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THE FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES  
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

DOCTOR'S DEGREE THESIS

THE CREATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A TRADITION BASED CURRICULUM IN  
THE ROMANIAN PRIMARY EDUCATION

- resume-

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Cluj-Napoca  
2010

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**Words and key syntagms:**

Curriculum, tradition curriculum, curricular projection, national values, optional course, culture and civilization, research project, archetype values



## INTRODUCTION

What makes us different from each other, us, people, is the system of values we believe in. This defines us as individuals and as groups. With one system of values we come out of our families, with one system of values we come out of school, with one system of values we get promoted among the persons we get in contact with and among those we educate, as teachers.

The way we can form a desirable system of values in our students, finding such a system, this is the concern that is following us and that we follow on our social, family, professional path and which stands at the basis of our didactic and research activity.

In the present research we propose, as a variant, the authentic national values, archetypical, key-concepts around which is organized the present work.

The fundamental motivation of approaching the theme is given by the importance that these represent for the human existence in general, for the survival of nations during alteration and for the attitudinal, behavioral and cognitive development of students in particular.

The main elements of the system of values (promoted by the Romanian people along history) we are heading our attention are: the tendency to socializing, the feeling of belongingness to the world and to the values of the village, the need of “meeting”, not only with the self, but with the *Other*, with the *Other one*, the availability of accepting reciprocal learning, the need of confirmation for some attitudes, behaviors, intentions etc. by reference to the community’s vision and conception, living the feeling of joy and the charm of group activities, using learning through cooperation, promoting communication and exchange of opinions, preaching and consolidating the faith in God. In time, these have led to the appearance of some characteristic features of the Romanian people: the joy of working, valuing work, wisdom, cleverness, intelligence, spirit, intuition, valuing education, merit, the ethic sense, honor, dignity, sincerity, modesty, sobriety, forbearance, the spirit of helping each other, of solidarity, patriotism, sense of humor.

We are living a historical present in which parents dedicate little time for the children’s education, reason for which we consider that this essential role is taken by the school, by the teachers. Thus, seeing education from the perspective of the national values, we have the belief that we can teach the students:

- To value man, culture, work, moral and Christian virtues;
- To gain access to the fascinating world of folk culture, material and spiritual;
- To find resemblances between practices within school life and village life;
- To connect the present to the past and to the future;
- To know where they are coming from and where they are heading to;
- To form positive traits of character and will;
- To know and love the work of pedagogical research.

The elements we took into consideration in order to finalize the formative and informative elements proposed in the work:

- Valuing the elements of tradition in the instructive-educational process;
- Describing old traditions, caused by religious celebrations;
- Describing custom regarding working on the fields;
- Describing laic customs regarding the mysteries from man's life;
- Interpreting the well-known folk dance *Călușeru'*;
- Telling the legend of a village and being aware that each village has it's own legend;
- Narrating authentic random acts that generated a carol;
- Organizing a visit in our birth village, so that the students come into contact with the village life;
- Elaborating common didactic products teacher-student;
- Organizing Christmas celebrations, valuing the elements of tradition;
- Stimulating the students' and parents' personal reflection regarding the educational relevance of tradition;
- Creating, experimenting and validating some educational strategies what value tradition;
- Promoting moral archetypes from the folk fairy tales;
- Supporting the collection of information on the performance and traits of personality of the students;
- Encouraging students, their parents and the entire community towards approaching the authentic and living tradition, that they “penetrate”, that they decode and exploit its valence.

Our experimental research, with the view of a possible orientation of education towards national values, can be enrolled in the category of action-researched in which the researcher is directly involved in the didactic process, a very important aspect because by experimenting new action models, this being able to efficient certain didactic strategies (methods, procedures, techniques).

The experimental approach respects the established phases of the pedagogic research as it follows:

- The delineation of the problem that is being researched (based on documentation, by studying the bibliography connected with the issue);
- Realizing an ascertain study (with the purpose of collecting necessary data for creating and realizing the experimental approach);
- The inventory of the theoretical and applicable premises that will represent the starting point of the proper experiment (the results obtained based on the documentation about the problem that is being researched and the conclusions obtained after having had the ascertain investigation);
- Formulating objectives and a hypothesis of the investigation;
- Presenting each phase (methodology, samples of subjects, content samples);
- Realizing the proper experiment (the pre-testing phase, post-testing, re-testing);
- Analyzing, processing and interpretation the obtained data, both quantitative and qualitative;
- Elaboration of research conclusions;

The present work contains two parts: the first one that is more theoretic, and the second one – practical-applicable. The theoretical part represents the base on which stands the practical part, both parts dealing with the present education's problems in a scientific and original way.

We briefly present, as it follows, some aspects that can be found in this work along the seven chapters that complete it.

**Chapter I – National values and contemporary education** - presents the critical situation in which can be found the Romanian society and, as default, the school population of all ages, proposing as a solution the implementation of national values in the instructive-educative process. In this vision, it realizes similarities, differences and compatibilities between usual practices of the village life (*The popular way of socializing and working in group*) and the instructive-educational activity that takes place in an institutionalized environment. The data provided by realizing “the tradition scan” of the village, completed and rounded with the ones provided by the “tradition scan” inside the school, propose a school population therapy with the help of traditional national values (source of culture and civilization valued in the educational process), motivating and offering a guarantee for coming out of the crisis.

