

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DISTANCED E-LEARNING IN TEACHERS' EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY IN SLOVENIA

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Abstract

In the last two decades a remarkable shift from conventional forms of teaching toward e-learning happened on all levels of education. This shift included also teachers' permanent, lifelong education. The purpose of the study was to find and compare the effectiveness of conventional workshop and an e-learning module in teachers' lifelong/permanent professional training. A study included 30 mother tongue teachers. The aim of the teachers training course curriculum was focused in their competence for developing students'/reader's reception metacognition (RRM), a competence which is a prerequisite for differentiation/individualization in the process of implementation of literature curriculum in the frame of mother tongue education. Pre- intervention and post- intervention teaching practice of both groups of teachers were observed and compared to find out, which form of lifelong education influenced participants' teaching practice in a more effective way. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of data, gained in e-module and compared with those, gained in the traditional workshop education, shows a significantly bigger effect of education on the case study participants teaching practice for the group of teachers, which participated in traditional educational form – a workshop.

Key words: *distanced e-learning, lifelong learning, reader's reception metacognition, teachers' training.*

Introduction

In the last two decades a remarkable shift from conventional forms of teaching toward e-learning happened on all levels of education. The use of network technology for training is the latest trend in the training and development industry and has been heralded as the 'e-learning revolution' (Sun, Tsai, Finger, Chen, Yeh, 2008, Dolenc, Aberšek, 2015). E-learning is emerging as the new paradigm of modern education. Worldwide the e-learning market has a growth rate of 35, 6% (Welsh, Wanberg, Brown, Simmering, 2003) and the tendency is growing. According to Bates (2005) there are seven reasons why governments, private sector and individual students have given such a strong support to distance learning and e-learning: economic competitiveness, the necessity for lifelong learning, social equity and access, better education, cost effectiveness, geography and, probably most influential, commercialization of education. In the frame of economic competitiveness e-learning is perceived as a new knowledge based industry, able to create educational products and services, which can be marked internationally, and as a means to improve the quality of education. Parallel to this a rapid development in technology is happening. Consequently, the paradigm of learning for professional early years in school and later using that knowledge for the lifetime doesn't function any more. In the current world jobs are changing very quickly and the knowledge, needed to perform the particular job, is rapidly changing, too. Distance and e-learning provide the flexibility needed for adults to continue their education while still working or family possibilities. Distance learning and e-learning forms should grow also because they can generate social equity among learners and guarantee the common access to knowledge. Especially if one considers high school fees in the conventional school system. Under the right circumstances distance and e-learning can

provide quality education and training to large numbers of learners at a lower cost than the conventional educational system. "There is often the belief by key policy makers that in the long term e-learning must be more cost effective, because it will replace high labor costs with low-cost technology" (Bates, 2005, p.12).

The shift from conventional to distance and e-learning educational forms happened also in the field of teachers' education, especially teachers' permanent, lifelong education. E-learning in teachers' training is more and more perceived as a very effective, highly motivational and comfortable form of gaining new pedagogical knowledge, not to neglect its' rather low costs and the facts, how teachers save a lot of time (no travelling to the place of education), they can choose the time of learning, but also that with one set of e-learning material almost unlimited number of teachers can be reached (Flogie, Aberšek, 2015). The cost-benefit relation should indubitably speak for replacing lectures and workshops with e-learning modules – if only one could be convinced that this new form of permanent education form brings sufficient results – an effective transfer of new knowledge into the teaching reality. As a matter of fact, some doubts about this effectiveness have emerged lately (Sun, Tsai, Finger, Chen, Yeh, 2008, Welsh, Wanberg, Brown, Simmering, 2003). Therefore, the necessity for closer research should be performed on the effectiveness of distance learning education.

Based on the above literature the study aimed to compare the effectiveness of e-learning educational form with effectiveness of conventional workshop educational form. For the study teachers' mother tongue and literature teaching competence was selected, a competence, which includes also all forms of teaching literacy. Form so called 21st century literacies to online literacies up to the (fiction) literature reception, which is, as all other literacies, rapidly changing while moving from book to e-book on various reading devices. Being in line with the aim, the following research questions were to be sought for answers within the scope of the current study:

- Which of the educational forms, the conventional workshop or the distance e-learning educational form, is more effective on teachers' teaching practice? Which group of teachers is going to use the new knowledge and differentiate their literature class according previous investigation of students' reception metacognition?
- Which of the educational forms, the conventional or the distance e-learning educational form, was evaluated as a successful one by the participated mother tongue teachers? Which of both groups of teachers evaluates higher their own progress in establishing their students' reception metacognition?

