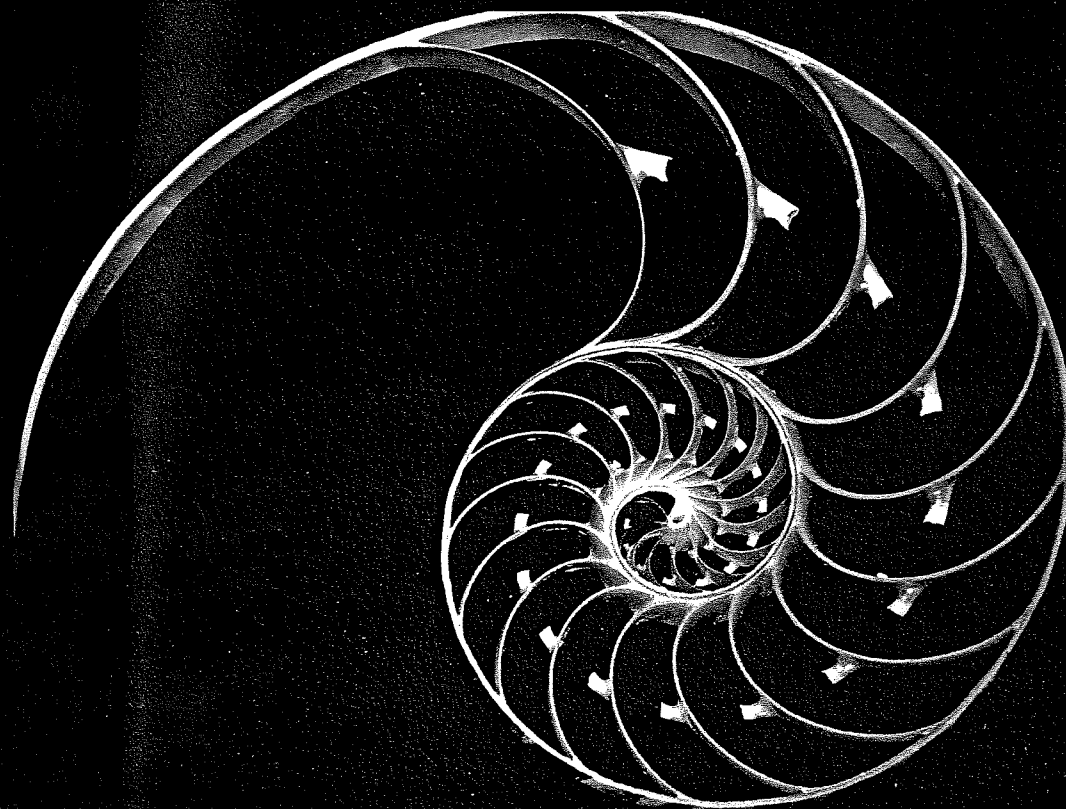


POKLICNI RAZVOJ UČITELJEV Ugled in transverzalne kompetence

TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT Status and transversal competencies

Urednici/Editors: Jana Kalin, Renata Čepić



Posebna vrednost monografije izhaja iz dejstva, da prinaša pregled znanstvenoraziskovalnih spoznanj o ugledu in transverzalnih kompetencah učiteljev z vidika njihovega poklicnega razvoja ter predstavlja rezultate doslej najobsežnejšega empiričnega raziskovanja tega področja. Ugotovitve so pomembne tako za hrvaško kot slovensko situacijo, pa tudi na mednarodni/globalni ravni. Treba je poudariti, da je to prva raziskava, ki omogoča primerjavo raziskovalnih ugotovitev med dvema sosednjima državama – Hrvaško in Slovenijo. Pomemben rezultat raziskave je tudi nabor preizkušenih instrumentov, ki lahko služijo za nadaljnje raziskovanje pričujoče problematike.

prof. dr. Grozdanka Gojkov

Vsebina monografije je zanimiva za učitelje na različnih stopnjah izobraževanja, hkrati pa ugotovitve empirične študije predstavljajo svojevrsten izziv za oblikovalce šolske politike in načrtovalce temeljnega izobraževanja učiteljev ter programov njihovega strokovnega usposabljanja in nadaljnega izobraževanja. Predvsem pa bo monografija dragocen študijski vir za študente pedagoških študijskih programov ter študente pedagogike, andragogike in drugih sorodnih področij.

prof. dr. Mojca Peček Čuk

Monografija je nastala kot rezultat skupnega raziskovalnega dela kolegov s Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani in Pedagoške fakultete Univerze na Reki v okviru znanstvenoraziskovalnega projekta »Poklicni razvoj učiteljev: status, osebnost in transverzalne kompetence«. Besedilo je osredotočeno na učiteljev profesionalni razvoj s perspektive potreb, ki jih učitelji prepoznajo za kakovostno opravljanje svojega dela, in presoje njihove usposobljenosti za delovanje na različnih strokovnih področjih. Avtorje so posebej zanimale učiteljeve kompetence za razvijanje t. i. transverzalnih kompetenc pri učencih, ki postajajo nujnost v sodobnem svetu in eden temeljnih ciljev, ki jih želimo doseči z izobraževanjem (npr. razvijanje metakognitivnih spretnosti, kritičnega mišljenja, sprejemanje drugačnosti v inkluzivnih okoljih). Posebna pozornost je v knjigi namenjena raziskovanju ugleda učiteljskega poklica v družbi s perspektive samih učiteljev.

