Teachers’ perspectives on innovative and interactive teaching methods

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Abstract
This study aims to reflect teachers’ perspectives on the use of innovative and interactive teaching methods and to present the importance of the application of modern teaching methods by first-level teachers (grades 1-5) and second-level teachers (grades 6-9), in the development of student competencies. The research includes the Anamorava Region in Kosovo which covers an area of 650 km² and has about 200,000 inhabitants. Quantitative methods were used to research this issue, while Likert scale questionnaires were used as a tool for measuring teachers’ thoughts and attitudes. The research sample consists of 97 teachers working with first and second-level students. The results show that teachers do not use a variety of methods while a number of them state that teaching methods are always in coherence with the age and skills of students. A small number of teachers pay special attention to students’ prior knowledge. Based on the general data from the research, I have noticed that teachers do not practice enough modern teaching methods to develop students’ competencies and promote their activity and creativity.

Keywords: Contemporary methods, perceptions, student activities, competencies, technology

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1. Introduction

Teaching methods have a long history and since the beginning of educational work, they have always accompanied the process of learning development. In addition to the development of learning and the theoretical and practical basis of the organization of this activity, teaching methods have been developed, as an integral part of educational work (Zylfiu, 2005). Zylfiu, (1988) quoting Jan Amos Komenski (1954) states that Komenski, Loku, Rousseau and Pestalozzi were all supporters of monomethodism (the use a single method) in teaching. In Chapter XVIII, when Komenski spoke of the “Basics of Easy Learning,” among the ten requirements, the last requirement states that easy learning can be achieved “if all is developed by the same permanent method” (Komenski, 1954, p. 116).

Attempts to update the universal method in later periods were made by Berthold Otto, Maria Montessori, etc. Various representatives did not accept the universal method but tried to deny the need for the existence of teaching methods, emphasizing that "teaching work depends on the skill, dexterity and personal ability of the teacher" (Zylfiu, 2011, p. 277). Even in ancient Greece, teaching was based on teaching methods. Notturno et al., (n.d) pointed out that the multimethod has been introduced since Greek mythology. Various scholars, such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle made extensive use of teaching methods (polimethodism), and the Socratic method of conversation or Socrates' Dialogue is still popular nowadays. O'Neill (2008) demanded that instead of corporal punishment, teachers should use different teaching methods.

According to Zylfiu (2005), multimethodism should be understood as a requirement deriving from the differentiated character of the organization of learning based on numerous didactic modalities, according to which the active participation of students is a starting point in the selection and definition of methods. In contemporary teaching theory and practice, the issue of teaching methods has special importance, as they accompany the whole course of teaching development. According to Giorgdze et al., (2017), the action between the teacher and the student leads to the formation of a teaching method. Mwasalwiba (2010) thinks that teachers need to have affirmative pedagogical approaches to the student to achieve the success they expect from students. While Nadezhda et al., (2014) state that teaching strategies should be oriented toward student independence and self-learning. Zylfiu, (2005) has emphasized that the word method derives from the Greek language (methodos), which means the way or manner whereby one is guided when performing tasks and work actions.

While Brada (2005; 2010) emphasized that the teacher’s skill is one of the key factors in this case, he (the teacher) should "create interactive dynamics, trigger the curiosity and interests of students and thus make learning productive". Garo (2013) emphasized that the followers of active methods were directed with requests for a more pronounced manifestation of student participation in learning. Reform movements in pedagogy, such as that of the Active School, the New School, etc., also developed from the demand for the use of active methods. According to Zylfiu (2011), polymethodism should be understood as a requirement deriving from the differentiated character of the organization of base on numerous didactic modalities, according to which student participation is the starting point in choosing and determining the methods, in addition to the subject to be mastered. Petrina (2007) thinks that “advanced teaching methods for the classrooms are a guide to education about, through and for technology”.