Students' Reception Metacognition (RRM)

The literature didactic curriculum for teachers defines different competencies for teaching literature in the classroom. It points out teacher's scientific competences, their knowledge of literature history and of literature theory, it mentions general pedagogic and didactical competence and special literature didactic knowledge (Krakar Vogel, 2006). In the frame of the last one it doesn't mention teachers' knowledge about the reception theory and connected – knowledge about the importance of student's horizon of expectations. As a consequence, observing the school reality (see later in the text) shows that mother tongue teachers are very well trained to be literature scientists (their knowledge of literature history and literature theory is excellent) but they know very little about the reception theory and know hardly anything about the students' horizons of expectations. Such situation dictates a new consideration about the mother tongue teachers training curriculum and especially a consideration about the new literary didactic competence: a competence for developing students' *reader's reception metacognition (RRM)* and in this framework also a competence for detecting the quality of students' horizons of

expectations. To develop such competences a mother tongue teacher should get new knowledge and new skills: he should gain knowledge about the aesthetic reception, about RRM, insight about his own reception metacognition and about the importance of developing RRM at his students. He should also learn strategies for developing students' MMR and he should learn the strategies for detecting the quality of students' horizon of expectations. Knowledge about RRM can be derived from the reception theory and the reader response theory. The reception theory originated from the work of H. R. Jauss in the late 1960s and is a version of reader's response literary theory that emphasizes the reader's reception of a literary text. According to Jauss (1982) a literary work, even if it seems new, does not appear as something absolutely new, in an informational vacuum, but predisposes its readers to a very definite type of reception by textual strategies, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics or implicit allusions. It awakens memories of the familiar, stirs particular emotions in the reader and with its 'beginning' arouses expectations for the 'middle and end', which can then be continued intact, changed, reoriented or even ironically fulfilled in the course of reading according to certain rules of the genre or type of text (Kerndl, Kordigel Aberšek, 2012). Realizing the importance of understanding how the reader's interpretation is produced, Jauss introduced the concept of "horizon of expectations" in order to reveal the way in which the text interacts with the reader's interpretation. Jauss explains that the horizon of expectations is formed through the reader's life experience, customs and understanding of the world, which have an effect on the reader's social behaviour." (Jauss, 1982: p.39) In short: Students' understanding of literary text is limited with their competence to overlap their horizon of expectations with the literary text. According to all this, mother tongue teacher should know that each of his students has his own, very specific horizon of expectation.

According to reception theory readers' reception metacognition includes the awareness of his horizon of expectations. Developing *students' horizon of expectation awareness* is an essential part of mother tongue teachers' strategy for developing RRM competence. With teachers' help each student thinks (and talks) about his literature reading, about his reception competence, about his intertextual experiences, about his attitude toward literature reading, about influences, his environment has/had on his literature reading, what does he like to read about, how is his reception competence changing/developing. This way a student becomes aware of processes, activities, standpoints, environment and experiences that influence his reception of literature and he is aware of his weaknesses and strengths in the process of reading literature. A student is following his own thinking process, while thinking about literary text.

For the process of developing the RRM it is important that the student knows himself and his own horizon of expectations – and it is equally important that the teacher knows the horizons of expectation of his students. But in the literature class reality he usually doesn't. Or he knows some parts of horizon of expectations of very few students' – the knowledge, he has got accidentally in interpretation conversations with his students. In the context of developing RRM mother tongue teacher should learn some *strategies for detecting and evaluating the horizon of expectations* of his students'. To mention only some: a questionnaire about the literary aesthetic family environment, a reading portfolio, a questionnaire about reading habits and attitudes, a check list, a reflexive letter, a guided interview, a poster of reading activities. (Kerndl, Kordigel Aberšek, 2012). With this strategy can both, teacher and student, recognize, monitor and evaluate horizons of expectations.

Methodology of Research

General Characteristics of Research

Methodology used for the examination was a case study, an approach of qualitative research. A case study was chosen, because it is an in-depth approach, useful to observe and evaluate a particular program, project or setting (Lichtman, 2009). The research design for the case study explored the effectiveness of two forms of teachers' lifelong/permanent education: a workshop and an e-learning module.

Each group of teachers was educated in a competence for developing students' /reader's reception metacognition (RRM), a competence which is a prerequisite for differentiation/individualization of implementation of literature curriculum in the frame of mother tongue education. The pre intervention and the post intervention teaching practice of both groups of teachers was observed and compared to find out, which form of permanent education forms influenced participants' teaching practice in a more effective way.

First teachers' existing competence for detecting students' horizon of expectation was examined. For defining the pre intervention knowledge about RRM and its implementation in the class was a reactive observation of the literature didactic unit of both groups of teachers, those, who chose a work shop permanent education and those, who chose e-learning module.