Učitelji so pogosto v precepu med visokimi pričakovanji družbe (verjetno pa tudi njih samih) in nizkim poklicnim spoštovanjem. Različna mednarodna poročila in študije opozarjajo, da vloga učitelja postaja vse bolj zahtevna in zapletena, medtem ko njihov status v družbi v primerjavi z drugimi poklici stagnira ali pa se slabša.

Teachers often find themselves in the midst of the high expectation of society (and probably their own expectations as well) and low professional reputation. Many international reports and studies warn that the role of teachers is becoming increasingly demanding and complex, while, on the other hand, their status in society is stagnating or even decreasing compared to other professions.

Urednici/Editors: Jana Kalin, Renata Čepić

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Kazalo vsebine/Table of Contents

Poklicni razvoj učiteljev: Ugled in transverzalne kompetence

Predgovor	7
1 Uvod	11
<i>Renata Čepić in Jana Kalin</i>	
2 Poklicni razvoj učiteljev: kontekst, perspektive in izzivi	21
<i>Renata Čepić, Jana Kalin in Barbara Šteh</i>	
3 Status učiteljev in učiteljskega poklica: pogledi od znotraj	47
<i>Barbara Šteh, Jana Kalin in Renata Čepić</i>	
4 Učiteljeva strokovna usposobljenost kot napovedovalec njegovih . . . prepričanj o samoreguliranem učenju	67
<i>Darko Lončarić</i>	
5 Usposobljenost učiteljev za izvajanje individualiziranega pouka v inkluzivnih razredih	89
<i>Sanja Skočić Mihić</i>	
6 Sklepni razmislek	107
<i>Jana Kalin in Renata Čepić</i>	

Teachers' professional development: Status and transversal competencies

Foreword	119
1 Introduction	123
<i>Renata Čepić and Jana Kalin</i>	
2 Teachers' professional development: Context, perspectives, and challenges	133
<i>Renata Čepić, Jana Kalin, and Barbara Šteh</i>	
3 Status of the teacher and the teaching profession: views from within	159
<i>Barbara Šteh, Jana Kalin, and Renata Čepić</i>	
4 Teachers' professional competencies as predictors of teacher beliefs about self-regulated learning	181
<i>Darko Lončarić</i>	

5 Teachers' professional competencies for individualised instruction in inclusive classrooms	207
<i>Sanja Skočič Mihić</i>	
6 Concluding remarks	227
<i>Jana Kalin and Renata Čepić</i>	

Povzetek.	239
Summary	245
Imensko kazalo/Author Index	251
Stvarno kazalo.	256
Subject Index.	258
Predstavitev avtorjev	260
About the authors	262

**TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**
**Status and transversal
competencies**

Summary

This book is focused on two main concepts that are key to the efficient and modern professional development of teachers: teachers' status, and professional competence for the development of the students' transversal competences in educational practices. After the introductory theoretical and methodological starting points, the second chapter sets out the theoretical and conceptual framework based on a review of relevant scientific knowledge about the professional development of teachers. Some basic conceptual definitions and key features of the dominant approach to professional development are also presented, while special attention is given to current views that underscore the perspectives of professional development. The third chapter is devoted to the analysis of factors affecting the position and status of the teaching profession and various approaches to the definition of status, as well as problems of not recognising the teaching profession, and the implications of the conducted analysis are presented with the aim of improving the position of teaching both within the profession and the society. The fourth chapter explores self-regulated learning as an important transversal competence, which has, as part of the Comprehensive Curricular Reform, gained importance with the introduction of the cross-curricular topic "learning to learn". Finally, in the fifth chapter special attention is paid to questions of inclusive education policies and competences of teachers for inclusive education.

Theoretical considerations and the results of empirical research permeate all chapters of this monograph, whose aim is to explore the experience and attitude of class and subject teachers of elementary schools in Croatia and Slovenia toward professional development and status, as well as transversal competences in the field of self-regulation and inclusion. The research included a total of 1,867 teachers (1103 (59.1%) Croatian and 764 (40.9%) Slovenian elementary school teachers) who correctly completed a questionnaire. The research, among other things, has resulted in a set of proven tools that can serve as good empirical support for future follow-ups of this topic.

