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STUDENTS' ACTIVITIES IN THE TEACHING OF NATURAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION⁸⁴

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Abstract

The activities that students realize in the teaching process are an indicator of the developmental changes and of the reached progress of the students in the educational process, and hence, they are crucial for the educational process. For the activities of the students to be in function of the effectiveness of the process of learning it is of the utmost importance for them to be a product of the contents and objectives of the teaching process. In that sense, the aim of this paper is to clearly determine the term activity of the students in the teaching, to determine the basic characteristics of the activities and types of activities, as well as to emphasize the main determinants that each teacher should take into consideration when operationalizing the educational objectives of the teaching in activities for the students.

Through the analysis of the problem connected with the nature of the activities that students realize, in this paper, we want to stress that the role and the meaning of the activities that students realize in the teaching in the field of natural and social sciences on the effects of studying is great and starting from there, we will put an emphasis on the meaning of the introductory, learning and reflexive activities for all domains of the personality development of the individual in the first and second developmental cycle of the elementary education.

Key terms: *activities, classification, types, determinants*

1. Term, classification and types of students' activities in the teaching process

So that the level of realization of the objectives in the field of natural and social sciences can be determined, as well as in any other field, the attention is more and more put on the following students' achievements and on assessing the effects from the teaching (that is, on the final result) that are being compared to the already determined criteria. In the process, the achievements and the success of the students is being followed and assessed through *measurable, structured, organized activities* that arise from the concrete objectives. On one side, these types of activities are indicators of the effects, the developmental changes and the progress of the students in the educational process, and on the other, they present a necessary condition for the efficiency of the process of learning in the teaching process.

⁸⁴ Original scientific paper

Defining the term – The term activity, realized in the broadest sense, signifies an activity, a doing, voluntary directing the doing and moving the activity in a certain direction. The term is derived from the Latin verb *actus* which means *activity, an act*. In that sense, *the activity* in its broadest sense can also be defined as a characteristic of someone who is active, doable, working but also as acting, involved and urging others to act, (Mikjunović, 1990: 33). In the scientific psychological literature, Čudina and Andrilović state that the human changes its inner and outer behavior based on the finished actions in different areas of the personality, (Andrilović, Čudina, 1985: 3). That undoubtedly points to the fact that the activities, in fact, comprise the basis for the human learning. In fact, when a learning of any kind is taken into consideration, the same could not be thought of without a certain activity, and on the other side, there is no activity if there is no need and an urge for the same on behalf of the person. The urges or the people urging, in that sense, are of the utmost importance since they are objects, doings, acts form the outer environment that make the person to act.

The significance of the activities in the teaching process in their bases is not different from these basic definitions that sum down to work, acting, taking action that leads to change of the constant situation with putting energy into it, which is mental and physical force. What is joint for all of these actions is that they are directed towards an external purpose that has to be reached. The teaching activities of the students, therefore, are directed towards realization of the educational purposes of the learning. According to Adamčevska, the teaching activities are usually connected with the work of the teacher during the lesson, but also with the activities of the students that have cognitive character, and which are conducted in the classroom, during the lesson, but also out of the lesson. That said, Adamčevska classifies the teaching activities according to the functional and educational tasks that need to be realized and separates them into the following activities: *activities of the student encompassed in the educational tasks*, and *activities of the students encompassed in the functional tasks*, who, in their turn, depending of the field of acting are classified in the following: psychomotor and cognitive activities, (Adamčevska, 1996: 59 – 60). Havelka states that the activities present a basis in learning, that is, learning is a sum of activities that change the personality of the student. Voluntarily conducted activities lead to permanent positive changes in the personality of the students, (Havelka, 2000: 67 – 68).

The activities of the students have to be *planned* beforehand and to be adequate with the type of the lesson. During the operational daily planning, based on the concrete objectives the teacher sets the activities for the introductory, main and finishing part of the lesson, and according to the phases of the lesson, the activities can be classified to the following types: *activities in the introductory*, *activities in the main (learning activities)* and *activities in the finishing part of the lesson (activities for reflection and activities for evaluating*, for example, activities that involve analytical journal, 5-minute essay, etc.).

