



Centar za stručno usavršavanje zaposlenih u obrazovanju Kragujevac  
Sestre Janjić br. 6 :: 34 000 Kragujevac :: Telefoni: +381 60 55 988 01; +381 34 201 303  
Tekući račun: 840-737764-85 :: PIB: 107183610  
www.csu-kg.edu.rs  
czsu.kg@gmail.com :: csukg.saradnici@gmail.com



## EVALUATION OF THE ERASMUS + MOBILITY PROJECT APPLICATION INTEGRATIVE TEACHING/LEARNING Primary school “Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic”, Kragujevac, Serbia

Center for Professional Development of Teachers, Kragujevac (CPDKG) is an institution established by the Local government of the City of Kragujevac, Serbia with the support of the Swiss Agency SDC, back in 2011. CPDKG gives support at all levels to the teachers: needs assessment and organizing PD programs as well as all other types of support.

CPDKG has conducted the evaluation of the application of the learned throughout the duration of the Mobility project *Integrative teaching in Primary School “Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic”*. The evaluation was done by using the technique of the focus groups. The focus group was organized on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. There were 21 teachers participating.

There were 8 questions that covered all important segments of the project application. The questions are focusing on the changes that happened among both teachers and students.

To the first question “**What have you learned from the (project) mobility team during the past year (during the project duration)?**” the participants agreed that the term “integrative teaching” was quite familiar to them, but they did not understand the way it functions. After the project (mobility) team have presented the methodology of the “integrative teaching and learning” and shown the best practice examples from the Mobility activity in Prague (Czech Republic), they fully understood how to apply it in the teaching process. They have noticed that they have been using the elements of the integrative teaching, but now they are aware of the mistakes they have made in the past and how to correct them and how to create a good plan for implementation. During the discussion, the teachers stated that they are aware of the influence of the integrative teaching/learning on the pupils and the way it motivates them. What teachers liked the most is the fact that they can have students’ feedback on sight, which is of great importance for their work. They have come to realization that the students are easier to motivate in the “integrative classroom”, that they participate more at the lessons, they are more interactive, they develop critical and divergent thinking, ask more questions, cooperate with each other more, and what is the most important is that the content stays longer in students’ memory and they connect the content of different subject more easily. Besides, teachers seem to appreciate the usage of a diverse learning activities and experiences and the fact that learners become creators of knowledge, rather than recipients.

**Conclusion:** Teachers know the principles of the “integrative teaching” method, how to apply it and what are the benefits of this type of teaching. They know how to write integrative lesson plan (how to interconnect content from different subjects so that the lesson is meaningful) bearing in mind all important steps for the integrated unit design.



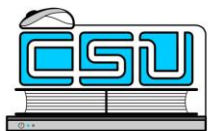
To the question “**What influenced the most on your work?**”, teachers stated that the best practice examples from the Mobility activity have given them the different perception of the implementation of the integrative teaching strategy. The implementation of learned in practice, i.e. the lessons they have planned and conducted with the colleagues is valuable for their self-reflection which is an important segment of a good lesson plan and teachers’ feedback on the lesson conducted. The classroom atmosphere, team work and students’ attitudes toward the integrative teaching/learning gave an additional boost to the teachers to take part in the implementation of this type of teaching. The most influential factor was the lesson outcomes which were better when this type of teaching is applied than the traditional way of teaching, as stated by the Focus group participants.

Since the integrative teaching methodology was applied in the third and fourth semester of the school year, some teachers were not able to apply new method in their teaching. Those were subject/grade teachers (from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade). The reasons are numerous, but they all are set around administrative obligations (grading students of the final year of the primary school, filling in and printing diplomas for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, etc.). Some teacher work in more than one school and, thus, they find it hard to arrange integrative lesson with colleagues. The Ministry of Education of RS is currently organizing training for class teachers (from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade) as well as for grade/subject teachers (from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade) on how to implement Project based learning, which will be obligatory from September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 in all primary and secondary schools in Serbia. Those teachers that are participating at these training sessions could not find enough time to organize integrative lessons with their colleagues.

**Conclusion:** Teachers are highly motivated for implementing integrative teaching in their school and their lessons. Around 10% of teachers that did not apply integrative teaching methodology will strive to apply it next school year.

To the question “**How did the integrative teaching influenced the students?**”, the teachers stated that the motivation is way higher because the lessons are interactive since the activities are switching more often, that the attention and focus are higher than at the typical (traditional - frontal) lessons. The students enjoy team work and consider the lessons more interesting, because they like team work and learning through play. They like research tasks (similar to the “flipped classroom” principle) and they, of course, enjoy using the IT in the classroom. They were able to show their creativity and wider interests which they appreciate the most. Also, they pointed out the fact that this type of teaching provide students with opportunities for social action, help them develop self-direction and help develop the sense of values. It trains students to think and reason at higher levels and make the long way learning worthwhile.

When asked about the **changes they have noticed in students work and attitudes**, teachers added (to the previous question) that the content and knowledge is more permanent, which they seem to consider highly important. And what is more, teachers like the fact that at integrative lessons students can learn how to learn and, thus, the learning itself is more meaningful. They like that they can guide students



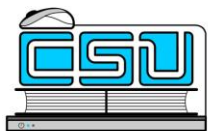
to discover answers to the questions, whether or not answers pre-exist. And what is the most important thing – students like it too.

To the question “**What was the biggest challenge to you?**”, participants singled out two: organizational and implementation. When it comes to organizational ones, it is related to the schedule switching/ changing and arranging, as well as the planning (to find time to plan together, to write the plan, to agree on the units, topics, material and methods and to agree on the implementation date). When it comes to implementation – they pointed out the challenges at the lessons (to conduct the lesson so that the students feel the natural flow and not being confused).