Nowadays, many people think that using the right teaching method is critical in the learning process and also in the development of the new student. Some think that using the wrong method can lead the student to a bankruptcy stage, and push him or her to drop out of school. The correct use of teaching methods also affects the formation of students' personalities, enabling and preparing them for life and work, especially for self-education and self-education, as one of the most contemporary requirements of our school. As Basariček (1922) points out, there are many definitions of teaching methods, but they all include mainly the structures of the elaborations I did above, because they contain the meaning of the reasoning of the value of teaching methods, no matter how they are treated. The methods should aim at the joint work of the teacher and the students.
If we take a retrospective look at the development of teaching theory and practice, we see that some of the methods used today have been used in the past though in other terms and circumstances. From the didactic point of view, the issue of teaching methods has been and remains an integral part of the theoretical and practical activity of every teacher. Permanent treatments of methods have left traces giving to different developments of this issue an importance in the organization of teaching work. In the process of developing teaching methods both in the past and today, there are several attitudes still unharmonized, especially when it comes to the issue of their classification and the use of one or more teaching methods. Musai (2013b) has emphasized that situational learning is often referred to as "culture" or as embracing norms, behaviours, skills, beliefs, languages, and attitudes of a certain community.

The development of teaching methods has gone through several stages, while the time of introduction of active methods with special emphasis on the active participation of students in learning is also important. Karanezi et al., (2015) citing Schoenfeld (1992) emphasizes that the perception that the teacher creates about teaching affects his or her outcomes. Glaserfeld, (1995) describing teaching methods talks about constructivism, where he emphasizes that from a constructivist point of view, learning is not a stimulus-response phenomenon. Musai (2013a) quoting Piaget, emphasizes that knowledge building is driven by internal processes such as organization, acquisition, and adaptation. New knowledge is abstracted from previous knowledge. Musai (2003; 2009; 2014) emphasizes that teachers should be based on the learning objectives within their teaching sets as well as the attitude that students should hold towards what they have benefited in the lesson. MEST (2016) has foreseen in the core curriculum document the innovative teaching methodologies that teachers must implement during the teaching.

According to Fullan (2001) “everything must change once because otherwise, a static society will develop”. The demand for the use of teaching methods derives from the essence of the organization of teaching work and the didactic-methodological structure of articulation of the teaching process.

2. The purpose of the research

This study aims to reflect teachers' perspectives on the use of innovative and interactive teaching methods and to present the importance of the application of modern teaching methods by first and second-level students in Kosovo, in the development of student competencies.

2.1. Hypotheses

H1. Teachers practice teaching methods that are not in line with the age of the students.

H2. Students are not active participants in the development of personal competencies.

H3. Technological tools (projector, laptop, etc.) are not practiced to the proper extent by teachers.

H4 Teachers still have a traditional approach to teaching where the student is not at the center.

2.2. Research methods

This research is based on the quantitative method of collecting and processing data that are structured and presented in numerical form. Data collection was based on primary data through the Likert scale questionnaire. For the purposes of the research, the questionnaire with 14 statements was used, as well as the space for comments by the respondents.

2.3. Respondents

The population is numerically large, definite, and homogeneous. Our sample is intentional and randomly selected from the region of Anamorava, respectively including 3 municipalities, the municipality of Gjilan, Kamenica, and Vitia. For the sample, I have assigned 6 primary and lower secondary schools (nine-year) from these three municipalities, respectively three schools in urban areas and three other schools in rural areas. The survey procedures were performed by the first level teachers (grades 1-5) and the second level teachers (grades 6-9) of these 6 schools with 97 teachers.
2.4. Instrument

The survey was conducted through a questionnaire compiled for teachers. The questionnaire was compiled according to the Likert scale within which 14 statements were placed. The questionnaire includes 5 possible alternatives, starting from alternative 1 fully agreeing with the statement, and alternative 5 which proves complete opposition to the given statement.

3. Results

The research sample included 97 teachers working in urban and rural areas. Table 1 presents the data of teachers by gender and age. The data show that the largest number of teachers is female and that the largest number of teachers is from 36 to 55 years old.