The activities are conditioned from the aim of the lesson, that is, from the type of the competencies that need to be developed with students. Hence, according to some authors, several activities can be distinguished: *cognitive, motor, receptive, productive, reproductive, creative* and other. Those activities that are of a higher cognitive level from the level of learning with receptive activities, with which higher thinking processes are being employed and logical thinking with students is required, and who, in that way, with independent thinking efforts cognate certain structures and come to conclusions, in the pedagogical encyclopedia are called *responsive* activities. Actually, those are activities with which the students react, that is, responds to the content he/she learns.

Depending on the implementation of the activities in different teaching strategies such as the instructing and learning strategies, experiencing and expression, exercising, creating, etc., (De Zan, 2005: 267 – 268) we can classify the activities into activities: *of instructing through* – talks, dialog, programmed instruction, etc.; *learning through* – research, problem

solving, discovering, different projects, creative games etc.; *receptive and productive; learning of* – practical skills, mother or other tongue and other; *that encourage different forms of creation* etc.

Depending on the forms of the teaching work the activities can be classified in the following manner: *activities for group work; activities for pair work; activities for individual work.*

The planned activities need to be conducted in a way that a stimulative environment and positive social and emotional atmosphere will be enabled which will manifest with students with motivation, will encourage them, will keep them interested and attentive etc.

For reaching better effects when learning natural and social sciences it is necessary for the teaching to be didactically and methodologically properly modeled. That said, certain methodological models need to be made as directions that will serve as an initiative for teaching situations. The methodological models include the activities of students and teachers, the forms and methods for work, teaching aids, etc. Modeling, in the simplest form, presents a system of doings through which teaching situations can be identified with already determined type and content of activities that the student must do, in collaboration with the teacher and the other students. What are understood with teaching action are *concrete activities that are in function of creating teaching situations, i.e. ways of doing the sequences in the teaching process*, (Havelka, 2000: 137).

What is understood under *specific* activities of the students is a sum of activities, that are determined on the bases of the type of the lesson (regarding if new knowledge is being acquired, or an exercise lesson will take place, or the already learned is being repeated), and on the basis of the nature and the aims that need to be realized. For example, if the teaching situation points to prevailing of the problem elements, then the specific activities are research type of activities in realization of the sequence of the teaching process.

Every activity has a *structure* which underlies a *beginning, main part and end* of the activity.

The activities of the students that comprise the content of the teaching process are numerous. In that sense, for us, the most acceptable is the division of the activities according to the domains which are being influenced in the development of the students' personality. Those are activities for developing the *cognitive, psycho-motor and socio-emotional competencies*. That said, what is realized under activities are the real activities of the students in the educational system, directed towards accomplishing the aims of the learning, that are planned, specific and structured. Under *real activities* what is realized are the activities of the student in the educational process that can be visibly manifested, i.e. that are the introductory, learning, reflexive and assessment activities that the students does in the process of learning and are an indicator of his/her achievements. *Quality activities* are activities that arise from the objectives and from the teaching content for the appropriate lesson. Meanwhile, the quality, planned, specific and structured activities of the student that are appropriately didactically and methodologically guided and directed from the part of the teacher are a presupposition for successful learning on behalf of the students.

Types of activities – Based on the way the students gets acquainted and acknowledges the surrounding environment, in accordance to the already set concrete objectives that need to be realized and the created problem situations that are to be solved, we distinguish the following *types of activities* in the domain of the psychomotor, socio-emotional and cognitive development.

In more detail, the description of the activities is the following:

- Perceptive-motor activities – For inspiring and stimulating the development of the general and specific psychomotor competencies (development of the senses, ability for talking and writing, reading, working and technical abilities and skills, motor abilities and

skills, etc.) of the students in the natural scientific and social field the following specific activities can be implemented: acquisition of relevant stimulation with the senses for touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing with talking, dramatization, oral presentation, noting down terms, reading texts with scientific, popular, artistic content in which there is a description of events, describing certain processes and similar, activities in written form, then, technical activities like modeling, gluing, drawing, making sketches, coloring, etc.

