conflicts in pedagogical communication between student and teacher and strategies for overcoming them. *Preschool and school education*. Sofia: Educational Publishing House "Education". no. 2, 73 – 86. (in print). ISSN 2535-0692.

The article presents conflicts as a barrier to full-fledged pedagogical communication between teachers and students in the modern school. The responsibility for building an environment of mutual acceptance and equality in relations belongs to the teacher. That is why knowledge of the psychological models of communication, the study of conflicts in pedagogical interaction, the purposeful acquisition of skills for establishing relations of equality, partnership and mutual respect both in the children's team and in the teacher's communication with the class are an important basis for effective communication. *In order to identify the causes of conflicts and to determine approaches to their resolution, the development presents and analyzes various situations of pedagogical communication from the practice.*

H. Publications in the field of media communication

Dimitrova, Zl. 2022. Cultural Evolution: Theater in a Pandemic. *The Creative City: Media Narratives and Communication Policies*. University Publishing House "St. St. Cyril and Methodius". Veliko Tarnovo. 86 – 102. ISBN 978-619-208-288-8.

The historical 2020 offered unexpected and dramatic plots in culture, and they were not the fruit of an original script, but an absolute reality. The coronavirus pandemic has put art in front of unexpected tests, and according to UN experts, humanity is facing a «disaster in the field of culture». The pandemic has led to huge economic losses, and cultural institutes in our country are on the verge of survival. A

whole generation of artists, painters and musicians, not only in Bulgaria, faced unprecedented difficulties and many of them even left the profession. **The article presents how three state theater institutions are adapting to the new post-pandemic reality** - Music and Drama Theater "Konstantin Kisimov" in Veliko Tarnovo, Theater and Music Center "Dimitar Dimov" in Kardjali and Puppet Theater - Gabrovo.