Professional development of teachers is observed as a lifelong process of learning and development in the personal, social, and narrow field of expertise. It is important how teachers perceive their competences and assess the possibilities for their professional activity in the direction of critical, independent, and responsible decision-making and action.

A person's worldview, attitude toward oneself and others, the perception of the relationship between the individual and school, family and culture in general,

knowledge, attitude toward the learning content and methods of teaching, as well as all the experiences that have shaped the idea of what teaching is and what a teacher's work includes, affect the interpretation and importance which teachers attribute to their teaching experience. In fact, many authors see this as the reason why many professional development programmes do not have a genuine impact on changing teaching practices and even less on student learning. It is therefore very important to understand how teachers progress professionally and which conditions contribute to and encourage their growth.

The obtained results show that Croatian and Slovenian teachers on average assess themselves as well trained, which raises the question as to whether the teachers provided realistic estimates of their qualifications or if they perhaps chose to give responses that showed themselves in a more favourable light than reality. The Croatian teachers assess their qualifications as being significantly higher than the Slovenian ones in all areas covered by this research (competence to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of their educational work, establishment of a constructive dialogue with their counterparts and a cooperative partnership with other schools, institutions, and parents) except in the competence of mentoring pre-service students and teacher-trainees. One may wonder whether Croatian teachers are truly more competent or whether their self-assessment is less self-critical, i.e. whether Slovenian teachers are too critical in assessing their competences in relation to Croatian teachers. Despite the relatively high assessments of their readiness for professional activity, it was found that Croatian and Slovenian teachers assess the lowest their capacity for action in research and development projects, mentoring pre-service students and student-trainees, and establishing a cooperative partnership with other schools and institutions. This suggests that not all teachers have been trained to provide mentorship or to assume the role of a mentor. It is also possible that teachers understand to a somewhat lesser degree that collaboration on various research and development projects and the establishment of cooperation with the wider community as one of their key tasks. Based on this, it can be noted that these are areas in which it would make sense to apply more incentives and support to teachers in the future.

It is clear that over time the role and tasks of teachers have increased, while their status, compared to other professions, has remained stagnant or has even worsened, as confirmed by the results of many different national and international reports and studies. It can be stated that teachers are often caught between the high expectations of society (and probably themselves) and low professional respect.

Croatian teachers, to a greater extent than Slovenian ones, agreed with the fact that teachers' work is among the most important in society, while, on the other

hand, they feel to an even greater extent that the teachers' work has a low social reputation and is paid less in comparison to other equally demanding professions. In contrast, Croatian teachers agree to a lesser extent than Slovenian teachers that their profession provides regular income and financial independence, and that parents and students respect them. In this sense, it can be concluded that Croatian elementary school teachers perceive their reputation in society as being lower than Slovenian teachers do, although they assess their qualifications for professional activity to be significantly higher. At the same time, they assess themselves as being well qualified for their professional activity, but also as under-recognised by others in relation to how much they think they should be recognised. Such a discrepancy signals the existence of a number of factors affecting the teachers' self-positioning and status of the profession. This discrepancy also appears among Slovenian teachers, but is less pronounced.

The results of this research also point to how teachers rank the reputation of their profession in relation to the reputation of others, such as preschool teacher, high school teacher, university professor, physician, nurse, lawyer, entrepreneur, journalist, and stage actor. It was found that Croatian and Slovenian teachers ranked highest the profession of physician followed by lawyer and entrepreneur. In accordance with the results of other research, it is not surprising that both Croatian and Slovenian teachers ranked lowest the professions of preschool and primary school teachers.

It is a disturbing fact that the Croatian and Slovenian teachers in our research express the least agreement for the statement that they are respected by the students who are the first "users" of their knowledge. In this context we should mention that a certain degree of responsibility for their reputation in society certainly lies in the hands of teachers themselves, and that through demonstrating quality and excellence in their professional activity they can certainly contribute to achieving greater respect among students and parents, both toward themselves and their work, and thus contribute to improving their prestige and status in society.

It should be expected that the dynamic changes taking place in our region impose a need for the creation of an educational policy in which the following outcomes will have priority: the improvement of salaries and working conditions, which appear to be the most critical factors affecting the professional status and personal self-esteem of teachers, the provision of high quality teacher education, professional development opportunities and promising careers, the assurance of academic freedom, autonomy, and participation in decision-making, advocating for a strong system of public education in local communities, maintenance of a regular

dialogue between educational associations and the government, and encouraging teacher participation in public policy development.

