Slovene and Portuguese Pre-School Teachers About the Play and Movement Activities of Pre-School Children

Tatjana Devjak, Sanja Berčnik

University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Srečko Devjak

Management and Law College (MLC), Ljubljana, Slovenia

The authors compare the views of Slovenian and Portuguese pre-school teachers about the importance of play and movement for pre-school children. They focus on the personal views of pre-school teachers towards curriculum objectives regarding movement activity, because play and movement are highly important activities in the pre-school period. The authors note that both the relationship to the objectives of the curriculum, as well as the physical activity of pre-school teachers is reflected in the design of physical activity in the pre-school group. The research results have revealed a common dilemma: If we know what we need to implement in kindergarten (objectives and activities of the curriculum) and who should do it (pre-school teachers), the only open-question that remains is how this can be accomplished. The quality of the educational process in kindergartens in all areas depends largely on the degree of the professional competence of pre-school teachers as well as on their subjective theories on that subject.

Keywords: Curriculum for Kindergartens in Slovenia, movement of pre-school children, kindergarten, play, movement activities, subjective theories

Introduction

The research regarding play and movement activities was first conducted by the authors Tatjana Devjak and Mojca Juriševič from the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana in the year 2000; it was repeated in 2008. In 2009, during an exchange of professors in Portugal, the idea for a comparison of the views of pre-school teachers of both countries on movement and movement activities was born. This paper aims to show, compare, and analyze: (1) the basic characteristics of the systems of pre-school education in Slovenia and Portugal; (2) the importance and role of play and movement in the development of pre-school children; and (3) the views of the Slovenian and Portuguese pre-school teachers regarding the curriculum objectives for movement, groups of children engaging in movement activities, and identification of the problems or barriers preventing the high-quality performance of movement activities with children in kindergarten.

Tatjana Devjak, Ph.D., associate professor, Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana.
Sanja Berčnik, Ph.D., assistant researcher, Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana.
Srečko Devjak, Ph.D., professor and dean of Management and Law College (MLC).

Slovene and Portuguese Pre-School System

Slovene Pre-School System

Slovenia has established an integrated, non-compulsory approach to pre-school education, combining education, play, and care. Pre-school institutions admit children from one to six years of age or to the age at which they enter primary schooling. Pre-school education is performed by public and private pre-school institutions (kindergartens), and the parents have the right to choose pre-school education programmes. The aim of pre-school education is to support the parents in bringing up the child, to improve the quality of family life, and to create good conditions for the development of the child's physical and intellectual abilities (Devjak, Berčnik, Devjak, & Castanheira, 2013). The Pre-School Institution Act (1996; 2005, 2nd & 3rd parts) is based on the principles of democracy, pluralism, autonomy, the professionalism, and responsibility of pre-school teachers, equal rights for children and their parents, while recognizing the differences between children, freedom of choice, being different, and balancing various parts of children's development. Among the objectives of pre-school education, the following are especially emphasized: the development of comprehension skills and the skills of accepting others and oneself, distinctiveness and cooperation in groups, the development of the skills of recognition of emotions, the stimulation of emotional perception and expression, the stimulation of curiosity, an exploratory spirit, imagination and intuition, the development of independent thinking, the stimulation of communication skills for the effective and creative use of language, at later stages also the stimulation of reading and writing, the stimulation of the perception of artistic works and artistic expression, the transmission of knowledge from various fields of science and everyday life, the stimulation of physical and locomotive development, and the development of self-dependence in hygiene habits and health care.

The Pre-School Institution Act (1996; 2005) and the Curriculum for Kindergartens (1999) are the two main national documents that guide the course of pre-school care and education, accompanied by the Law of Organization and Finance in Care and Education (1996). The Curriculum for Kindergartens (1999) is based on the appreciation of individual differences in development and learning, as well as on an appreciation of the child's integrative and balanced development. The curriculum is open and enables implementation of day, half day and short programmes. The objectives, contents, and activities are designed separately for the first (1-3 years old) and the second (3-6 years old) age groups of children and are divided into various fields: physical exercise, language, art, society, nature, study, and mathematics. The suggested curriculum themes extend over the stringent limits of a single field and are placed into the context of the children's daily life in a pre-school institution. Interdisciplinary activities, such as ethics, health care, safety, and traffic education, are incorporated into all of the above mentioned fields. The implementation of different subject fields goes hand in hand with the daily routine. Educational work is important for the child's personality (not only as a preparation for the next educational level), which is why it is based on the abilities of children and their activities. Children's play enables the most natural way towards their development and learning (Devjak et al., 2013).