After establishing the initial level of RRM competence the intervention followed:

- for group one an especially designed training, where teachers' knowledge about students' horizons of expectations and knowledge about strategies for establishing horizons of expectations was developed in a form of traditional workshop (WS group);
- for group two (e-group) the same knowledge about students' horizons of expectations and knowledge about strategies for establishing horizons of expectations was prepared in a form of e-material.

After the intervention (participating in workshops/receiving e-material) the teachers' competence for developing students' RRM in WS group and e-group was investigated for the second time – their literature didactical units were monitored and evaluated with the same evaluation sheet. Additionally, teachers were asked to evaluate their own progress in a self-evaluation essay.

Finally, the results of both groups were evaluated, compared and conclusions were made. The study was carried out in the academic year 2012/2013.

Participants of Research

Selecting of the sample was connected with the previous research (Kerndl, 2013) in which 274 teachers were randomly chosen, mother tongue teachers' RRM competence was assessed. Teachers were asked *if they establish students' horizon of expectations before planning yearly curriculum for literature teaching*. At the same time teachers were asked, if they would be interested in participating in the course, in which they would learn to determine their students' RRM. In the second step from those teachers, who declared, they would be interested in gaining more knowledge, 30 teachers were randomly chosen and divided into two groups – according to their preferences: into the WS group (group 1) and into the e-group (group 2). Both groups included 15 teachers.

Instruments of Research and Procedures

The research was performed in three phases: pre intervention teaching practice, intervention phase and evaluation phase. For the pre intervention phase a didactic unit observation sheet was used, for the intervention phase a curriculum training course was implemented and for final evaluation two instruments were used: again the didactic unit observation sheet and a participants' self-evaluation essay:

- Didactic unit observation sheet
In both, WS group and e-group, teachers' RRM competence was observed twice - in the pre intervention and in the evaluation phase of the research. This observation

was carefully planned, systematic and structured. A researcher attended the teachers' literature class and observed their didactic unit according to criteria, selected before the observation and listed in the for the observation prepared *didactic unit observation sheet*. The observation scheme contained the following observational categories: in which phase of the didactic unit the principle of individualization and/or differentiation was included, which students were the target group of individualization and/or differentiation, what was the aim of the individualization and/or differentiation, which content was used to achieve this aim and which methods were used for individualization and/or differentiation.

- Curriculum for training course: RRM competence
The *second phase* was the implementation of education for teachers. The training course was performed according to the *Curriculum for training course: RRM competence*. This curriculum was divided into three thematic sections. After each training unit teachers were advised to test new acquired skills with the elements of action research.

In the first workshop meeting reception theory was introduced to the teachers. Reception aesthetics was introduced as a methodological direction that defines the reception of a literary text as an interaction between the text and readers' understanding of the world. Then the term horizon of expectations was introduced. The dialog between the text and reader's horizon of expectations can be spontaneous or reflexive (Jauss, 1982). It was pointed out that reflexive reception is associated with the distanced reader's thinking and therefore his RRM. At the first training teachers were taught what the horizon of expectations is, the factors which affect it, and the focus on the reader/learner in connection with it. After the first training the teachers were asked to study the literary aesthetic environment of their students. The findings were presented at the second training meeting.

The aim of the second meeting was to link RRM and motivation for reading literature. L1 teachers were instructed on the importance and impact of RRM on motivation for reading. The workshop produced a variety of strategies through which they examined their students' attitude to reading according to their family's attitude towards literature, previous literature teacher (how they affected their motivation), stress they experienced during literacy process (or have learned to read quickly, with problems ...), the literary interest (thematic, genre, gender ...), intertextual experience and impact of contemporary media. Based on these findings, teachers encouraged students to observe and be self-reflexive in processing and understanding of literary reading and thinking about the causes of motivation or lack of motivation for reading literature. Teachers reported about these findings at the third meeting.

The third workshop meeting was designed for training L1 teachers to think about their own RRM because knowledge about their own RRM is necessary if they want to develop students' RRM. In addition, mother tongue teachers were looking for ways how to use their new knowledge on the horizon of expectations and RRM in the curriculum for literature teaching and the teaching itself. To help, we offered teachers a didactic reminder that encourages literature teaching according to the students' horizon of expectations and development of students' RRM.

