

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The text is centered on a white background that is partially framed by these blue shapes.

TEACHER COMPETENCIES:
recognizing one's own competencies
and attitudes toward the different

Each individual's competencies tell us what an individual is actually capable of in theory and practice. (Razdevšek Pučko 2004)

A professional teacher should have competencies especially in these three areas: interpersonal relations, setting guidelines or assuming leadership, and reflection. (Jensen, Jensen, 2011)

Teacher's competency should be a result of continuous learning.



A teacher's special competence should be professional development, meaning the ability of deliberate pedagogical work. Successful and professional pedagogical worker can adjust only when they are ready to evaluate the newly acquired knowledge critically and thoughtfully integrate it into their pedagogical work. (Bell, adapted from Valenčič Zuljan, 1999)

There are various factors that can affect an individual's professional development, which are divided into two major groups:

- ▶ Internal factors are mainly the teacher's beliefs and subjective theories.
A teacher should be able to recognize both their own subjective theories and consider the subjective theories of others.
- ▶ External factors, which include various forms of formal and non-formal education and training, an introduction of new features and changes into the school system and various informal influences (eg. general welfare at the school, the influence of parents, etc.). (adapted from Štemberger and Vesel, 2016)

Educators have an opportunity for critical reflection within their team, in the context of which they can articulate and structure their views, opinions, interpretations, and conceptions. Professional development is best pursued through collaboration within the team: teachers learn from one another, share their knowledge, experience, views, and more.
(adapted from Štemberger and Vesel, 2016)

Mutual cooperation of teachers is also a bridge between the development of teachers as individuals and kindergarten as an organization (Hmelak and Lepičnik Vodopivec, 2014). Therefore we believe the continuous professional development of educators in a kindergarten - not only as individuals but also as a collective - should be put to the forefront.
(adapted from Štemberger and Vesel, 2016)



The quality benchmark is being assured by answering these two questions:

- ▶ How do we know that we are working well?
- ▶ Why can we trust ourselves and why can others trust us? (Gaber, Kos, and Kocojević, 2001)

The concept of competence is divided into several levels:

- ▶ Personal competence: this includes the teacher's determination, confidence, intelligence, initiative, diligence, responsibility, honesty, confidence, and communication skills,
- ▶ Development competence: enables successful conduction of the educational process, enables innovation and creativity and enables the use of the latest findings from the field in class, and also includes familiarity with the pupils' needs,
- ▶ Professional competence: includes educational, psychological, philosophical and other expertise necessary for successful work in the classroom, rational time distribution and realization of the regulatory objectives,

- ▶ **Social competence:** includes knowledge on communication, interaction, problem-solving techniques and motivating children to work together; it basically stands for knowledge and capacity in the field of interpersonal relationships.
- ▶ **The action component of competence:** includes hands-on activities that allow children, teachers and professionals from both inside and outside of school to participate. The figure of a teacher is crucial for such an aspect of competence. Through setting their personal example and active involvement, they contribute to achieving the objectives. (Devjak, 2004)

TEACHING



...is a work of heart

Literature:

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Jasna Šraj

Assessment and evaluation of the project - work in the kindergarten

Teaching the little ones, as I see it, has been, and always will be, a particular challenge. When trying to get on their good side, there always needs to be some motivation present, deliberately initiated by the teacher and their colleagues.

What I find especially interesting at the moment are the collaborations between older and younger generations of educators, which enable and give even greater importance to children's knowledge.

Despite the fact that a child in the kindergarten acquires a lot of experience with all their senses, the teacher should not ignore the modern technology.

A teacher needs to constantly educate themselves, search for old and new ideas and enable the possibilities of implementation. If they are dedicated to working with children, they will always find the best way to spark children's interest in any situation, description, an active role or a test.

In any case, one must take into account the established knowledge, novelties, teamwork, continuous education and the constant challenge. Therefore I always try to approach the set tasks systematically. It is indeed important to take into account one's previous experience with children but to also try to sneak in something new or already tried and tested for a better understanding.

We shouldn't forget how different the approach is when the parents visit and talk about something new, and the interest the children show when that happens. Connecting with parents is essential for obtaining a different knowledge, perhaps of vital importance. Integration with the nearby and also more distant environment is also of great importance since it expands and enriches the children's knowledge. The children remember these experiences forever.

Cooperating with foreign educators from different countries is a great responsibility. Nevertheless, I think Slovenia has a very well-conceived educational process, and every single educator has the opportunity to achieve a lot if they are aware of that. In contrast with the school system, the kindergarten does a much better job at preparing children for life. Thematically an educator has many options which all lead to a common goal.

Speaking of work regarding this project, I miss more cooperation with children, like live conversations over Skype if that was possible. This way we could get to know the children from other countries better. That would mean more cooperation between teaching staff included in the project and would enable everyone to get in direct contact with the way of work of other educators and teachers. To maybe exchange a few words and talk to each other live, see the games they play, their lifestyle, customs, maybe try to adapt their games to Slovenian environment and vice versa.

Saša Markelj

EVALUATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I decided to take part in the project because there were quite a few children whose parents were of other nationalities in my class. I wanted to get the most out of the opportunities that a project like this would provide. While researching the characteristics and attributes of other nations, I encouraged and invited the children to tell us about their parents' (or parent's) home country.

I was amazed at just how much a child's self-esteem would improve. It made them feel proud of their roots and their uniqueness. They began to be aware of the knowledge that they possess and which gives them additional value. They got a chance to pass on their knowledge and skill to other children. They were pleased with all the attention they were receiving from their peers and felt proud of their parents. That was when I realized that, while I did expect some changes, I had not been fully aware of the strength of the bond that would form between the parent and the child through these presentations.

At the same time, some parents started opening up, began to participate, and I slowly gained their trust.

I became aware of how great the impact really is that the teachers have on a child's development and their family relationships. I became aware of the importance of the connectedness and a parent's trust in me and my expertise. There is a very thin and fragile line between a positive impact on children and manipulation. I like that I can use moments like these to think about my knowledge, methods, approach, relationships, and my professionalism. That is when I become aware of my shortcomings, mistakes, and strengths, and think about newly acquired knowledge and how to use it in my work.

Every relationship reforms and changes us, every culture can enrich us. It helps us understand others and their actions, thought process, and feelings. And at the same time, it gives us an opportunity to think about our values, fears, and expectations. All of these things are necessary in our line of work and we need to be aware of that so that we can be even more professional, and integrate newly learned skills into our work. This is how we can change, perfect, and improve areas where we might have deficiencies.