Table 1
Teacher demographic data

Note: Adapted from (Part of the PhD thesis unpublished): Contemporary teaching methods in primary and lower secondary schools, by F. Latifi, 2017, p. 149.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>25-35 age</th>
<th>36-45 age</th>
<th>46-55 age</th>
<th>56-65 age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15,46%</td>
<td>9,27%</td>
<td>26,80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3,09%</td>
<td>1,03%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In total</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18,55%</td>
<td>7,21%</td>
<td>26,80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the first question, I have presented in the questionnaire that teaching methods are key factors for the sustainable learning of students and I wanted to get the opinion of teachers whether they support the idea of whether teaching methods affect student learning or not. Out of 97 teachers surveyed in the three municipalities, 54 or 55.67% of them stated that teaching methods are every time a key factor to the sustainable learning of students, while 42 teachers or 43.29% stated about the alternative often. 1 teacher or 1.03% is stated for the alternative never or rarely.

The various activities and methods that the teacher plans to do with the students, in each case should be in full accordance with the skills and age of the students. Such a statement has also taken place in our questionnaire which I have prepared for teachers. Out of a total of 97 teachers surveyed, 71 or 73.19% of them stated that they adapt every time the teaching methods to the skills and age of the students, while 23 teachers or 23.71% stated the alternative often. For the alternative sometimes 2 teachers or 2.06% have been declared and 1 teacher or 1.03% of them has declared for the alternative never or rarely.
The variety of methods is also one of the key factors that motivate students to keep the knowledge they receive longer and the same to be more functional. Given these facts, I have presented a statement in the questionnaire which requires the statement of teachers whether they use a variety of methods in their teaching or not. Out of 97 teachers surveyed, 65 teachers or 67.01% of them have stated every time, while 28 teachers or 28.86% have stated the alternative often. For the alternative, 4 teachers or 4.12% of them sometimes.

Given that students’ previous knowledge is a good basis for building new knowledge, through a statement in the questionnaire, I wanted to get the opinions and attitudes of teachers during the teaching whether they build new knowledge on students’ experiences or not. Out of 97 teachers surveyed, 51 or 52.57% stated alternative every time, while 41 teachers or 42.26% for the alternative often. 5 teachers or 5.15% stated declared sometime.

Table 2

Results of the survey of teachers from the municipalities of Gjilan, Kamenica, and Viti (Anamorava region)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions (q)</th>
<th>Every time</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never or rarely</th>
<th>I do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1. Teaching methods are key factors for students’ sustainable learning.</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2. I adapt teaching methods based on the age and abilities of the students.</td>
<td>55,67%</td>
<td>43,29%</td>
<td>1,03%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3. I use a variety of teaching methods to help stimulate students’ ideas.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4. Students’ prior knowledge is essential in my teaching.</td>
<td>73,19%</td>
<td>23,71%</td>
<td>2,06%</td>
<td>1,03%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5. Students actively participate in personal knowledge building.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6. When working with students, I also use digital technology (computer).</td>
<td>67,01%</td>
<td>28,86%</td>
<td>4,12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7. Using modern methods means even more noise in the classroom.</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8. We place students’ work in the visible parts of the classroom.</td>
<td>52,57%</td>
<td>42,26%</td>
<td>5,15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9. Contemporary teaching methods can be applied regardless of school conditions.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10. Teaching methods should be in coherence with the learning unit being developed.</td>
<td>36,08%</td>
<td>45,36%</td>
<td>16,49%</td>
<td>2,06%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11. Learning objectives are worthless if they are not consistent with teaching methods.</td>
<td>5,15%</td>
<td>28,86%</td>
<td>38,14%</td>
<td>27,83%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12. I always answer students' questions</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13. Within the school year, we develop some learning units outside the classroom.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14. At the end of the lesson, I ask students to reflect on what they have learned.</td>
<td>57,73%</td>
<td>28,86%</td>
<td>12,37%</td>
<td>1,03%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Adapted from (Part of the PhD thesis unpublished): Contemporary teaching methods in primary and lower secondary schools, by F. Latifi, 2017, p. 150.
Active participation of students in personal knowledge building is essential if we want to have good results. It is not enough for the student to be present in the classroom and to acquire knowledge only through the "sense of hearing", but sustainable learning occurs when the student manages to connect theory with practice and life in general when critical thinking gives ideas and solutions in certain situations, in other words when he looks at the process from the inside and is not just a passive viewer. To see the active participation of students in knowledge building, I have presented in the questionnaire for teachers a statement where out of 97 teachers surveyed, 35 or 36.08% stated that students are every time active participants in knowledge building, while 44 or 45.36% for the often alternative. 16 teachers or 16.49% of them have stated sometimes, while 2 teachers or 2.06% have stated the alternative never or rarely. In the time we are living in, controlling information is almost impossible. They come not only from texts and textbooks but also other sources that today are very easily accessible and usable by anyone. Computers and other devices that enable access to the Internet enable us to access information within a very fast period. To see if teachers in their teaching use teaching technology, such as computers and projectors in their teaching, I asked them to choose one of the five identified alternatives in the statement presented in the questionnaire.