**Chapter II – Arguments for a curriculum of folk traditions in the primary school** – is trying, in the first place, to clarify the basic concepts, subordinate to the research theme, realizing an foray into the specialized literature with the purpose of the inventory of some well established points of view of specialists, materialized in definitions of the notion of “curriculum”. Subject of critical comparative analysis, then commented and interpreted in one’s own way, these have outlined a personal point of view upon the approach ways of the tradition based curriculum (approach in a broad way), aiming both the educational processes and the learning experiences through which goes the student during school. The chapter mentions and describes its components, it presents the principles that form its basis, the relevance that the curriculum elements can have in instructing and educating students by means of national values and the optimum possibility of realizing the curriculum of popular traditions: through curriculum decided by the school, optional at the level of various curricular areas.

In the attempt of presenting arguments in favor of the new curricular paradigms, we appealed to multidimensional approaches: axiological, pedagogic, psychological, sociological, historical, ethnological, theological, focused on the education of emotion and humanization of knowledge. We consider relevant the following arguments:

- ✓ Regularization of the concept of cultivating love for the country, for the historical past and for the traditions of the Romanian people (The Law of Education, title I, article 4, paragraph (2));
- ✓ The need of European compatibility of the Romanian curriculum;

- ✓ *Globalization and tradition, plurality and individuality* – compatibilities or incompatibilities?;
- ✓ Assuring the perspectives of full content approach;
- ✓ Tradition based curriculum – archetype recovery act;
- ✓ The educative experience of tradition (the educational role of it along the years), the use that educative action can have by its continuous use, in school and extra-school;
- ✓ Tradition based curriculum as a solution for the moral crisis of society (the social matrix);
- ✓ A tradition curriculum assures resistance to the threat of vertical transmission between generations, of own cultural values;
- ✓ The possibility of adapting and combining traditions with the new resources, updating it without distorting the message;
- ✓ The educational experiences of mankind, verified by each generation of individuals, that *tradition* does not mean going backwards, going old, but it means value, validates;
- ✓ Cultivating the feeling of belongingness to a community and to a nation, affirming the cultural identity of the nation, in the conditions of respecting multiculturalism, promoting the individual and group identity;
- ✓ Family rehabilitation;
- ✓ Knowing the values and traits of the people, you get to know yourself and to define yourself, to integrate in a social way;
- ✓ When knowing the tradition of your own people, you can notice that certain customs, borrowed from other cultures exist from ancient times, in your own culture (see Dragobetele vs. Valentine's Day);
- ✓ By highlighting the creator spirit of the Romanian people, we contribute to the development of creativity among students in the Romanian education;
- ✓ A tradition based curriculum can help to keeping healthy the mental health of the child.

The end of this chapter contains proposals referring to the initial instruction and the continuous development of teachers for primary schools and pre-primary institutions, or

proposals referring to the admission exams (introducing some eliminatory examinations that show the education level of the future teachers) and to activities to value the tradition in different didactic contexts by making actualizations and completions of the information specific to the domain, information already existent or through theoretical, methodical or practical specializations of teachers. Having in mind our own experience, this chapter is an invitation to some approaches, such as: study fieldtrips, action-research, national culture and civilization contests, school celebrations, the optional discipline *Romanian Culture and Civilization*, suggesting the expansion of these by experimenting new approaches and new themes, subordinate to this domain.

**Chapter III - Creating a curriculum of popular traditions for the primary education** – starts with a brief, critical presentation of the levels at which the folk traditions curriculum can be introduced in the primary schools: creating a new discipline, multidisciplinary modules, inserting tradition elements within the curriculum, inter-disciplinary periodical synthesis. An alternative to the multidisciplinary modules being not possible in the primary schools (where all disciplines are taught by the teacher) as it supposes the participation of a team of teachers, with different specializations and the option of creating a new discipline would overload the plan and the teaching schedule and it would impose having interdisciplinary qualified teachers, the optimum option for creating a new discipline being the optional discipline, that can be completed with insertions of national values in the other disciplines with periodic interdisciplinary synthesis.

The chapter observes the steps of creation and implementation of the tradition based curriculum within the optional discipline, *Romanian Culture and Civilization*, whose general educational finality is to facilitate students' contact with Romanian popular values, help given for their formation and information in valorisation activities, valorisation of the Romanian popular traditions. Being an optional discipline for various curricular areas, frame objectives, reference objectives and examples of learning activities, the entire planning, the projection models of the learning unit and the composition of the lesson project, as well as the evaluation instruments are all made by us. All these can be found in the subdivision III.2 of the work.

In terms of inserting tradition elements through educational sceneries, we mention the logical, coherent, well articulated path we have crossed with each inserted element: describing

the authenticity of the practice/custom →describing the way of valorisation → the intuitive presentation of the way of valorisation.