- Practical life and working activities – In the subjects from the field of natural-scientific and social studies the practical life and working activities include self-service and house work doings (maintaining hygiene and personal health; taking care for the cleanness of the home, the classroom, etc.), caring after animals, plants and immediate and wider environments (planting, sowing, watering, digging, feeding the animals and birds, etc.), making toys and models of objects and means (bird houses from cardboard, pencil cases, masks, pet clothes, etc.) as well as activities in the broader societal environment that have characteristics of work camp (cleaning the school yard/park from litter, gifts and help for elderly people, making gifts, messages for Mother's day, etc.), (Kolondovski, 2010: 160 – 161).

- Societal activities – Their purpose is to improve and to gain a more detailed knowledge for the societal life, to establish social contacts and to interact with the environment, to manifest group solidarity and collaboration, to acquire and affirm ethical norms of conduct etc. most often these activities understand simulated real-life situations and re-work and practice of the social experiences (for example, *Witness of the actions*), role play with re-working of the emotions and inspiring empathy, solidarity and compassion, as well as playing activities such as *me-messages*, *praise in circle* etc.

Other specific activities for the development of the socio-emotional competencies (values, attitudes, ability to judge/assess, feelings, motivations, etc.) are: respecting rules, customs, norms, collaboration, role changing, esthetic acquisition of words, movements acknowledgment, sounds acknowledgment, visiting cultural and historical sites, natural sites, monuments of nature etc.

- Observation, receptive, responsive activities – In this type of activities included are all of the forms of observation, for example in traffic and traffic situations, growing of the plant, of the market, of the farm life and farm work, producing pastry, milk, meat and other products. Also, other systematic observations of the natural occurrences and processes with plants, animals and human and his activities, through which the quality of knowledge is enriched and the cause and effect relationship is being discovered are a part of these, (Kolondovski, 2010: 158). Much clear determination of this type of activities for the students is given for the purposes of the doctoral thesis, (Pejchinovska, 2015: 54).

- Activities for reasoning, understanding, discovering – The activities of reasoning, understanding and discovering are immediately connected with the development of the logical thinking and thinking processes of higher instances, through which the student with independent thinking effort sees certain structures and processes and reaches conclusions and solutions. These activities are closely connected with the research and observation activities that enable further cognitive development. In the framework of this type of activities fall the following: *activities of classification*, which underline grouping of the subjects and occurrences based on certain qualitative and quantitative characteristics. These activities are significant for the process of forming the terms because the activities of this type in the beginning classes contribute for the forming of classes of subjects, occurrences and processes that later serve for assimilation of new knowledge.

- Activities for presenting, making, assessing, evaluating – These types of activities include the *activities for space structuring* (activities for determining the space structure such as openness, reticence, closeness, distancing, separateness etc.; activities for enabling the

students for getting around and orienting themselves in space and for cartographical literacy, such as: activities for determining direction, left, right, forward, backward and similar, activities for determining the four sides of the world with the help of the Sun or with the help of other orients of the land such as: growth rings and moth, Northern star, religious objects, compass and other, activities for smaller presenting the following: distance, land scheme, classroom plan, school and its immediate surroundings, settlement plan, activities for introduction to cartographical literacy – getting acquainted with relieve, from relieve to map, getting over to map, etc.); *activities for time structuring*; *activities for problem-solving; discovering and reseacrh* (activities for asking questions, supposing (hypothetical frame), data collection, gaining insights into relations and reaching conclusion based on the relations, activities of synthesis, analysis, comparison, combining, reversibility, discovering the laws and principles, etc.); *activities for presentation, making, assesment, evaluation* (activities of imitation, pantomime, imaginary objects and their usage, onomatopoeia, or sound presentation of some objects, ideas, emotions or situations, tridimensional presentation of objects – creating models from different materials or using toys as preventatives, making of picture-books, albums, boards, pictures and illustrated cards, two-dimensional presentation, giving meaning to patterns, drawing, painting, dramatizations, essays, etc., while examples of activities through which the students develop ability for assessment, self-assessment and evaluation we will name a few: 5-minute essay, analytical diary, reflexive essay, active learning etc.).