Teachers, who had chosen the e-education, received e-materials in three packages – analogue to three workshop meetings of the first group. They studied the e-materials in the time, they could choose by themselves and they were not time limited (as teachers who attended workshops). Their e-materials included recommendations (advices) to implement the in curriculum introduced and suggested methods for detecting students' horizons of expectation in their teaching practice. In short: e-education was almost identical to that, received by the workshop

participants. The only difference between them was the way, knowledge arrived to the participant and the opportunity to discuss the experiences, the workshop teachers had and the e-teachers did not have (Kerndl, Aberšek, 2012).

- Teachers' qualitative self-evaluation essay
In a short qualitative self-evaluation essay teachers evaluated their didactic teaching units and their experience with research performed during their participation in training courses, and thus expanded their field of awareness on the importance of developing students' RRM. It was decided to give this essay some components of semi structured interview and asked teachers to focus in their evaluation also on some questions: does the RRM contribute to students' motivation for reading fiction, how important is to develop students' RRM, do they intend to use new knowledge, gained in the RRM curriculum in their teaching practice in future, what is their opinion about the education form (work shop/e-education), would they choose the same type of education next time.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was started by recording the presence or absence of observational categories in literature classes for teachers educated, which participated the WS education and for those, which participated in the e-learning education. The following data were recorded for each group: in which phase of the didactic unit the principle of individualization and/or differentiation was included, which students were the target group of individualization and/or differentiation, what was the aim of the individualization and/or differentiation, which content was used to achieve this aim and which methods were used for individualization and/or differentiation. This data was summarized in six tables, which give the insight in which parts of the didactic unit teachers used the differentiation and individualization, which was the focus group for differentiation and individualization and which were criteria for differentiation and individualization. The data collected before and after intervention were gathered in the same table, which gives the possibility to observe the progress of teaching practice for each group of teachers, those who participated in WS education form and those, which participated in e-learning education form.

Results of Research

The results of the current study are presented in three groups. Firstly, the implementation of differentiation in the literature class before and after intervention is presented – separately for the WS group and for the e-group. Finally, the results for the two groups are compared. The results of the observations regarding the targeted group for the differentiation are presented, and finally the criteria, used for differentiation are presented. This group of results give the insight into the teachers' understanding of their students' RRM and with this into the level of effectiveness of educational form: WS or distanced e-learning.

Observation of the Literature Class

The results of observation literature education didactic units before and after the intervention and the comparison of results of WS and e-group educated teachers are presented in tables 1-6. Teachers, who participated in the workshop are marked as T1–T15 (T=teacher) and teachers, who were educated in the e-group, are marked as T16–T30. The observation procedure consisted of a closed system of observation categories and was recorded on a prepared observation sheet.

Table 1. Phase of implementation - WS group.

| Phase | T 1 | T 2 | T 3 | T 4 | T 5 | T 6 | T 7 | T 8 | T 9 | T 10 | T 11 | T 12 | T 13 | T 14 | T 15 | Total f | Total f (%) |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------------|----------------|
| a) Motivation | | | | Δ | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 6.6 |
| | | | + | + | + | | | + | + | + | | + | + | | + | 9 | 59.4 |
| b) Reception and guided interpretation | Δ | | | Δ | | | Δ | | | Δ | | | | Δ | Δ | 6 | 39.6 |
| | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | 15 | 100 |
| c) Creative discovery of deeper meanings: (re) creative writing, drama ... | Δ | Δ | Δ | Δ | Δ | | | | | Δ | Δ | Δ | | Δ | Δ | 10 | 66.6 |
| | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | | + | + | 14 | 92.4 |
| d) Evaluation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | |
| e) Homework | | Δ | | Δ | | | | | | | Δ | Δ | | | Δ | 5 | 33.3 |
| | + | + | + | + | | | + | + | | + | + | + | + | + | + | 11 | 72.6 |
| f) No differentiation | | | | | | Δ | | Δ | Δ | | | | Δ | | | 4 | 26.4 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | |

Δ observed at the initial observation (before intervention)

+ observed at the final observation (after the intervention)

The initial literature class observation revealed that two thirds of the teachers (66.6 %) used differentiation approach in the phase of »creative discovery of deeper meanings«, 39.6 % teachers used the principle of differentiation for the reception and guided interpretation, 33.3 % teachers gave students different homework. Just in one case a differentiated motivation was observed, the observation of four teachers (26.4 %) showed no traces of differentiation and individualization.

The second observation – after the implementation of *RRM curriculum* – showed quite a different picture. The principle of differentiation and individualization was used in the phase of motivation by 59.4 % teachers, »creative discovery of deeper meanings was differentiated by 92.4 % teachers, different homework gave 7.6 % of the teachers, and reception and guided interpretation was differentiated in all observed literature class didactic units.