The chapter mentions more options and gives examples through the following **practices and customs**:

- Describing the authenticity of **carols and carol singing**, identified more for children and teenagers → describing the ways of valuing carols, as an historical document, during Romanian language classes with historical content → presenting the lesson project with the title *The carol as an historical document* (III.2.4.2.1.);
- Describing the authenticity of *Șezători populare (The popular way of socializing)*→ knowing and valuing them through fieldtrips → presenting this didactic activity in an intuitive way (III.2.4.2.2.);
- Describing the authenticity of *munca în clacă (working in groups)* →describing the ways of valuing it and its practices at school celebrations → presenting, in an intuitive way, the didactic activity *The “work in group” celebrations* (III.2.4.2.3.);
- Describing the authenticity of *Obiceiul Sângiorzului (The Sangiorz custom) Strigatului peste sat (Calling over the village)* →the opportunity of valuing it in the „Talking catalogue” (artistic instrument in the educational practice, realized by us), auxiliary to the students’ pshychopedagogic fishe → realising a page of the „talking catalogue” (Annex no. 4);
- **The folkloric survival of some historical characters** (Stefan cel mare / Stephan the Great) → valuing this image in books (*Povestea lui Tolpa și a lui Ștefan cel Mare*, written by Petre Ispirescu) → speech given by us at the book launch (III.2.4.2.5.);

In terms of the didactic experience of syntactical projecting and of implementing the taught contents, this is a challenging aspect, equally for students and for the researcher. By the fact that students participate to *variations* of the lessons *on the same theme*, these are well seen, with joy and interest, and the learning experiences of the students are one hundred percent positive. The up above affirmations have the support of our didactic experience. A model of interdisciplinary synthesis is the one presented in the subchapter III.2.4.3., realised during Advent (2007), period: 26 November – 4 December (7 days).

From the teachers point of view, preparing these activities requires a lot of time, a big amount of knowledge, working with all the operations superior to thinking, practise the didactic art, but the interdisciplinary synthesis have the advantage that they can offer students an overall view, a global view of the traditions' content (from the value and fact point of view), as well as a global vision of the attitudes that derive from them. The reason for which they cannot be a constant of the teacher's activity is that they can only be organised periodically: at the end of a chapter, at the end of the school year, in certain moments of the year when tradition activates some folk customs etc.

The end of this chapter explains, in a comparative way, the sintagms *learning situation* and *learning experience*, underlying the dependence of quality of the first ones to the quality of the last ones.

If the learning situation is a curriculum made by the teacher and supposed an ensemble of conditions of "learning attitudes, assimilating values, moral formation" (M. Stefan, 2006, p. 316), the learning experience belongs to the learners and represents the student's experience, due to participating to a *learning situation*: how one perceives it, how one interiorize it, the last one produces changes of knowledge, of attitudes, of behavior etc. If a learning situation can be anticipated, the learning experience is unpredictable, subjective, up to the student's interests, to his temperament, character, culture, maturity and other factors that make up his personality. Being teachers and researchers, our concern was to plan learning situations in conformity with the pursued objective, hoping that they create in students learning experiences and positive formation. We have focused on two categories of learning situations: one based on activities predominant practical-applicative (for example *removing maize from the cob*) and the other one based on activities predominant intellectual (for example *familiarizing students with the sintagm of working in group and with the activities and practices specific to this sintagm*), the creation of these, from the methodical and original point of view, end the chapter.

**Part two** is well anchored, scientifically and theoretically, in part I and presents the undertaken experimental approach and the results registered following its unfolding.



**Chapter IV- The ascertain phase of the investigation** – represents the starting point of the research, gathering the starting data and presenting initial results, in fact the information that make possible the optimum projection of the experiment.

In the projection of the ascertain phase, the following objectives have been our target:

- The evaluation of the students’ opinion referring to their wish of being instructed and taught with frequent uses of values belonging to the Romanian culture and civilization;
- The evaluation of the students’ parents involved in the research concerning the utility of orientating education towards a tradition based curriculum;
- The evaluation of the teachers’ opinion regarding the particularities of a potential Romanian folk tradition based curriculum;
- The evaluation of the headmasters’ opinion concerning the idea of orientating the instructive-educative process towards a Romanian folk tradition based curriculum;
- Finding the strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities of the tradition based curriculum;
- Collecting proposals and opinions from teachers, parents about the tradition based curricular offer.

The sample of subjects of the investigation was formed of 109 persons and had four components (C) as if follows: C1 – 30 students with the age between 8 and 9 years; C2- their parents, 60 persons; C3 – 12 teachers from different schools and high school from Targu-Mures; C4 – 7 headmasters.

The following table shows other variables of the samples:

**Table no. 1**

<b>COMPONENT (C)</b>	<b>NO. OF SUBJECTS</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>SEX FEMININE</b>	<b>SEX MASCULIN</b>	<b>ORIGIN</b>
<b>C I- students</b>	30	8-9 years	14	16	Urbane
<b>C II- parents</b>	60	29-42 years	30	30	Urbane
<b>C III - teachers</b>	12	27-58 years	8	4	8 Urbane 4 Rural
<b>C IV- headmasters</b>	7	40-53 years	5	2	5 Urbane 2 Rural
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>109</b>		<b>57</b>	<b>52</b>	

In conformity with table no. 1, in this phase have been investigated 109 subjects, with ages between 8 and 58, from which 57 have been females and 52 males. We mention that 103 subjects have urbane origins and 6 subjects have rural origins.

The main method used in collecting the initial data from the adults has been the inquiry, the used instrument, the questionnaire. For students we used the direct inquiry/oral, this making the exchange of information more accessible between the researcher and the investigated subjects, having in mind their age.