The activities of the students in the educational programs – The decisions from the type of *what will be taught* (which units will be worked on), then, aims of the programs of the subject (why those content units are being taught, worked on) and *with which media* the teaching will be made (what will be used for teaching/learning) are all included in the teaching curricula. Every primary and secondary school gets basic program and for its concretization makes its own construction program of the educational work. In this respect, taken into account are the specifics of the environment where they are educational institutions, their material and human capabilities, and interests of children, parents and teachers. The ultimate goal should be the preparation of such programs that meet the educational needs of individuals – participants in the educational process. Realistically, this optimal scheduling in practice is still elusive given that it comes to educational institutions that include large populations of students, thus acceding to certain modalities of elements of self-programming, such as the ability to make the required separation on elective and optional subjects, (Kamchevska, 2006: 48).

The learning goals (specific goals) in the educational curriculum have to be clearly and concisely formulated, and they should relate to the specific changes in the fields of development of the student's personality (cognitive, psychomotor and socio-emotional development). The expected result of the learning, and the outcome of the learning are established by the curricula goals (i.e. the learning goals) and they are compared with the already established criteria which should be easily measurable. For illustration, one specific goal (a learning goal) can be: the student should identify similarity and should make difference between himself/herself and his/her colleague – student, and the final result can be: perceives and states characteristics according to which he/she is similar/different than his/her friend (appearance, abilities, skills). In addition, the expected result, or the outcome (which is compared with the criteria) will be achieved when the student realizes some activities, such as: measures the height, weight, observes eye color, talks about his/her success etc. The notion criterion for success prevails in the new curriculum for the primary school. It is an expression which can be drawn from the learning goal, and correlates with the outcomes/results of the learning, (Pejchinovska, 2015: 52 – 56).

For successful operationalization of the goals into activities, it is essential for the teacher to pay attention to the so-called *Mager's principles*, i.e. the teacher should: use activity verbs which describe the students' activities; choose adequate questions which will reflect students' knowledge, abilities, or skills (towards the achievement of the set goal); describe the criterion which he/she will be using during the evaluation of students' achievement, (De Zan, 2005: 65).

For example, some of the activity verbs for goals operationalization are: insert, write in, establish, add, state, ascertain etc. In addition, in order for the teacher to be able to determine the activities, the knowledge level has to be determined (remembering, identifying, reproduction, creative etc.), i.e. the level of development of students' skills and abilities, which will serve as basis when choosing adequate activities. One convenient approach for this goal is the Bloom's taxonomy, which is the first step when the goals are being operationalized, i.e. the teacher begins from the activity verbs, which are equivalent to the activities oriented towards the desired level of achievement, which will allow more precise and more complete defining of the specific goals and the outcomes of the learning, (Pejchinovska, 2015: 80).

3. Analysis of the determiners of students' activities

The students' activities must be a result of the teaching goals and teaching contents, while the real completed activities of the students are indicators for the achievements during the process of teaching. In that sense, the key determiners by which, more or less, the choice of the actions is determined are: *the goals of the science and social teaching programs, the planning of the education process, the specific goals of teaching of every subject, the type of the content, the characteristics of the students' age and the role and characteristics of the teacher.*

3.1. Goals of the science and social teaching programs

In today's conditions, the goal of the education is to provide free and complete development for every person, in accordance with their natural and individual possibilities. Based on that, the contents, and the didactic and methodic solutions in the educational process are being correlated and changed, without overlooking the specific activities for goal realization. Still, we can conclude that the goal of education in science studies and social studies is the students to acquire the ability to explore the world around them, to understand the natural and social phenomena and the process of thinking and, by their own judgment and creativity, to discover their real role in the social life. The school nowadays should be a place where the basis of the future explorers and innovators are set, who by their own activities in the spheres of social life and everyday work will ensure their personal and social improvement and development. In accordance with these tendencies, the student should be provided with the ability to be an active student, (Stevanović, 2001: 42 – 46; De Zan, 2005: 109 – 114; Kolondovski, 2002: 24 – 31) in the teaching through activities that will help the students: accumulate permanent and usable knowledge, abilities and skills; solve problems by doing research, observation, case study, analysis, synthesis, generalization, conclusion etc.; to become able to study independently; to be able to evaluate themselves about their personal development and knowledge; to develop the creative and critical thinking; to develop their motivation which comes from the clear picture of the set goals and the desire to reach those goals (extrinsic motivation); to become able to communicate freely in interpersonal relations; to become able to collaborate with others; to become the carrier of initiatives and to choose

alternatives; to know and use the research methods and to methodologically empower themselves.