Table 2. Phase of implementation - e-group.

| Phase | T 16 | T 17 | T 18 | T 19 | T 20 | T 21 | T 22 | T 23 | T 24 | T 25 | T 26 | T 27 | T 28 | T 29 | T 30 | Total f | Total f (%) |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|-------------|
| a) Motivation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | |
| | + | | + | | + | | | | | | + | | | | + | 5 | 33.3 |
| b) Reception and guided interpretation | Δ | | | | | | Δ | Δ | | | | | Δ | Δ | | 5 | 33.3 |
| | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | | + | + | | + | + | + | + | 13 | 85.8 |
| c) Creative discovery of deeper meanings: (re)creative writing, drama ... | Δ | | Δ | Δ | Δ | Δ | | | | Δ | Δ | | Δ | | | 8 | 52.8 |
| | | | + | + | | + | + | + | | + | + | + | + | + | + | 11 | 72.6 |
| d) Evaluation | | | | | | | | | | | | Δ | | | | 1 | 6.6 |
| e) Homework | Δ | | | | | Δ | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 13.2 |
| | | | + | + | | + | + | | | | + | | | + | + | 7 | 46.2 |
| f) No differentiation | | Δ | | Δ | | | | Δ | Δ | Δ | | | | | | 6 | 39.6 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |

The pre intervention observation of literature didactic unit showed 52.8 % cases of creative discovery of deeper meanings: (re)creative writing, drama, 33.3 % cases of differentiated reception and guided interpretation, 13.2 % teachers gave differentiated homework and only one case (6.6 %) of using differentiated evaluation methods. Not a single teacher used differentiation in the phase of motivation. In 39.6 % cases no use of differentiation was observed. After implementation of e-module *RRM curriculum*, a different situation regarding the implementation of teaching paradigm was observed: 33.3 % of the teachers used differentiation in the phase of motivation, 85.8 % teachers used differentiation in the phase of reception and guided interpretation, 72.6 % in the phase of creative discovery of deeper meanings: (re)creative writing, drama ... Also homework was differentiated in 46.2 % of literature classes.

Table 3. A group – WS group.

| Target | T 1 | T 2 | T 3 | T 4 | T 5 | T 6 | T 7 | T 8 | T 9 | T 10 | T 11 | T 12 | T 13 | T 14 | T 15 | Total f | Total f (%) |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|-------------|
| a) Gifted students | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | 4 | 26.4 |
| | + | | + | + | | + | | + | + | | | | + | + | + | 9 | 59.4 |
| b) Students with special needs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 11 | 72.6 |
| | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | 15 | 100 |
| c) Other (not a or b) | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 3 | 19.8 |
| | + | + | + | + | + | | + | | | + | + | + | + | + | + | 12 | 79.2 |

Before attending the workshop *RRM curriculum* the majority of the teachers gave the attention (and differentiated approach) to the group of students with special needs – 72.6 %. 26,4 % performed differentiation/individualization for gifted students, only 3 teachers – 19.8 % used special (differentiated) approaches in other students, according to their literature interests, competences, learning style.

After attending a workshop *RRM curriculum* teachers shifted their focus: if they previously paid their attention almost exclusively to the students with special needs, they later focused their attention also to other students. Table 3 shows: 79,2 % teachers differentiated their didactic approach also for students, which did not belong to the groups a and b. Also the bigger number of cases where teachers differentiated for gifted students was observed (59,4 %). On the other hand, it was observed that also teachers, who didn't differentiate at all before the intervention, after attending the work shop *RRM curriculum*, used differentiation for students with special needs (teacher T6, T8, T9 and T13).

Table 4. A group – e-group.

| Target | T 16 | T 17 | T 18 | T 19 | T 20 | T 21 | T 22 | T 23 | T 24 | T 25 | T 26 | T 27 | T 28 | T 29 | T 30 | Total f | Total f (%) |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------------|----------------|
| a) Gifted | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | | 3 | 19.8 |
| | + | | + | | + | + | + | | + | + | + | + | + | | + | 11 | 72.6 |
| b) Students with special needs | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | 8 | 52.8 |
| | + | | + | + | + | + | + | | + | | + | + | + | | + | 11 | 72.6 |
| c) Other (not a or b) | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | | 2 | 13.2 |
| | + | | + | | | + | + | | | | + | | + | + | | 7 | 46.2 |

The results of literature class observation before the intervention showed similar results than in the WS group: 52.8 % teachers used differentiated didactic approach for students with special needs. 19.8 teachers gave differentiated attention to gifted students, only 13.2 % of the teachers used differentiated approach for students, which didn't belong to the groups a or b. Six teachers – 39.6 % – didn't use any differentiated approaches (T17, T19, T20, T23, T24, T30).