In this stage of the investigation the pre-test has been used, with the purpose of establishing the starting level of the students, the volume and quality of knowledge regarding folk tradition. We are presenting the items used in the initial knowledge test (Pre-test):

#### *Initial evaluation*

1. What is the peasants' celebration outfit?
2. What Romanian folk customs do you know?
3. What is your opinion about living at the country side?
4. How would you get ready for a trip at the country side?

We mention that this knowledge test has been an important instrument of our research, used in the following phases. Thank to this instrument we managed to establish the starting level of the subjects, to which we have reported the results of the post-test and of the re-test.

In parallel, we filled the observation grid of the attitudes and behaviours of the students regarding valuing personal things and the ones of the classmates, aggression, lying, theft, cooperation, culturalization, politeness and pity (with the sense of goodness).

The results of the investigation and of the initial knowledge evaluation, attitudes and behaviours, applied to the students, showed in this chapter, have strengthened our belief that the orientation of the primary education towards a tradition curriculum is required and this has encouraged us to continue our research.

**Chapter V – The proper experiment** – is structured in four subchapters, correspondent of the steps made to test the hypothesis and to realising the objectives.

The first subchapter, *Designing the experiment*, includes:

- Formulating the purpose: making easy the students' contact with the Romanian folk values, orientating and supporting their understanding steps, the acceptance, assuming and interiorizing these values, helping them to develop and to get informed in activities of valuing the Romanian folk tradition. The educational finalities cu little generality we had in mind aimed the two dimensions of the instructive-educational process, between them existing necessary and natural interrelations: the informative dimension and the formative dimension.

- Formulating the objectives:

**Objectives for students**, that have as aim the informative dimension:

O1 – to describe in simple words the national costume, a peasant's house, a village, a custom etc. based on their own experience and of the feelings they felt;

O2 – to gather information about practices in the village, about religious celebrations, traditions, agricultural customs etc.: actions, affective-emotional implications, attitudes, demeanours;

O3 – to explain the multidimensional aspects of work, gathering detailed information from a social night, from working in group: songs, amusing customs, works, stories, legends and so on;

O4 – to condense in their sentence register and in the iconic one the essence of the activities and their affective, cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural implications;

O5 – to reproduce the essence of the popular values they came into contact during the research through activities of experimental learning and through cooperation;

O6 – to realize Christmas celebrations, playing roles in conformity with the role games “Colindatu' cu ața cu scăluș”, “Umblatu cu Chiralesa” etc.

**Objectives for students**, that have as aim the formative dimension:

O1 – to find traits specific to the Romanian people: optimism, sense of humor, respect for the others, the correspondent attitude towards alteration, diligence, the sense of helping one another, wisdom, the power of fighting for own beliefs, the fighting character, valuing work and the work products, the cult for work;

O2 – to interiorize and assimilate popular values connected to working the land and to mysteries and events from people’s life;

O3 – to make personal or group reflections, caused by different events from the village life;

O4 – to show sensibility and interest for the traditions and popular customs through a high level of (self) motivation in the reception and interiorization of national values;

O5 – to show attention and responsibility for writing correct and with attention: compositions, texts, essays, poems;

O6 – to show active involvement and responsibility in choosing and playing roles, as well as in debating role games.

**The research objective for teachers:**

O1 – to organize, to coordinate and evaluate the instructive-educational process, to build learning and self-learning sequences, their sequence and interdependence;

O2 – to observe the formation and development of the *learning abilities*, theoretical and practical;

O3 – to develop *the critical and auto-critical sense* in students and to promote the sense of cooperation, communication and of helping one another, all these found in the village;

O4 – to the understand the importance of knowledge, of valuing and promoting the traditional folk culture, in order to induce it to students;

- Formulating the research hypothesis: *At primary classes, applying a tradition based curriculum facilitates some efficient, flexible and personalized learning situations, depending on the age and psycho individual particularities of the students, as well as living some learning experiences with formative and informative effects;*
- Mentioning the independent variable: *valuing the tradition elements in the instructive-educational process;*
- Mentioning the dependent variable: *the level of knowledge/acceptance of traditional values, the depth of their understanding and the decoding, the extent to which they are interiorized and put into attitudes and behaviors;*
- The presentation of the subjects: 30 students from the second grade from the “Unirea” National College;

- The presentation of the content samples: optional discipline of valuing culture and traditional popular civilization (*Romanian Culture and Civilization*), spontaneous insertions of tradition practices by means of educational scenarios, research projects of some practices from the village;
- The presentation of the phases, of the methodology of the research, of the material resources needed in the research.

The second subchapter, *Directions of the formative intervention. Activities with the students*, insists on describing the formative activities (characterized by a high level of originality) and on action directions (aiming for intention quality, of attitudes and behaviors of students) we seeked during the experiment.