Out of 97 teachers surveyed, only 5 or 5.15% of them stated the alternative every time, while the alternative often was stated by 28 teachers or 28.86% of them. The alternative sometimes was stated by 37 teachers or 38.14% and 27 teachers or 27.83% stated the alternative never or rarely. The next statement concerns classroom management in general and discipline in the use of contemporary teaching methods and techniques. I have noticed that most of the teachers' opinions deviate from the alternatives from time to time and rarely, respectively from 97 teachers surveyed, regarding the alternative 13 teachers or 13.40% stated every time, while the alternative often was stated by 54 teachers or 55.67%, 27 teachers or 27.83% of them stated the alternative sometimes. In the next statement, I wanted to know if teachers practice working in pairs and groups as well as if their works are posted on the walls of the classroom and school. From the data, I have noticed that out of 97 teachers surveyed, 56 or 57.73% have stated the alternative every time, while 28 or 28.86% the alternative often. 12 teachers or 12.37% stated the alternative sometimes.
The use of modern teaching methods can be done only by knowing the procedures of teaching methods and techniques regardless of school conditions. One of the statements in the questionnaire is intended to note whether teachers agree that teaching methods can be used in whatever conditions the school offers. Out of 97 teachers surveyed, 30 or 30.92% of them have stated the alternative every time, while 56 or 57.73% of the teachers have stated the alternative often. 10 teachers or 10.10% rarely stated sometimes.

Teaching methods must be in full coherence with the learning unit that is developed so that the method has the effect for which it is intended, and this goal is to make it easier for students to learn and it is long-term. So, the teaching method or technique should be in full compliance with the teaching unit and not the other way around. During the data collection, I notice that teachers generally take this fact into account, and out of 97 teachers surveyed 80 or 82.47% have stated the alternative every time, while 14 teachers or 14.43 have stated the alternative often. 3 teachers or 3.09% of them stated the alternative sometimes.

**Figure 2**
Teachers’ opinions from 8 to 14 questions of the questionnaire

![Bar graph showing responses to questions Q8 to Q14 from the questionnaire](image)

*Note: Adapted from (Part of the PhD thesis unpublished): Contemporary teaching methods in primary and lower secondary schools, by F. Latifi, 2017, p. 155.*

It is well known that each preparation or plan outline of the teacher also contains the learning objectives that are thought to be achieved within the lesson. The importance of setting learning objectives is crucial given the fact that the objectives help us get to where I planned. All three processes, the learning unit, the learning, objectives, and the teaching methods must be in full coherence with each other. To see if the teachers present clear objectives for each teaching unit and if the objectives are in line with the teaching methods and if they are realized at the end of each lesson, in our questionnaire I have presented a statement by which I wanted to know whether teachers support these facts or not. Out of 97 teachers surveyed, 51 or 52.57% have always stated every time, while 25 teachers or 25.77% have stated the alternative sometimes. 15 teachers or 15.46% of them stated the alternative sometimes, while 6 or 6.18% never or rarely.