Based on what the mentioned above, the general conclusion is that the educational goals refer to the desired *personal* and *social* outcomes. The social aspect of the basic and specific educational goals refers to promoting the system of values (ethic, moral, cultural, etc) in accordance with the social needs, while the individual aspect refers to satisfying the *cognitive, experiential and psychomotor* needs and interests by which the individual tends to self-affirm by affirming their own potentials, satisfying, and the need for their own identity and autonomy, (Bognar, Matijević, 1993: 139). However, under the social requirements of the educational process it is good to mention the requirements that lead towards the preparation and gradual implementation of individuals for taking a specific social role, without, in the same time, conforming and alienation. For that purpose, highly desired social requirements, which in the same time satisfy the individual needs of a person, also, are the social integration and acceptance through productivity and creativity. These requirements, needs and interests are the basis for the goals, which refer to the personality of the student and his/her optimal development in *cognitive, socio-emotional and psychomotor* field, accepting the widely accepted psycho-pedagogical classification for the developmental domains of the person. Therefore, as a conclusion we can state Havelka's view which points out: *one of the most important functions of the goals of the educational process is to identify the key components of everyday activities of the students, which means they (the goals) to enable the education to influence the real activities of all students in order to get the desired profile*, (Havelka, 2000: 46). In that sense, the main determiner of the students' activities are the goals of the educational process, its effects that can be monitored through the completed activities, only if the activities in the operationalization emerge from the specific goals, and in that case, they should be objective and relevant indicator of the quality of the educational process, (Pejčinovska, 2015: 84 – 85).

3.2. Teaching content

The teaching content is an important part of the education and it influences the working style of the teacher, because it characterizes the technology in its entirety and the dynamic of the work in the teaching process. The teaching content is chosen following the accumulated experience based on the: social needs and trends, the needs of the individuals, the degree of the cultural development, the cognitive abilities of the students and the goals of the education. The basic directions for the choice of the content for any program are the educational goals. The teaching content is current, humanistically and scientifically based, and its planning and choice is done in accordance with the age capabilities of the students, gradually, depending on the complexity of the material. The goals of the teaching are achieved through the realization of the teaching content, i.e. through the activities which are chosen in accordance with the nature of the teaching content and the lesson type. An important function of the educational goals and the teaching content in the educational system is to insure optimal determination of the everyday real activities of the students, especially if we take into consideration the fact that the educational process in its entirety is oriented towards the development changes, which are not visible immediately. Therefore, the realized activities of the students are the only relevant indicator of the quality and the potential efficiency of that process. The analysis of the quality of some of the teaching content in certain textbooks in use shows serious conceptual inconsistencies, and in some of them orthographical and didactic-methodical deficiency can be found, (for example, contents in the textbook for the subject *Nature* for fourth grade, by B. Krtolica, V. Mitkovska and O. Velichkovska)