The accent is put on the following aspects:

- Mentions made by the researcher, at the beginning of each formative activity, regarding the aimed objectives, the essential content elements of new themes, of criteria and of grade scales;
- Presenting and using new methods and self-knowledge and inter-knowledge instruments:

**Table no. 2      *Methods and techniques of self-knowledge/inter-knowledge***

<b>Method category</b>	<b>Used methods</b>	<b>Used techniques and instruments</b>
<b>Methods of self-knowledge/inter-knowledge</b>	-personal reflection -auto-characterization/caracterization of a class mate -self-observation -self-analysis -„The window to my soul” -„Who am I”	-the valoric circle with pluses and minuses -personal diary -list with positive traits -list with negative traits

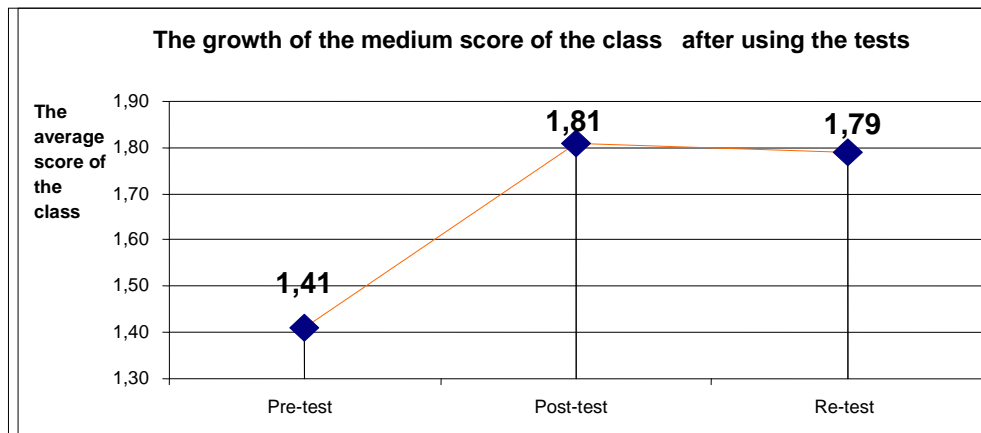
- Using various methods and instruments in order to stimulate positive behaviours in students:
  - ✓ Watching/observing other persons, role models, that develop in them a positive behaviour;
  - ✓ Offering suggestions regarding an adequate behaviour;
  - ✓ Using rewards/reinforcements.
- Promoting moral archetypes from folk stories.

The third subchapter, *Summative Evaluation (Post-testing)*, gave us the possibility to compare the results registered in the post-test with the one from the initial test/pre-test. We mention that the items used in the post-testing have been symmetrical with the ones from the pre-testing, because the evaluation wanted to make students partially revise their knowledge, to assume this knowledge, in order to reactivate them in various contexts. The obtained averages as a class at the Pre-Test (1,4), respectively Post-Test (1,81) show an obvious progress of the students' knowledge level, at the end of the school year, respectively at the end of the formative intervention.

We highlight the fact that the evaluation has not aimed only for the cognitive level of the subjects, but for the quality of their actions and behaviours, monitored by us through the observation grid. We mention that there have been obvious changes in the quality of these.

The fourth subchapter, *The distance evaluation. Re-testing* highlights the stability of the cognitive, attitudinal, behavioural acquisitions from the post experimental phase. Through the registered results, through the minor differences between the averages obtained in this phase (1,79) and the ones obtained in the Post-Test (1,81), the Re-testing has reconfirmed the research hypothesis, reinforcing the idea that the results were due to the experiment and not due to other causes.

The graphic from the next figure illustrates the evolution of the medium score of the class as a result of using questionnaires:



**Figure no. 1** *The evolution of the medium score of the class, after using questionnaires*

**Chapter VI – The results obtained in the research activity. Their analysis and quantitative and qualitative interpretation** – presents, through a comparative analysis of the registered data in the main stages of the research, the success of the formative intervention, the progress registered by the students and names some important aspects:

- The comparison of the scores obtained by the subjects at the knowledge tests applied during the research;
- The comparison of the students' attitude and behaviour quality during the research;
- Highlighting the cognitive, attitudinal, behavioural progress of the students, in the Post-Testing and Re-testing.

This progress can be highlighted by the results obtained in the Post-Test, respectively Re-testing, by comparing them with the results from different stages of the research: Pre-test – Post-test – Pre-test - Re-test, Post-test – Re-test. The comparisons have as aim the inter and intra subjects criteria.

In terms of the value system assimilated by the students, the formed attitudes, as results of the instructive-educational process, are hard to be evaluated; this is why we used a qualitative analysis.

All the presented results and the analysis refer to the content sample used in the formative intervention (the optional course, spontaneous insertions of tradition elements in the instructive-

educational process, realised research projects) and they present obvious modifications of the students' cognitive level.

By realising the students' knowledge questionnaire result analysis, it results that at the Pre-test the class registered a score of 1,41 points, showing that the experiment started from the limit between minimal knowledge and medium knowledge level. After applying the knowledge questionnaire (Post-test), at the end of the school year, a score of 1,81 points was obtained, the class having a grown, advanced level of knowledge, almost maximum. This shows that for the class level there has been an evolution of the volume and quality of knowledge regarding national value. This evolution is not surprising because in the interval Pre-test-Post-test, the subjects came into contact with the country side, due to the trip they have participated (in October). They have seen the components of the popular costume (the celebration outfit of the peasants, at which refers item 1 of the questionnaire) in their natural environment, worn by villagers during the activities organised in the two days, the presentation of the popular costumes being one of the most important points of the trip. One month and a half later (in December), the students themselves wore national costumes for the Christmas celebration, until the Post-test having planned to visit the Ethnographic Museum from Targu-Mures, where they received information about the components and characteristics of the popular costume.