Through the next statement which asks the teachers to determine whether it is only them answering the students’ questions or the answers are also given by the students, I have noticed that 18 of the teachers surveyed or 18.55% stated that they give the answers every time as teachers, while 48 teachers or 49.48% have stated the alternative often. Of the respondents, 20 teachers or 20.61%
stated the alternative sometimes, while 11 teachers or 11.34% stated the alternative never or rarely. In most cases, the connection of theory with practice has the greatest effect on student learning.

To see if teachers make this connection by going out with students outside the classroom to conduct a lesson, in our questionnaire I have submitted a statement where I have asked teachers to state whether they practice such a thing or not. Out of 97 teachers surveyed, 3 or 3.09% stated the alternative every time, while regarding the alternative 26 teachers or 26.80% of them stated often. 52 teachers or 53.60% stated the alternative sometimes, while 16 teachers or 16.49% the alternative never or rarely. Reflection is the part where teachers observe all phases of the lesson and verify whether certain objectives and methods have performed their function. This was also the last statement with which I wanted to get the opinions of teachers if they reflect at the end of each teaching unit to see if the set objectives have been achieved. Out of 97 teachers surveyed, 71 or 73.19% have stated the alternative every time, while 24 teachers or 24.74% have stated the alternative often. 2 teachers or 2.06%. stated the alternative never or never or rarely.

4. Conclusions

The use of innovative methods in teaching and their diversity affect students to develop the full competencies that are provided in the Kosovo Curricula. Through the use of contemporary methodology, we manage to develop students’ cooperation, make them capable discussants of certain issues, develop interactive reading, encourage them to write and build writing skills, etc. In the first statement of the questionnaire for teachers, if teaching methods are key factors for sustainable learning, 54 teachers or 55.67% of them have stated the alternative every time, while 42 teachers or 43.29% stated the alternative often. Of 71 teachers or 73.19% of them stated that they every time adapt the teaching methods based on the age and abilities of the students. 65 teachers or 67.01% of them stated that they every time use a variety of teaching methods to help stimulate students’ ideas. Teachers should keep in mind that students' prior knowledge is a good basis for building new knowledge. 51 teachers or 52.57% of them have stated that teachers keep this fact in mind every time.

Regarding the fact whether students are active in building their knowledge, 35 teachers or 36.08% have stated the alternative every time, while 44 teachers or 42.26% have stated the alternative often. Only 5 teachers or 5.15% stated that they every time use the computer in their teaching, while 28 or 28.86% of the teachers stated the alternative often. 37 teachers or 38.14% stated that they sometimes use the computer in teaching, while 27 teachers or 27.83% stated that they never or rarely use computers in teaching. If the use of modern teaching methods always causes noise in the classroom, 13 teachers or 13.40% are declared, while 54 teachers or 55.67% stated alternative often. 27 teachers or 27.83% stated the alternative sometimes and 3 or 3.09% the alternative never or almost never. 56 teachers or 57.73% of them stated that they every time put students' work in the classroom, while 28 or 28.86% stated the alternative often.

Contemporary teaching methods can be applied at any time regardless of school conditions, 30 teachers stated or 30.92%, while 56 or 57.73% stated the alternative often. If the teaching methods should always be in coherence with the teaching unit that is developed, 80 teachers or 82.47% have been declared, while for the alternative 14 teachers or 14.43% have stated sometimes. Only 3 teachers or 3.09% stated the alternative every time I asked them if they develop any teaching units outside the classroom, while the alternative often was stated by 26 or 26.80% of the teachers. In the statement at the end of the class, I ask students to reflect on what they have learned, 71 teachers or 73.19% have stated the alternative every time, while 24 or 24.74% have stated the alternative sometimes.

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