In modern educational contexts emphasis is placed on the development of innovation, creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, entrepreneurship, computer literacy, social and other competences that cannot be achieved in a traditional education sector with its emphasis on knowledge transfer. Transversal competences are recognised as important teaching skills in the organisation of the learning and teaching process and the teachers' professional development, as well as in the process of teaching these competences to students. The transversal competence "learning to learn" and the various civic and social skills play a key role in inclusive education, which is defined as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education" (UNESCO, 2005). In an inclusive classroom the teacher teaches different students with different educational needs. This implies strengthening the teacher's interdisciplinary collaborative skills for modelling and development of transversal competences among students. Teachers' transversal competences in the field of self-regulation and inclusion have not been sufficiently explored, although there is room for improvement in the area of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research.

Teachers' attitudes and beliefs about the importance of self-regulated learning largely determine their readiness to introduce activities and carry out the organisation of classes in ways which would be stimulating for the development of the competence of self-regulated learning. Such attitudes and beliefs are formed during the initial and continuing education of teachers, so it is an interesting question to what extent their self-assessment of the degree of professional competence can be associated with positive beliefs about the importance of encouraging self-regulation of learning in students. In order to investigate the correlation between the self-assessment of professional competences and proactive teachers' beliefs about self-regulated learning, the Scale of Teachers' Beliefs about Self-regulated Learning (Lombaerts, Backer, Engels, van Braak, & Athanasou, 2009) was translated into the Croatian and Slovenian languages and adapted to the local conditions in these two countries. No statistically significant differences in teachers' beliefs were found between Slovenian and Croatian teachers. Professional competence has a low (although statistically significantly) positive association with proactive beliefs about self-regulated learning, pointing to a certain, minimum contribution of vocational training to the development of a positive, proactive attitude toward self-regulated learning. An almost identical result was obtained on the sub-samples of

Slovenian and Croatian teachers, indicating a need to change initial and continuing education in terms of better information about the importance of encouraging the competence of self-regulated learning through a variety of cross-curricular teaching activities.

An inclusive education policy has had a significant effect on the inclusion of students with different abilities, interests, and opportunities in the regular heterogeneous classes. Therefore, it is crucial for the teaching of different students to be individualised, and that teachers have the competence for such work. Initial education should enable teachers to take responsibility for the learning and achievements of all students, including inclusive attitudes and values, as well as give them the knowledge and skills needed for teaching in inclusive classes.

The results of the research presented in this work indicate that teachers assess themselves as being partially to well-qualified to teach in inclusive classrooms, whereby they consider themselves most qualified to manage classroom discipline and encourage the development of social skills. Their level of self-perceived competence with regard to individualised instruction is associated with professional competence, but not with age or length of service. Female teachers perceive themselves as more competent for individualised teaching. No cross-cultural differences in qualifications for individualised instruction are observed between the Croatian and Slovenian teachers, except in connection with their level of professional and inclusive competence, which is higher in Croatian teachers.

Current trends in inclusive education emphasise that one of the characteristics of quality teaching is an individualised approach based on the strengths of each student. An inclusive policy increases the number of children with disabilities in regular classes, especially students with significant needs for individualisation. Therefore, it is important to allow teachers to acquire specific skills in their work with children with special needs in inclusive settings during initial education, to strengthen self-efficacy, particularly efficiency in collaboration with professional colleagues and other teachers, which is associated with the attitude of teachers towards inclusion, and to strengthen teachers' skills for interdisciplinary cooperation. Therefore, the professional development of teachers as a long-term process that involves various forms of systematically planned opportunities and gaining experience is crucial for the development of the competences that are essential for an inclusive teacher, as evidenced by the results of this research.

Finally, teachers are responsible for the expansion of the boundaries of professional knowledge through reflective practice and systematic engagement in continuous

professional development. If our goal is to contribute to the creation of innovative educational practice and encourage the development of innovation, creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, entrepreneurship, computer literacy, social and other competences, and the implementation of appropriate activities in the classroom then, among other things, we ought to reconsider traditional educational approaches while putting into question many established educational theories and practical solutions.

In order for teachers to acquire the competences needed for these new roles, it is necessary to ensure the quality of initial education and a coherent process of continuous professional development. Professional development does not happen in a vacuum, and it is important that it includes other elements in a broader context (such as professional identity, characteristics of the environment, social conditions, and the development of motives for participation in professional development), which can also affect the institutional practice of professional development. Maintaining a high level of teachers' abilities to act in different fields of professional activity and their progress in critical, independent, and responsible decision-making and action requires an appropriate institutional, administrative, and organisational structure, which recognises the importance of continuous learning and promoting development at the individual and institutional levels. Providing an environment that supports learning plays a critical role in the success of learning and educational efforts, especially if one considers the contemporary context of work and learning, which is characterised by continuous change. A prerequisite for such an initiative is the establishment of an organisational culture and climate that would be based on trust, respect, critical reflection, collaboration, communication, and the distribution of responsibilities.