Portuguese Pre-School System

The Comprehensive Law on the Education System (1986) defines pre-primary, pre-school education as the first step of the Portuguese Education System in a lifelong learning process and as a complement to the parents' role (Early Childhood Education and Care Portugal, 2016). The pre-school network is provided by the state, private and cooperative bodies, private social solidarity institutions, and non-profit institutions. The public

network is fully financed by the state, which also covers the costs of the educational component provided by the private social and non-profit networks. Fees are paid in independent private nursery schools. Pre-primary education is aimed at children aged three to five years. In 2009, Law No. 85/2009 of 27 August established the universality of pre-school education for children who reach five years of age; nevertheless, attendance is never compulsory (Devjak et al., 2013). The most common forms of child education and care are *Jardim-de-infância*, social/educational activities, community and children's activities, and itinerant nursery education. *Jardim-de-infância* is pre-school education for children aged three, four, and five. They provide services geared to child development and assist the family. Social/educational activities are overseen by the Ministry of Work and Social Solidarity and offer activities to children in pre-school education that supplement the school timetable; they mainly just look after children. Community and children's activities are for five-year-old children in outlying, over-populated and disadvantaged urban areas where there are no proper facilities. This programme offers activities that are appropriate for children's development. Itinerant Nursery Education allows children between the ages of three and five in rural areas to have access to educational activities. These are the areas where it is not possible to establish a *jardim-de-infância* due to a small number of children (less than 15) (The Education System in Portugal, 2006/2007).

Educational provision for children under the age of three is not part of the educational system and therefore not the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science, but the responsibility of the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment, and Social Security. Child-minders, crèches, and family crèches are available for children in this age group, which is a socio-educational provision for children up to the age of three during the day, thus supporting children and families. This service is provided mostly by private, not-for-profit bodies that have agreements with the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security and by for-profit private bodies with an operating licence approved by the same ministry. The services of child-minders and family crèches (a group of between 12 and 20 child carers) are provided by suitable people who, in return for payment, care for children who are not related to them, for a period of time. Child-minders are regulated, technically and financially, by Social Security, Lisbon's Santa Casa da Misericórdia, or private charities. Each crèche sets out a pedagogical project, which functions as a tool for planning and the monitoring of activities, in accordance with the profile of the children. The pedagogical project includes the socio-pedagogical activity plan, which includes educational activities that help children's overall development, including motor, cognitive, personal, emotional and social skills, and an information plan that includes awareness-raising activities for families in the area of parenting (Organisation of Programmes for Children Under 3 Years: Portugal, 2016).

The Portuguese pre-school system allows for great diversity to guarantee access to pre-school education for all children from three to five years of age. Pre-school educational institutions have a flexible timetable to match the needs of families. When establishing the class times, they always take into account the opinion of parents and guardians. The education component last for five days a week, five hours a day; it is divided into two periods. The establishments that belong to the state and private network are open for a minimum of eight hours; the Ministry of Work and Social Solidarity establishments are open 10-12 hours a day, five days a week; the majority close for one month a year (Education System in Portugal, 2006/2007).

Each classroom used for pre-school education (for 3-to-5-year-olds) must have a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 25 children. In areas with low population density, authorisation may be given for the attendance of fewer than 20 children per classroom. The activities of the three, four, and five year-olds can be the same, but they differ in the degree of complexity due to the development of groups of children. The formation of the

groups depends on the methodology and the principles upheld by the Pedagogic Council of each establishment. There can be heterogeneous groups, groups of different ages, or groups of the same age (Education System in Portugal, 2006/2007; Devjak et al., 2013). Attending pre-school education is optional, “[...] because the family is recognised as being responsible above all for the education of children” (Devjak et al., 2013, p. 11).

