# INTERDISCIPLINARY CORRELATIONS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IN ECONOMIC SCIENCES

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**ABSTRACT.** In a world ruled by technological progress, stress and speed, the task of directing the students' educational path belongs to the school, which must inform and familiarize them with various fields of knowledge, but also to mould him in the spirit of the demands of society. The realization of these aspirations is favoured by the changes that have occurred in the school functionality that draw attention to the role of competences. The notion of competence has evolved greatly, encompassing nowadays areas of knowledge increasingly wider. Specialists in the field consider that there are eight key areas of competence, including communicative capacities of individuals acquired throughout their lives that can be improved by applying a special methodology. In Romania, three areas of competences are considered to need improvement: the digital competence, the learning to learn, the initiative and the entrepreneurship.

**KEYWORDS:** competence, education, knowledge, methodology, skill.

## Challenge

It's night. When arriving in front of the entrance door, **A** realizes he does not have the keys... He turns back on the same way he had come to the house and stops by the first lamp-post, searching desperately down the pavement. **B**, who was just passing by, stops and asks: *What has happened? May I help you?* **A** answers: *I have lost my house keys somewhere along the way and now I am looking for them...* Surprised, **B** asks again: *And why are you looking for them here, under the lamp-post*? **A** responds calmly: *Because it's the only place that is lighted...* (L.Ciolan, 2008).

Since the late 90s, with the change of the paradigm at the level of the high school curriculum, school curricula in Romania give the notion of competence the status of 'organizer' in respect of which, on one hand, the purposefulness of learning is set out and, on the other hand, the contents are selected and organized.

Competences are designed as structured sets of knowledge and skills acquired through learning, which allow the identification and solving, in various contexts, of some problems specific to the field of study.

The competences the current programmes opt for aim to contribute to mould the **specific intellect**, in order to develop an **autonomous person**, able to formulate answers to a great

variety of situations and workloads - including those of learning - and to assume fundamental roles that a person is likely to perform as an adult in a society of knowledge and in a world of rapid changes.

The moulding of the specific intellect of the expert's specific way of thinking is the starting point in developing the first generation of programmes focused on competences in the late 90s. All the high school programmes have included competences that aimed at concepts and procedures internalized by the expert in the field (for example the investigative steps specific to the natural sciences or, for history, the analysis of the sources).

An important step in the development of this concept was the design of some teaching courses of the curricular area focused on the following common aims:

- clarification of terminology and methodology;
- the relationships between the areas of knowledge and teaching from the perspective of trans-disciplinarity and the new theories of learning;
- methodological transfers between the areas of knowledge and the school subjects.

In synthesis, the way of thinking characteristic to the curricular area materializes into a core set of operations and macro-concepts specific to the component subjects.

Thus, the research procedures used to investigate the specialized areas become contents required to teach in class and, at the same time, operational filters for teaching and assessing the different concepts of the school subject (Sarivan L. et al., 2010, *The Didactics of the curricular area - Man and Society*)

Most European educational systems started the reforms in the late 80s and the 90s, aiming at the development of some **transversal competences** meant to enable the graduate's integration on the labour market in the 'global village'. These large-scale processes of change, which continue at the present moment, reveal an equal number of attempts made in order to balance the relationship between school and contemporary society.

The solutions found were manifold, from wider areas of knowledge (such as curricula), to dimensions or perspectives included as principles of curriculum design and teaching approach, and the emergence of some new fields of knowledge known as the **New Education**.

In Romania, a recent analysis of how the school programmes in use assumed the model of the key European competences identifies the following trends:

- the curricula must recover three areas of competences that are not present or are insignificant in the current texts: the **digital competence**, **learning to learn**, the **initiative** and the **entrepreneurship**. These areas of key competences, essential in the context of lifelong learning, must be addressed in all the stages of schooling and at the level of all the elements of programme structure;
- the operationalization of the **attitudinal component** at the level of the secondary and high school through learning activities that stimulate the development of attitudes;
- the premise that there is a number of general competences common to a group of school subjects.