3.3. Developmental characteristics of the students from age 6 to age 11

Essential characteristics of the cognitive development – For optimal cognitive development, the starting point should always be the knowledge about the developmental characteristics of the students and the teaching and learning should be adjusted to the way of thinking and to the specifics of the logical learning. The learning goals in the first and the second developmental period, in broad sense, include the students' activities during the learning of the following things: *knowledge that they should master (know)*; *skills that they should develop (to do)*; *values and attitudes that they should build (to be)*; *interest and motifs which should be stimulated and developed (to want)*, (Kamchevska, 2006: 94). In addition, in relation to the knowledge which the students should master and on the basis on the findings about the development of their cognitive abilities, it is emphasized that the students at the age of 6 – 7 years can learn scientific notions. And because of it, it is stated that the first two years of the primary school have really important role in the development of the thinking potential of the individuals. In fact, it is the period *when the child's spontaneous thinking transforms into scientific-theoretical*, (Kolondovski, 2002: 59). In this sense, the following things are essential for the next cognitive, and also overall development of the potential of the student's personality: the approach of systematicity in the work; the choice of optimal manner for realization of the contents through the use of the inductive logic which should be the starting point, as well as the development of the perceptive abilities, the attention, the ability for thinking, the individual learning etc. The mental development at the age of 6 is followed by associative processes, which are the basis for the forming of the general notions, and that development is a result not only of the practical activities done by the students, but a result of the thinking processes and the active intellectual activity. The student in its first year of education can plan the sequence of its activities after the explanations of the teacher, the goals that he/she wants to accomplish with the realization of the activities etc. In addition, the student shows eagerness for adapting, respecting and accepting of the agreements during the realization of the activities, which creates basis for the transition to individual thinking, with decreasement in the inclination towards copying. Stamatov in his work *Child's psychology* identifies the following changes in the thinking at 6 – 7 years-old students: exchange of the intuitive thinking with the logical thinking, which is characteristic for the preschool period; interiorizing of the cognitive operations which become reversible, recurring; gradually releasing of the thinking of the strength of perceptive images which are typical for the intuitive thinking, characteristic for the preschool age; and gradually releasing the child's thinking of the egocentrism, (Stamatov, 2000: 226).

The logical thinking develops during the period of specific thinking operations (at the age of 7 – 8 years) on the basis of the inductive logic. It conditions the knowledge to be acquired, and the abilities and skills to be developed through a sequence of activities based on practical experience and through inductive manner of logical concluding. During the period of the middle childhood the students acquire new forms of memorizing and recollection of those things that they already know, where upon of a great importance are the way of repeating, the development of the ability for organization of the material that is being learned in certain order, the associations and the abilities for linking certain situations with others etc. The development of the thinking in the period of the middle childhood is much more intensive, and the speech is a mean for verbal thinking and the individual uses it to regulates its behavior, i.e. for activating or inhibiting its activities, (Škarić, 2004: 182). The deductive logic is a characteristic of the next phase of the middle childhood, i.e. it is a characteristic for the period of formal operations and abstract thinking (8 – 12 years).

According to the already said, we can conclude that for optimal cognitive development the starting point should always be the knowledge about the developmental characteristics of the students and the teaching and learning should be adjusted in accordance with the way of thinking and the specifics of the logical learning. This is the basis for the methods, approaches and activities which should be used in the first school years and should have experimental – demonstrative nature. The two developmental periods have one thing in common which is of great importance – the student should actively process the information which he/she gathers through the interaction with the surrounding, and should enrich his/her knowledge and experience. The knowledge about the processes of processing and memorizing of the information should contribute in a great deal towards better organization of the curricula and towards adequate choice of methods, procedures and activities which will lead to better memorizing of the data. The teaching shouldn't be reduced only to memorizing and reproduction of information, but on systematizing of the knowledge in logically connected entities. They will be the basis that the student will upgrade, enrich and use in new situations during the solving of new problems.

Essential characteristics of the socio-emotional and psychomotor development – The period between the 9 and the 11 age of life is filled with progressive changes in certain forms of behavior and psychomotor functions such as: the movements – motoric, the emotional reaction and the motivation, and the social behavior, which complete the development of the person. In this period, the development of the psychological functions, together with the physical growth and development, is happening, as well as the development of the emotional life of the individual, through which the development of the overall individual can be noticed, the attitudes, beliefs, values, motifs connected to a coordinated system of view towards the world are being developed and the adequate behavior of the individuals in accordance with that world view is being formed. Having this in mind, the identifying of the students with the grown-ups with whom they are in contact, especially the parents, i.e. the teacher or some person of their surrounding that they consider as important or influential, is of a great importance for the development of the psycho-physical aspects of the students' personality, especially for the development of their attitudes and principles and their use. Also, the influence of the same-aged friends, whose friendship is based on the mutual interests and the familiarity with each other and the mutual understanding, on the basis of similar abilities and characteristics is of a great importance. It is not uncommon for the school friend to ask for help or support when it is needed. The role of the same-aged friends in students' development in the middle childhood is reflected in the following behaviors: increasing of the understanding for the social rules, increasing of the ability for coping with conflicts and forming a complex notion for itself. In this period the students accept the social rules of behavior, but first in their broadest form on the principles of morality, justice, well-being, respect of the life, protection of the weaker etc., then in the socially accepted norms, and at the end in the more complex personal rules which are being created by every student regarding the accepted forms of behavior, which can be already noticed towards the age of 9. The development of the picture for itself is important in the period of middle childhood, when the students begin to compare themselves with the other students of same age or with the grown-ups, but not on the basis of physical appearance and the activities being done in the previous developmental stadium, but now they pay attention on more complex activities and they make the comparison on that basis, (Škarić, 2004: 189 – 190). Having in mind the previously stated, the teacher should create activities that will develop the students' competencies in these fields with all of the gaming activities, especially the gaming activities with rules, role playing, me-messages, imitations, and many others.