During the activities of socialising and working in group that the students attended, in Șerbeni and Sânmihaiu de Pădure, they have gathered a lot of information about Romanian folk customs from the village (useful for responding to item 2 of the questionnaire): Chiralesa, Pogănicu', Dragobetele, Cununa la seceriș (The harvest wreath), Aruncatu' pe casă a colacilor din flori de sânziene (Throwing flower garlands of the house for the fairies), Obiceiul Sângiorzului (The Sangiorz custom) etc. All these were studied thoroughly during the instructive-educational, at the optional disciplin, *Romanian Culture and Civilization*, but not only theoretical, but practical-action too, through role games played in nature, imitating village practices and interiorising the messages in this way, so that the Post-test encountered them with a consistent volume of knowledge regarding the Romanian popular customs, unknown for students in the Pre-test stage.

The trip in the villages from Beica Valley represented for the students a good occasion for them to define their opinions about living at the country side (the third item of the questionnaire), unclear in the Pre-test and defined in the Post-test. Tradition elements, such as



Poganiciu, painting eggs in red onions for Easter, Strigatu' peste sat – Shouting over the village (Custom from the Sangiorz custom) etc., has helped students to express in the Post-test a solid, argued opinion about traits of life at the country side, both positive and negative, the positive ones being predominant. On affirming this we base on the system of authentic general-human and religious values, promoted by the village mentality.

Of course, after the experience lived by organizing the trip to the country side, it would have been easy for students to respond how they would get prepared for a trip they were to do in a village (the fourth item of the questionnaire). Even though the researcher made them a list of necessary and useful items for the trip and for participating to the “village life”, the food being offered by the hosts, in some students' backpacks (a lot!) were found a lot of inadequate items (for example, sandals, strap sandals; in October), other necessary items missing (trainers, for example).

A debate on this theme was necessary, in the backyard of Maria Badiu, debate during which the students recognized that they did not predict some realities and so they did not prepare for them. From this debate, as well as from the experimental learning, the students understood those realities, which they used to respond to the Post-test, increasing so their value.

From the things mentioned above, one could think that the didactic trip was the only element that caused the value mutation from the Pre-test in the Post-test. It would be a mistake to interpret in this way the answer evolution even if we admit that the trip, through the contact with the village, was a starting point in changing the mentalities and it was a reason of continuous reporting the knowledge assimilated by the students during the formative intervention. We highlight one more time that in this context, the educational valences of the study trip.

We mention the fact that the data given by the questionnaires were completed and fulfilled by the analysis of the observation grid from the Pre-test and Post-test.

In studying students' attitudes and behaviors regarding appreciation, aggression, lie, theft, cooperation, culture level, politeness, pity (kindness), we have used the method of direct observation of the students' behavior, their conversations, and discussions. After the formative program, the subjects registered significant differences on the attitude and behavior scale, registered in the Post-test. The results obtained show a positive dynamic of the competences of knowledge – application- integration of attitudes and behaviors. There have been registered

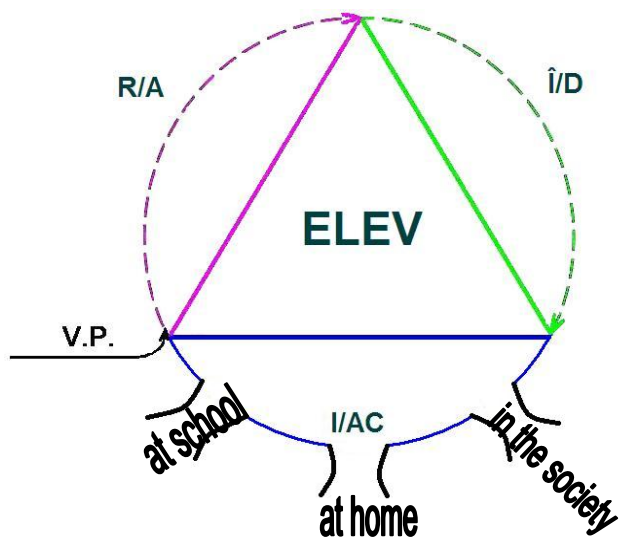
significant percent decreases at most of the negative behaviors, presented in this chapter. We also mention that none of these disappears.

Through the obtained results it was shown that the students who participated to the formative program are open to reception new, open to replacing behaviours inadequate to the school and social environment, contributing in this way to the optimization of the education in schools. The most edifying result, in this sense, is the fact that the students involved in the experiment have balanced their relational style and this thing is obvious, both during classes and during breaks, in the school yard. Due to their pro-social behaviours, the new students that came in the class were helped by their classmates to accommodate fast.

The analysis presented in this chapter of the work entitles us to affirm that the results show a success, because the majority of the students changed their negative behaviours into positive ones.

The results registered in the Re-testing lead us to the conclusion that the students/ the class keeps its knowledge level (referring to traditional values) high, advanced, close to maximum, like the one realised in the Post-testing, meaning that the evolution realised by the students in the experimental phase is due to the formative intervention, retention and not due to other factors.

We mention that the progress is visible at the student and at the class. We believe it important that, in order to resolve the tests correct, the student had to use previously accumulated knowledge. This report proves the fact that the average increase, for each student and for the class is due to the intervention, the subjects succeeding to consolidate and fixate the accumulated knowledge, to interiorize these knowledge, so that they can make them operational, in a continuous process, suggested by us through the Triangular/Circular mechanism of attitude and behaviour formation in students, fed, in a balanced way, with popular values. This pedagogical model of students' education, model realised by us, allows monitoring the stages (phases) made in the process of recognition/acceptance – understanding/decoding – interiorization/formation of desirable students attitudes and behaviours, this meaning monitoring the modifications that take place within the dependent variables. We can see these stages in the figure below that can also be found in the works subdivision VI.1.