The new frame of the curriculum design, which was the basis of the third generation of programmes, brings into question the contribution of various subjects to what is called the key domains of competences. The objects of study have rethought the terms of reference in order to identify these contributions.

One consequence on the level of applying the programmes is the identification of those ways or methods that lead to the results mentioned. The study objects are challenged to adapt their learning efforts, by borrowing and adapting methods that are not directly related to the field of knowledge in question. Such methods develop both communication and interpersonal skills, and analytical ones.

The element specific to the Romanian system is the limited dimension of the practice of transversal approaches in the context of a predominantly disciplinary curriculum. From here, one can choose which strategy to opt for: the valorification of the disciplinary contexts in order to be able to operate intentional inter- and transdisciplinary openings.

In other words, it is about an ongoing journey that includes the identification of the present innovative practices at the level of the school subjects and their use in developing a pedagogy of transversal competences.

This journey allows the designing of some meaningful learning **opportunities**, at the disciplinary level, aimed at training the key competences. The focus on this category of competences from the transversal register has to do with their contribution to the profile of the compulsory education graduate.

In developing curricula and their application by teachers, the development of the transversal competences depends on the involvement of those competences that have a greater connection with each discipline of study. In this category belong the so-called **thinking skills**:

- **information processing skills**: they offer students the opportunity to locate and collect the information, to sort, classify, arrange, compare, and contrast it, and analyze the relationships between items of information;
- **motivation skills**: they offer students reasons for opinions and actions, consisting in formulating arguments and making inferences, in using a specific language to explain what they think, and in making judgments and taking decisions based on information and evidence;
- **investigative skills**: they prepare students to formulate questions, define problems, design, predict outcomes or consequences, test findings and improve ideas;
- **creative thinking skills**: they offer students the opportunity to expand and generate ideas, suggest hypotheses, apply imagination, and seek innovative alternative outcomes;
- **assessment skills**: they empower students to evaluate information, to judge the value of what they read, hear and do, develop criteria for valuing their own ideas and those of others, trust their own judgment.

An appropriate teaching approach allows the use of the listed skills for other subjects, too. Thus, all the generations of programmes issued after 1990 included objectives or competences aiming communication, most often focusing on the development of specialized vocabulary. A good example of transfer of the acquisitions in the field of communication is the use of oral or written communication techniques.

**The feedback** is a form of writing commonly used in the learning of the foreign languages and philosophy, but that can be successfully used in other subjects in preparing a report or as part of some activities such as discussion or role-playing. In order to achieve an accurate comment, students should be instructed to refer strictly to what their workload indicated, by avoiding considerations that are not directly related to the theme addressed. They are also urged to formulate personal points of view, based on objective observations that can be

checked by appealing to the text. In formulating personal opinions students need to be instructed that they must be well grounded.

**The journal** is a method of self-assessment often used in the North American area. The mentioning in a diary of the learning tasks, of the taken steps, of the difficulties and successes can be a good exercise of reflection on the students' learning process.

**The project** represents a more complex method of assessment that places the student in an authentic situation of research and action, facilitates the acquisition of specific work methods and techniques of drafting and fulfilment of some scientific practical projects, stimulates creativity, cultivates projective thinking and confidence in oneself. The project can be done as an individual task, but the achievement of collective projects, on groups of students, which are formed by affinities, are the most frequent cases, when students are given the freedom to choose their mates. In other cases it is up to the teacher to compile groups of students who have obtained similar scores after the summative assessment.

The conclusion is that the eight areas of the key competences can be developed and enhanced to a greater or lesser extent, in the context of studying each traditional school subject.

Since the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is becoming increasingly important in people's lives, these issues should be explicitly addressed in the process of teaching and learning. The potential that new technologies hold must be exploited more effectively in order to enhance innovation and creativity, to conclude new partnerships and personalize learning.

The learning competences of the training process are also present in many curricula, but teachers and educational institutions need more support to include these competences systematically in the teaching and learning processes.

Innovative methods such as personalized learning plans and inquiry-based learning can be especially useful for people who have had previous negative school experiences, or failure-marked ones.

There are increasingly more examples of promoting entrepreneurship through partnerships with enterprises or through the development of micro-enterprises run by students.

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