Learning styles – The learning styles of the students influence the choice of the activities. The cognitive aspects of the learning style relate to the perception and processing

of the data in the sense whether the students prefer more visual, acoustic or other types of information, how much the perception of the environment depends on the experience, the concentration of the attention, how complex or simple the information is interpreted etc., (Kolondovski, 2002: 55). The didactic-methodic modeling of the teaching and the determination of the type and the amount of the activities for the students involves good knowledge of the learning styles or the cognitive styles of every student, which will be the basis on which the teacher will adapt his/her style and work.

3.4. The roles and characteristics of the teacher in the choosing and realization of the activities

In the complex educational process the teachers as carriers and performers of the teaching in the educational institutions have really responsible roles whose successful performing is in correlation with the successful realization of the teachers' and students' activities. The roles that the teacher has in the educational process can be classified according to the following: *educational curriculum*, (planner and organizer); *the methods, the forms, the means, the techniques and the instruments* in the educational process (methodist, designer, innovator, motivator); *the students as individuals* (mentor, assistant and examiner); and *the class as a group* (manager, trainer, model for identifying, collaborator)⁸⁵.

Next, prerequisites for efficient realization of the activities during the learning and the teaching are the interactive – communication relationships in the class. To say, the success that the teacher will accomplish in the teaching depends on the personal, collegiate, professional and qualified qualities of the teacher.

In that sense, the most complex roles of the teacher in the teaching are the roles of *planner and organizer of the teaching, methodist, designer of the educational process, innovator, motivator, mentor, examiner, helper and collaborator*.

Also, the teacher should be a model for identification, with his/her good personal characteristics, competence and professional relationship, he/she should be a model for the behavior of the students, and example which they will follow and support, during their development in healthy moral persons.

Conclusion

The conclusion is obvious in itself, namely, through the theoretical analysis we come to important insights about the nature and characteristics of the activities carried out by pupils in the field of natural sciences and social sciences and the role and importance they have for the learning process. However, it is upon the quality realization of students' activities that the quality realization of the course objectives in the field of nature, science and society depends, by which we can easily recognize it as a condition necessary for the students' personality development in all domains.

In that sense, the paper sets the starting point for assessing the quality of the activities that the teacher chooses in the everyday practice, and points to key determinants without which cannot be performed successfully planning and implementing the activities of the general and specific objectives in implementation of the educational work. The paper makes an attempt to clarify the theoretical approaches in the development of the learning process of students through appropriate types of planned and implemented activities of students in natural science and social area in primary education.

⁸⁵ Some of the roles may have multiple dimension and to relate to all groups.

Terminological determination of the activities of students, specific objectives, learning outcomes, the nature and types of activities under the domains of development, dealt with modern didactic-methodical science, are the starting point for a thorough study of real everyday activities performed by students in the subjects of natural-scientific and social area. Hence what every teacher should pay attention to, in determining activities for students, is the following: To determine what is the content and typological offer of activities for students starting from the program objectives; whether and how thought about activities for students correspond with the determined objectives?; Whether the activities are determined by general and specific abilities of students of cognitive, emotional and conative plan and are aimed at the development of competencies among students (cognitive, psychomotor and affective)?; Whether the overall methodical tools present in the activities designed by the teacher corresponds with the cognitive potentials and learning processes that take place in a person that learns?; Whether and how the effects of learning processes correspond to the quality of thought-activities? etc.

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