**Figure no. 2 The triangular/circular mechanism of attitude and behaviour formation in students**

Where:

**R/A** means **R**ecognition/**A**cceptance by the students of the popular values;

**(Î/D) U/D** means **U**nderstanding/**D**ecoding popular values;

**(I.AC) I/A.B.** means **I**nteriorization/**con**verting the message of popular values into **A**ttitudes and desirable **B**ehaviours;

**(V.P.) P.V.** represents the popular value introduced by the researcher in the instructive-educational process, respectively the independent variable involved in our research activity.

The didactic experience and the experiment's conclusion affirm that replacing negative behaviors with positive ones requires time, will, effort on behalf of each student from the class, as well as unity in the educational requirements from students, on behalf of their parents and their teacher. Also, it is necessary that the attitudes and behaviors of little aged children are observed, corrected permanently, both at school and in the family, so that they can realize performances, useful both at school and in different life situations.

The subchapter *The statistical data processing* presents the possibility the way of calculating the statistical meaning of the research data, with the help of the Pearson test, by using

the program GraphPad InStat 3. The  $\chi^2$  method simplifies the measurement of the difference between the variation series, without the need of calculating the dispersion indices. This method can be applied especially in the situations when events exclude themselves (it is possible to take place only one of them), as it is the case in our research. The Pearson tests can be applied using contingency tables 2x2, the calculus for  $\chi^2$  being possible using the formula:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(axd - bxc)^2 (a + b + c + d)}{(a + b)(c + d)(a + c)(b + d)}$$

The next table that can be found in chapter VII shows, in an intuitive manner, *The contingency table 2x2*:

**Table no. 3** **The contingency table 2x2**

	Pre-test (Post-test)	Post-test (Re-test)	Total
Rejected (Grade 1)	a	b	$n_1=a+b$
Accepted (Grade 2)	c	d	$n_2=c+d$
Total	$n_3=a+c$	$n_4=b+d$	$N=a+b+c+d$

Where,

- a- students rejected at the pre-test;
- b- students rejected in the post-test;
- c- students accepted at the pre-test;
- d- students accepted at the post-test;
- a+b – total of rejected students;
- c+d – total of accepted students;
- a+c – total of participants at the pre-test;
- b+d – total of participants at the post-test;
- n – total.

The interpretation of the results:

- $\chi^2 > 10,83$  – probability 99,9%;  $p=0,001$ ;
- $\chi^2 > 6,64$  – probability 99%;  $p=0,01$ ;

- $\chi^2 > 3,84$  – probability 95%;  $p=0,05$ ;
- if  $\chi^2 < 3,84$  ( $p>0,05$ ) – the difference is insignificant, the hypothesis is not valid.

By using the statistical processing, having as a base the evaluation method of the “square chi”, we could demonstrate the volume and students knowledge evolution, regarding the popular tradition values, during seven months, demonstrating through the statistical data processing from this chapter that the hypothesis has been validated.

By interpreting the obtained results, we can affirm with certainty that the values of the Romanian village represent an interest for the little aged students and also, interest for the researcher, being a great help in the attitude and behavior formation approach of the students, in conformity with the archetype values. The used methods and instruments have been well chosen by the researcher, being appropriate for the age and understanding capacity of the subjects involved in the experiment.

Personally, we believe that the value of the research would be even more spectacular if the study would have been done on a bigger period of time, so that students can benefit more of the positive influences of more tradition elements. Also, a long monitorization of positive intentions, attitudes and behaviors of the students from the primary school would lead to a stronger fixation, making them automatic, being a guarantee of their transformation in desirable traits.

**Chapter VII – Final Conclusions** – is meant for conclusions regarding both the theoretical grounds of the paper and the experimental process carried out. The conclusions are grouped around three aspects that are of great importance at the end of any pedagogical research: the efficiency of the research process carried out, the difficulties, obstacles, and limitations encountered, suggestions regarding possible future actions.

The current research has focused on pupils' assimilation of a system of values belonging to the traditional Romanian folk culture and civilization, which would enable us to at least partly eliminate second-grade pupils' negative attitudes and behaviours, which are in fact characteristic of the current generation of elementary school pupils. Our constant target has been the archetypal values, viewed as *fundamental behavioural models* (Jung), which we have tried to unfold to our pupils by regularly introducing elements of tradition into the education process

throughout a school year. We have dared to aspire to a change of paradigm, crossing over from a knowledge-centred education system to a system in which the knowledge should exclusively become generators of positive attitudes and behaviour, with the purpose of restoring the way individuals relate in the classroom-group and the school-group. We believe that such relating is used for pupils' self-development and, implicitly, for the development of moral social action.

This chapter highlights part of the difficulties, obstacles, and limitations encountered along the research. Let us take them one by one.