Participation in e-module *RRM curriculum* brought changes: the most remarkable change occurred in differentiation of didactic approaches for gifted students – 72.6 % adjusted their methods for these students. Teachers also focused their attention to students, who don't belong to the groups of gifted students nor to the group of students with special needs, and have, according to the reception theory, individual horizons of expectations – 46.2 % of the teachers used differentiated didactic methods chosen according to individual horizons of expectations. Two teachers' T17 and T23 didn't use any differentiation also after participating in e-module *RRM curriculum*.

Table 5. Criteria for differentiation – WS group.

| Criteria | T 1 | T 2 | T 3 | T 4 | T 5 | T 6 | T 7 | T 8 | T 9 | T 10 | T 11 | T 12 | T 13 | T 14 | T 15 | Tot. f | Tot. f (%) |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|---------------|
| According to the feeling | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 11 | 72,6 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | |
| According to horizons of expectation/ reception competence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | |
| | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | 15 | 100 |

The first observation (before the intervention) showed that teachers used irrelevant criteria for differentiation: they planned the differentiated approaches according to general assessments (marks), according to which they divided students to the weak and a good group, and concluded, that the weak students must have a low developed cognitive competence and the good students must have a good developed cognitive competence. The second criterion for differentiating literature class was the reading speed and reading fluency. None of the teachers used as a criterion for differentiation information about students' reception competence or the horizon of expectations – all 72.6 % teachers, where differentiation was observed, made the differentiation according to »the feeling«.

After attending the *RRM curriculum* and after using the introduced methods for horizon of expectations on their students, the second observation of literature class showed a different situation: teachers didn't differentiate according to their feeling, for planning the differentiation relevant criteria for differentiation of literature class they used students' reception competence and the horizon of expectation.

Table 6. Criteria for differentiation - e-group.

| Criteria | T 16 | T 17 | T 18 | T 19 | T 20 | T 21 | T 22 | T 23 | T 24 | T 25 | T 26 | T 27 | T 28 | T 29 | T 30 | Total f | Total f (%) |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|-------------|
| According to the feeling | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 9 | 59.4 |
| | | | | + | + | + | | | | | | | | + | + | 5 | 33.3 |
| According to horizons of expectation/ reception competence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | |
| | + | | + | | | + | + | | + | + | + | + | | + | + | 10 | 66.6 |

Also in e-group, similar than in WS group, no one used reception competence or horizon of expectation as a criterion for differentiation before attending the *RRM curriculum*. Similar than in WS group, a criterion "better/weaker student" was used, or, in short: if differentiation was used, it was according to the teachers' "feeling".

The second observation of literature class showed two kinds of differences:

1. After the intervention 66.6 % of the teachers used reception competence and horizon of expectation as a criterion for the differentiation,
2. After the intervention 33.3 % teachers still used »their feeling« as a criterion for differentiation. Comparing this result with the WS group shows a remarkable difference: in WS group all teachers have learned to use relevant criteria for differentiation of literature class, in the e-group, the *RRM curriculum* was successful only in two thirds of cases.

Teachers' Self-Evaluation Essay

Teachers' self-evaluation essays are in this study treated as a form of narrative inquiry. A narrative is retrospective meaning making – the shaping and/ordering of past experience. It is a way of understanding one's own and the others' actions. In addition to describing what happened, narratives, in Denzin and Lincoln's words »express emotions, thoughts and interpretations« (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.656).

The essays were carefully read and compressed records of each essay were prepared according to five central questions: does the *RRM* contribute to students' motivation for reading

fiction, how important is it to develop students' RRM, do they intend to use new knowledge, gained in the RRM curriculum in their teaching practice in future, what is their opinion about the education form (work shop/e-education), would they choose the same type of education next time?

- Teachers' opinions about contributing RRM to students' motivation for reading fiction and importance of developing RRM

All 30 teachers, who participated in a qualitative inquiry, expressed the opinion that it is important for students to know their literary interests, to know, how they create the meaning of the literary text and that the teacher discusses with them the topic and therefore develop their reading reception metacognition (RRM).

