

# VODENJE

v vzgoji in izobraževanju 2|2021

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Katarina Grom **The Importance of Networking for (Pre-)Literacy Skills Development**

Our study was designed with the aim of vertical integration between two educational institutions and their teaching staff, while its goal was to improve educational practice in the field of pre-literacy skills development and initial literacy development. The fundamental problem relates to the disparity between the curricular bases and guidelines of national strategies on the one hand, and the results of studies into the effects of early and initial literacy on the other. The study employed a qualitative research approach using the causal experimental method, and the data was gathered in a longitudinal study using non-probability sampling, which included 314 children attending pre-school or starting school. The results grounded in networking implemented between the kindergarten and school, have shown important differences in the development of the pre-literacy skills and reading achievements of first year pupils between the studied groups. The research findings make it clear that by means of planned integration between kindergartens and schools and through the diligent efforts of teaching staff, it is possible to achieve better results in the field of pre-literacy skills and initial reading among children finishing first grade.

*Keywords:* kindergarten and elementary school, educators and teachers, pre-literacy skills, reading progress

VODENJE 2|2021: 5–17

Monika Mithans  
and Milena  
Ivanuš Grmek **Special Education Counsellor Collaboration with School Leaderships in the Field of Learning and Teaching**

The article discusses collaboration efforts between special education counsellors and their school leaderships in the field of learning and teaching. The first part briefly reviews theoretical considerations on the work of school counselling services and their collaboration with school leaderships. The second, empirical part, which was approached qualitatively, depicts the collaboration between special education counsellors and their school leaderships in the field of learning and teaching. Our results show that principals and special education counsellors collaborate primarily concerning the education of children with special needs or learning disabilities. Their collaboration demonstrates continuity and quality. In addition to commendable collaboration with their leaderships, our participants also emphasised the importance of active networking through the association of educational consultants. The results testify to the fact that schools are aware of the importance of networking, as it shows positive impact on learning among all educational process participants.

*Keywords:* school counselling service, school leadership, special education counsellor, networking, counselling service programme guidelines

VODENJE 2|2021: 19–31

Sanja Otto and  
Lea Avguštin

**The Professional Development of Assistant Principals through the Prism of ‘Become a Successful Middle Leader’ Programme**

New quality learning and teaching models increasingly build on collaboration and networking. Modern leadership requires the principals to have a number of other leaders by their side who, by bringing together and integrating all teaching staff and other stakeholders, enable and strengthen professional learning communities. The paper will recount our first experience related to the implementation of the BeCome a Successful Middle Leader programme, which was initially intended for assistant principals and was first implemented in 2020 by the National School for Leadership in Education. The introductory part delineates theoretical foundations, then the roles and tasks, and the professional development of assistant principals in Slovenia. The evaluation of pilot programme implementation showed that the need for competence building in this field was great and that this kind of programme could considerably contribute to the lifelong learning of all middle managers in educational institutions. The concluding section presents suggestions for further development in the field of professional training for assistant principals.

*Keywords:* professional development, assistant principal, distributed leadership, middle leadership

VODENJE 2|2021: 33–48

Claudia Rabuza,  
Vili Kotnik,  
Natalia Gorenc,  
and Boštjan  
Kališnik

**The Role of Leader in Achieving Positive Climate**

While the influence of leaders extends over various fields within their domain, in the framework of our NSLE project work we decided to delve into one that hovers in a kind of grey area, as leaders often run out of time before tending to it – i.e. that of climate, positive climate. Drawing on our literature review, we recognised that the leader really is a key agent in creating positive climate within the institution. Hence we directed our focus towards a correlation between the leader and positive climate (we were interested in how and for whom this relation was important, what it could bring to the institution, and whether we could purposefully encourage it and how). We decided to carry out an anonymous survey among the staff in our institutions, and then adapted the survey questionnaire for interviewing the leadership staff,

too. Based on the received responses we were able to carry out a comparative analysis of our selected fields: organisation, interpersonal relationships, communications, awarding, career development, leadership style, and general well-being in institutions. It turns out that it is only in the field of interpersonal relationships that there is no need to set guidelines for improvement. As for the rest, judging by replies, the views of staff and leadership diverge at some points, so we have outlined certain suggestions for improvements, which will most likely serve as a starting point for reflection and seeking further solutions.

*Keywords:* principal, (educational) leader, leadership, climate, educational institution

VODENJE 2|2021: 49–69

Vesna Lešnik

### **The Role of Classroom Visitations in Principals' Educational Leadership**

This article strives to highlight the role of classroom visitations as part of principals' educational leadership, and to discuss a study that was carried out at certain elementary schools in Slovenia. The aim of the study was to determine to what extent these visitations present an opportunity for professional cooperation between head teachers and their teaching staff, what the impact of visitations is on the professional development of teachers, and to what degree their principals associate visitations with educational leadership. The theoretical section reviews a part of professional and academic literature related to visitations, their significance, purpose and impact on the quality of learning and teaching. The empirical section explores principal and teacher views of visitations, as well as the function and meaning of visitations in educational leadership and professional collaboration at school level. Ultimately, the final part of the article sheds light on practical observation, monitoring and evaluation of teachers' work during distance education, which we witnessed (and are still witnessing) in the spring term of 2019–2020 school year and the autumn–winter term of 2020–2021.

*Keywords:* classroom visitations, educational leadership, professional development, distance education

VODENJE 2|2021: 71–89

Boris Zupančič

### **The Stories of Two Schools – The Small and the Big**

In the stories of two schools, the small and the big, we will learn of their problems and approaches to solving these problems. Both required an external 'person' who brought them a 'shot of rum' for courage and their vision going forward. At the point where the Rubicon

of education had to be crossed, they both froze; they got intimidated by the river, and there was no bridge! A historical retrospect attests to good and successful endings to both stories. These happened mainly due to the two faculties being able to take steps in the right direction, even though the river was cold and foreboding at first. Both faculties persisted and achieved – what we call today in a learned way – sustainable development. To this day, both schools still have little trouble navigating the sea of Slovenian elementary education.

*Keywords:* trust, integration, realistic goals, communication

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