When asked about the **difficulties they encountered during the planning and implementation of integrative lessons**, teachers agreed that it was mostly of organizational and technical nature. When it comes to those organizational, focus groups participants stated that those can be overcome (lesson schedule - transferring and changing lesson schedule with other teachers, especially in higher grades, from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>). When it comes to those of technical nature, they seem to be a bit more difficult to overcome but it is not impossible, teachers just have to acquire additional skills or to improve the existing ones (time management, moderating). Also, the yearly operational curriculum that is regulated by the Ministry of Education of RS, that is not quite interconnected for the same grades. The good thing is that teachers have the right to adjust up to 10% of the curriculum and have the ability to adjust the order of the subject units. They can change the dynamics which gives them the possibility implement integrative teaching by careful planning at the beginning of the school year. This year they found models to overcome these issues by selecting those subject units that are interconnected at the same levels (grades). Since this was done “ad hoc”, the potential and the possibilities were limited. Since they are at the beginning of the implementation of the integrative teaching methodology, there is still time to learn (by doing or some additional course or PD program within the school or outside the school). Still, when they talk about those technical issues, including the adaptation or finding the adequate classroom in the school or too many students in the class (which is challenging when forming group/team work) they seem to be a bit less enthusiastic. Still, the teachers have shown high motivation, and thus the will to continue to implement integrative teaching no matter what the difficulties are. The school culture and the learning culture in the school seem to be stronger than all the issues they may encounter. The school seems to foster a good PLC (professional learning community) and spread the “learning culture” at all levels.

**Conclusion:** Teachers stated that, knowing and taking into account the possible issues and difficulties, they will be able to carefully plan integrative teaching for the next school year. This can be observed as a good ground for the project sustainability.

When focus groups participants were asked about their **strengths**, they have declared that now they feel more flexible and willing to cooperate, more creative, motivated and that they have new knowledge of how to plan and implement integrative teaching on regular basis.



To the question “**What will you change in your work in the next period?**”, teachers stated that they will strive to organize this type of teaching on regular basis because they are, now, aware of the benefits of it. Also, they are willing to find ways to overcome all the difficulties in the future. They are of the opinion that the most important thing is the motivation, they now have, and that, having it, it will be much more easy to do whatever it takes to make integrative teaching “a school culture” and school “recognition mark”. They will use PLC meeting to plan and evaluate the integrative lessons.

### **Overall conclusion:**

The evaluation of the project *"Integrative teaching in elementary school Vuk Stefanović Karadžić"*, implemented in the school year 2017/2018, showed that it contributed to the improvement of the quality of school work, professional development of the employees (teachers) and better students achievements.

The teachers have shown the understanding of the benefits of the integrative teaching and the motivation to implement it in the future. They seem to like the fact that the integrative teaching method fosters students+ creativity, security and satisfaction that it helps them evaluate their own learning and that it promotes cooperative learning among students. Teachers can relate clearly to individual learning modes, they can make all pieces fit and provide instruction in a more relevant way and, thus, make it more interesting to the students. They realize that the integrative teaching helps alleviate fragmentation of learning and isolated skills instruction.

What teachers stressed is that they will sit together (PLC meetings) and plan lessons for the next year and, thus, provide more opportunities for the implementation of the integrative teaching.

For the sake of the sustainability of the project and the continuous application of integrative teaching, CPDKG has several suggestions (i.e. proposals):

**S1:** Considering the difficulties teachers listed, in the organization and availability of the technique part, CPDKG is of the opinion that these can be easily overcome by using students' phones they already have, as well as by using students' knowledge of the usage and application of ICT, making the student the resource.

Since the school participates at various projects, or participated in the past and still implements the products of them, we suggest integrating and interconnecting all or some of those projects (i.e. entrepreneurship through the integrative teaching or 21<sup>st</sup> century schools). Here, the school can organize peer education (among students) for using the IT (smart phones, computers, etc.). Thus, when all students learn how to use it (whether or not they have them privately) they will be able to use IT (smart phones, tablets, etc) at the integrative lessons. This can additionally contribute to the lessons, since most students have smart phones and teachers can use that as well as the students' knowledge in the implementation of certain topics.



Centar za stručno usavršavanje zaposlenih u obrazovanju Kragujevac  
Sestre Janjić br. 6 :: 34 000 Kragujevac :: Telefoni: +381 60 55 988 01; +381 34 201 303  
Tekući račun: 840-737764-85 :: PIB: 107183610  
www.csu-kg.edu.rs  
czsu.kg@gmail.com :: csukg.saradnici@gmail.com



**S2:** The best thing is for teachers to learn from other teachers within the school and their PLSs, but if the need for an additional education (courses or PD programs) arises, the school management can contact CPDKG for it. Through the evaluation, teachers pointed out a few things that can be suggestions for additional training support: time management, planning, organizational skills, and other. These can be improved within the school, but if the teachers feel more confident to take part in some formal training, it should be enabled by the school management.

**S3:** If the practice of the integrative teaching becomes school's strength, that is, if teachers implement it on regular basis and become "experts" in it, the school can apply for becoming a **Model Center** for this type of teaching methodology and disseminate it to other local primary schools (currently 22 of them). This will be the best way to keep the project sustainable.

The school can consider the suggestions listed above and can, in accordance with its needs, alter or adjust them. CPDKG's proposals are based only on the evaluation of the implementation of the concept of the integrative teaching, and therefore are not binding.

CPDKG director, Zorica Nikolić