The answers to the question about correlation between developed RRM and reading fiction motivation are similar: 27 teachers (81 %) agree that developed reading metacognition contributes to the fiction reading motivation. We illustrate these findings with some opinions expressed by teachers (names are changed):

In my opinion it is highly important for a student to be aware about his own attitude toward reading and to be aware, why he likes reading a particular type of literature and why he doesn't like other type of literature. Students must be aware of their reading strengths. Only in this case they can reach a higher level of their reception competence. (Karmen)

I think a developed reading metacognition contributes to the motivation for reading literature. In discovering his own meaning making process of literature a student is discovering himself. It will become clear to the student, what he is interested in and what he dislikes. Reading reception metacognition is guiding him to discover himself and to discover his own attitude toward reading. It helps a student to discover why his attitude toward reading is a positive or a negative one and to find out what he can do (together with his teacher) to raise his reading motivation. (Vanja)

I think it is very important for students to know their reading interest and how they create their literature world. Only in this case they can monitor and positively develop their reception process – alone or with the help of someone, who is trying to help him in that process. This someone can be a parent, a peer or a teacher. And it is also important for me as a teacher to know the reading interests of each particular student in my class. Only this way I can define goals I want to reach in my literature class for each of my students. At the same time, I can help each student to recognize his personal reading curricular goals. I can help him to find out what kind of reader he wants to become. Knowing students' RRM makes possible to reach highest possible goals at each student regarding his reading motivation. (Irena)

- Teachers' intentions regarding using new knowledge, gained in the RRM curriculum, in their teaching practice future

All 30 teachers, who participated in the RRM curriculum, those, who attended workshops and those, who had chosen the e-module expressed the intention for using the new gained knowledge in their teaching practice. They said the content of the education program was very useful. They admitted, they didn't know, what horizon of expectation was, before participating in the RRM curriculum, they didn't know what is influencing the horizon of expectation, which strategies could be used for discovering students' horizon of expectation and above all: they didn't know that knowing of students' horizon of expectation is a pre requisite (pre-condition) for monitoring of students' reception competence and planning of its' developing process:

I will definitely use my new knowledge in my teaching practice. It is now clear to me, that for a successful literature class, for a successful literature education of my students and for their positive attitude toward literature I definitely have to know horizons of expectation of each of my

students – because this is a starting point for the differentiation and individualization of literature education. As a teacher I have to know, what to differentiate for each group of my students and how to differentiate it - which students need differentiation in the phase of motivation, which in the phase of reception and guided interpretation and which for the phase of creative discovery of deeper meanings: (re)creative writing, drama ... Now I know, how to observe differences in horizons of expectation and reception competence in my students. In the RRM curriculum I have learned how to find out the differences in horizons of expectations in my students. I found some methods very promising: for instance, the reading story, which helps me to get acquainted with students' literary aesthetic environment, a questionnaire about reading interests, reflection letter or reading time belt, comic reading, exhibition of favourite books ... (Mira)

The essential knowledge I gained is the fact that the horizons of expectations must be examined – for each of my students. The student centered literature class is possible only, if the teacher knows each students' horizon of expectation – which depends from his intertextual experience and his extrotextual experience. Planning of literature class differentiation is possible only after examination macro and micro horizons of expectation. (Danica)

- Teachers' opinions about the education form (work shop/e-education); would they choose the same type of education next time?

All 15 teachers, who attended the RRM curriculum in WS group, expressed a positive opinion about the educational form. They appreciated the carefulness of the selection of themes in theoretical part of the workshop and were very pleased with the fact that no theory was lectured because of itself. Everything, what was "lectured", was clearly connected with the teaching reality. Also, the workshop group teachers pointed out the positive effect of »homework« - a chance for evaluating the suggested methods for examination of students' horizons of expectation on their own students and the positive effect of confronting their experiences with the findings with other participants in the group.

This type of education is one of those, from which you don't go home »empty«. You get only the amount of theory that you understand, only what is necessary. All the next steps origin from your own teaching practice. That is important because you immediately see why that is useful in your own classroom. Also the research of one's' own students (as a homework) was important – this is the only way you see the relevance of new knowledge for your pedagogical work. (Mojca)

On the other hand, in e-group only 11 teachers were satisfied with the educational form – as they pointed out, because they could avoid travelling and because they could choose the time of studying the e- materials of RRM curriculum. But the careful reading of essays of teachers which generally expressed, they had been satisfied with the e- learning form, shows, they missed the opportunity to participate in the work with other colleagues and exchanging their experiences with them.

I missed the collaboration with colleagues – the opportunity I would have had in a workshop. There is no doubt I have learned a lot with my individual work in front of my computer at home. But this first experience with e-learning didn't convince me. I missed the exchange of opinions, I missed the opportunity to discuss my experience with experiences of colleagues and I missed to hear about concrete examples in my colleagues' classes. I the process of studying »theory« I had doubts regarding my correct understanding. It would have helped, if I could ask the lecturer immediately in the work shop. (Sabina)

- *The intentions to repeat the just experienced education form next time*

All 15 teachers in traditional workshop educational form expressed the intention of selecting the same educational form (=workshop) also next time. Their argument was

predominantly the circumstance that they could get all their answers they needed immediately, they praised the opportunity to exchange the experiences, the possibility to get more new ideas or (in teachers' words) "*because the life interaction gives opportunity for more productive, qualitative and pleasant work*".