*Difficulties in building the theoretical, scientific foundation:*

- the limited number of bibliography resources approaching the topic being researched (the formative and informative potential of folk tradition), a difficulty that can also be seen as an advantage if we think that, the more original a research topic is, the more valuable it is;
- providing the clearest possible definitions for the theoretical notions, in order to build a correct and necessary term base which is essential for setting up the theoretical framework;
- the attempt to reach a balance between the presentation of established opinions and own points of view, critically analysed and interpreted;
- the use of some relevant bibliographic resources of the few ones available;
- making sure there is consistency between the theoretical and practical part of the paper, between the title and the content;

The *practical difficulties* can be grouped in three categories:

*Difficulties in designing the research:*

- clear and precise phrasing of the hypothesis and research objectives, which should represent an actual and topical issue;
- establishing the parts of the subject group from a quantitative and qualitative point of view, so that the results should be meaningful;
- establishing the content sample by selecting those pieces of content that were to be introduced into the teaching process, by creating the optional course as a medium for introducing the independent variable;
- creating the experimental design so as to be consistent with the research topic, the hypothesis, and the objectives;
- selecting the research methods and ensuring the suitability of the purpose, objectives, and hypothesis;

- creating the tools;
- designing the research project (plan) that should guide the whole pedagogical research, all its stages.

*Difficulties in carrying out the research:*

- motivating the pupils to become involved in the formative activities intended;
- costs borne by the parents for carrying out the research: transportation, accommodation, food, etc.
- uncomfortable accommodation (lack of bathrooms, basin washing, etc.)
- the impossibility to accommodate all 30 pupils under the same roof (in the 2-day study trips) due to small size of country homes, which also made it impossible for the teacher to keep an eye on all the pupils, without any help from anyone;
- the archaic language used by the villagers in the encounters with the pupils, a language young learners had trouble understanding;
- the staging, by the villagers, of a "rigged" bee and voluntary work;
- recording and quantifying the pupils' cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural progress;
- properly managing the material, methodological, and time resources for the carrying out of the formative activities;

*Difficulties in finalizing the research:*

- generalizing the results;
- analysing, processing, and interpreting the data;

Through the experiment, the hypothesis was checked and validated. While carrying out the experiment, new questions and hypotheses arose from the research, thus creating reflection points which, in addition to the issues explained and solved by the research and the solutions provided by it, only make it more valuable, since "the value of any research resides not only in the issues it explains or solves and the solutions it suggests, but also the reflection and research points it suggests" (M. Bocoş, 2003, p. 40). Here are a few of these secondary hypotheses, which could give rise to new research:

- involving the pupils in folk tradition research activities increases their interest in knowing the richness of the traditional heritage;

- the transfer of the ethical value of the folk scenario in the pupils' school shows increases the quality of their attitudes and behaviours;
- wearing the national costume at school shows fosters respect for it and national pride;
- involving the pupils in directing the shows increases their interest in this activity;
- engaging the students in data collection, processing, and interpretation facilitates the discovery of some of their psychological features which might otherwise go unnoticed in regular classroom activities;
- by perceiving tradition as complementary to school education, its research could become a means of educational and professional guidance;
- disseminating the pupils' research work becomes a motivating factor for continuing the research activity;
- engaging the students in the creation of some brochures entitled "Studies on..." develops their interest in writing "books";
- presenting the teachers' personal experiences concerning the folk tradition (experiences lived during childhood or adult life) has greater persuasive and motivating effects on the students than non-personal experiences.

As concerns the reflection and research points suggested by the experiment, we intend to carry out new research on the same topic, with some activities already underway (*From voluntary work to cooperative learning* and *School shows, a favourable context for internalizing authentic traditional values*) and others awaiting their turn in a more distant project

The paper ends with:

*Glossary;*

*Tradition and education in pedagogical and philosophical thinking* (reflections);

*Bibliography;*

*Appendices.*

The glossary contains 194 concepts and terms consulted by the pupils during the formative intervention and included in the manual we have created, *Romanian Culture and Civilization. An optional course for elementary education* (2008), *Petru Maior* University Press, Tîrgu-Mureş. The bibliography consists of 222 books, 6 documents by the Ministry of Education, 13



magazines of the Ministry, 17 other magazines, 5 optional subjects for elementary school grades 1 to 4, all the Romanian Language and Literature course books and Environment Discovery course books for grades 2 to 4, Aramis Press, Bucharest, and 2 web sites.

The 29 appendices (see the table of contents) complete and particularize the paper contents.

The thesis contains 15 figures and charts and 54 tables.

We believe this paper has a high degree of originality by its topic, conception, and carrying out and, by paying special attention to pupils' positive attitude and behaviour shaping (according to archetypes), it attempts to solve a current educational issue: bringing pupils out of the moral crisis (especially in the ethical field) by drawing their attention towards the cultural features, the traditions, suggesting and promoting a system of authentic values that should educate their emotion and propel them into universality.

Considering that "the integration of the emotional dimension into a cognitive perspective remains a permanent challenge" (S. Cristea, p. 139), we have focused, in the current paper, on the role of emotion, a role that lies beyond cognition (by creating a pleasant and stimulating environment). We have attempted a change of educational paradigm, looking at a model that is open to all the resources of multiple intelligences. In Gardner's view, such a model anticipates "the education for the future, which entails not only knowing the main teaching subjects, but also the ability to use them flexibly in order to solve new problems and create new lines of thought" (S. Cristea, p. 144).

We would like to mention that there is currently no preoccupation for research in Romania on the topic of designing and implementing a curriculum of traditions in elementary education.