In e-group teachers' opinions were more diverse. 10 from 15 teachers expressed the intention to select a workshop educational form next time. The e-module *RRM curriculum* experience with e-learning seemed not to suit them. Remaining 5 teachers, who expressed, they would like to repeat the experience with e-learning, underlined that saving the time and deciding, when they are going to learn, was the most important criterion for evaluation of the educational form.

Discussion

E-learning in the frame of distance learning is education, where the instructor and the student are geographically dispersed and the technology is used to facilitate the education. The main advantages of distance education are availability, reduced costs, flexibility and integration (Neal, 2000). According to early theoretical thought (Brown, Champione, 1996) the predictions for such form of transferring knowledge should be very optimistic. Also, empirical research showed the same directions (Winne, Perry, 2000; Zimmermann, 2000; Pintrich, 2000). Yet a meaningful amount of research brought doubts. Bernard et. all. (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of comparative distance education and compared 232 studies containing 688 independent achievements, attitude and retention outcomes. Overall results indicated effect sizes of essentially zero on all three measures and wide variability. This suggests, as the authors point out, "that many applications of DE outperform their classroom counterparts and that many perform more poorly (Bernard et al, 379)". Similarly, Moore et all. (2011) answer the question of their research E-Learning, online learning, and distance learning environments: Are they the same? With serious doubts, since their research shows the opposite direction. Differently Allen et all. (2004) could find no serious doubts in the effectiveness of distanced e-learning: in their study they used the meta-analysis to summarize the quantitative literature comparing the performance of students in distance education versus traditional classes. Their results demonstrate no clear decline in educational effectiveness when using distance education technology.

The results of the research, which had been performed, give no clear answer. In such context also the results of presented research have to be interpreted: participated teachers in of both groups, those, who had chosen the workshop educational form and those, who had chosen the e-module have expressed the positive opinion of the curriculum of their educational program, which is the consequence of the fact that the chosen topic was tightly connected with the real problem of their teaching practice – differentiation and individualization in literature education. Teachers had gained new knowledge and new competences, needed for implementation of differentiation and individualization didactic principle in their daily classroom work. The results of the didactic unit observation show that all teachers in the workshop group gained the new competence for detecting students' horizons' of expectation and use it as a criterion for selecting an adequate didactic approach in their student centered literature class. On the other hand, e-learning was not equally successful. Also teachers (self) evaluation essays showed that they liked the workshop educational form better than the e-educational form. They clearly expressed their high opinion of the combination of theoretical knowledge with experienced self-learning – they liked working in workshops, they liked reflection, they liked group discussions, they liked qualitative research on their own teaching practice and they liked »live« communication, where they could exchange experiences, showed their creativity, where they had the opportunity to learn from each other.

Workshop learning had shown in our research better results. The reason for that is probably the successful connection between theory and the systematic didactic procedure for

learning the new didactical competence with the elements of qualitative research on existing teaching practice.

Conclusions

Despite the fact that the e-learning forms seem to replace conventional forms of learning on all levels of education, also teachers' permanent – lifelong education – the results of our study point out the necessity for rethinking the unavoidability of this process.

There is no doubt: e-learning is very effective, highly motivational and comfortable form of gaining new pedagogical knowledge, it is not expensive (as are traditional educational forms), the participants can save a lot of time (no travelling to the place of education), they can choose the time of learning and that with one set of e-learning material almost unlimited number of participants can be reached. The cost-benefit relation indubitably speaks for replacing lectures and workshops with e-learning modules.

The qualitative analysis of results, gained in e-module and compared with those, gained in the traditional workshop education shows a significantly bigger effect of education on participants' teaching practice for the group of teachers, who participated in traditional educational form – a workshop. Perhaps the results cannot be generalized for all areas of teachers' permanent education, but for literature education there could be concluded: if the changes really want to be achieved in teaching practice, teachers' permanent education has to be organized in educational programmes in which the primary goal will not be the limitation of costs. The focus should be on the cost benefit relationship: and in case of literature education, positive effects of traditional educational forms (workshop education) are with the present study explored and proven. The positive shifts in teaching practice can be only expected if a high quality education for teachers is organized, if educational forms are chosen, in which new knowledge is combined with workshops, with creation of motivation for evaluating (in the workshops self-developed teaching strategies) in teachers' own professional environment (their class) and in which we create opportunities for confronting new gained experiences with their professional social environment.

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