The general objectives of pre-school education are encouraging the personal and social development of the child, based on experiences of democratic life, with a view to education for citizenship; promoting the inclusion of children in a variety of social groups, with respect for different cultures, encouraging a gradual awareness of their role as members of society; contributing towards equality of opportunity in gaining access to schools and towards learning success; encouraging the global development of each child, respecting individual characteristics, promoting behaviour to help significant, diversified learning; developing expression and communication through the use of multiple languages as a means of forming relationships, providing information, promoting aesthetic awareness and an understanding of the world; provoking curiosity and critical thought; providing each child with the conditions of well-being and safety in individual and public health; identifying in adaptabilities, deficiencies and precocious behaviour, encouraging better orientation and guidance of the child; and encouraging families to participate in the educational process and to form an effective relationship in collaboration with the community. The aims of pre-school education are helping families in the task of educating their children, providing each child with the opportunity to develop their own autonomy, social contacts, and intellectual development, promoting their balanced integration into the life of society and preparing them for successful schooling, and the acquisition of multiple learning skills (Early Childhood Education and Care Portugal, 2016).

The Importance and Role of Play and Movement in Child Development

Body movement depends on the awareness of the environment, space, time, and oneself. In elementary movement games, children gradually become accustomed to the meaning and sense of following the rules of games, thus becoming better socialized (Curriculum for Kindergartens, 1999). Fröbel was the first educator to seriously engage in the issue of play and its educational role; he also included movement games among a series of games significant for children. In our time, educators have emphasized the importance of play and movement, especially since 1960, when they began considering play to be a part of serious learning and a component of education (Devjak et al., 2013).

The results of several studies have shown that play educates, because through play many children solve assignments that they otherwise would have trouble with or no interest doing. Locke believed that learning can become play and fun for children, and thus prepare them to love learning, if we would show it to be a question of honour, trust, enjoyment, and entertainment (Devjak et al., 2013). Dewey (1996) pointed out the importance of play and work for education, as they correspond to the process of acquiring knowledge. In the past, children's living conditions gave them many chances to play and work in a family community. Therefore, it is believed that it is a waste of time also to do so in school. Today, there is a little opportunity to play and work in a family community, and therefore kindergarten must assume this task. Play is important for the child's personality development (Devjak et al., 2013).

Through play, children develop physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Through play, children also meet the need for self-approval, which directs the child to new activities, which help them to develop motor, sensory and mental abilities, creativity, work habits, and other crucial skills. Marjanović (1981)

said that child in the play came to confirmation and knowledge about himself in the local and wider social environment. Self-approval is the drive that directs the child to new activities. Movement is most important, as children at an early stage take part of the world around them by touching, gentle handling, and watching. Through play, the child is dealing with problems: He is happy, relaxed, and creative, because he is constantly looking for ways to resolve difficulties encountered during play. The child is looking for new ways to mentally develop and open the way to his imagination.

Kindergarten should provide for children a variety of physical activities daily, both indoors and outdoors. In the elementary games that form the basis of sports games, children gradually learn the meaning and importance of compliance with the rules of the game and enhance socialization (Grbec, 2010). We concur with Saje (2002), who said that movement, healthy nutrition, and a positive, optimistic attitude towards life are crucial factors that improve the quality of life and prolong it. There is a Slovenian saying, "What Janez learns, this Janez knows."

Methodology

Purpose of the Study and Problem Definition

The basic purpose of the study was to investigate pre-school teachers' views on the pre-school curriculum goals, especially with regard to movement activities and the selected recommended examples of movement activities derived from this curriculum for children aged from three to six years. At the same time, we wanted to know how and under what circumstances pre-school teachers implement movement activities, from where they draw ideas for implementing such activities, what the missing parts are, what kind of education they would want in order to improve the quality of their work, and whether they are physically active, and whether their activity is planned or carried out only spontaneously, and in what kind of physical activity they are involved.

Sample Description

The study performed in Slovenia in 2008 in the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana and 2009 in the Faculty of Education, University of Primorska in Koper included 133 pre-school teachers who participated in various continuing education and training programs at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana ($N = 51$) and at the Faculty of Education, University of Primorska in Koper ($N = 82$). In Portugal, in the district of Braganca, in the Escola Superior de Educação ($N = 78$), the study was carried out in the 2009/2010 study year.

On average, teachers from Ljubljana had 17.9 years of work experience, and teachers from Koper had 1.6 years of work experience; 76% of the pre-school teachers included were regularly employed, and 24% were working on temporary contracts.

On average, pre-school teachers from Ljubljana had 17.9 years of service; 84% of them were working students of pre-school education, who had already finished college for pre-school teachers and were in the process of obtaining higher professional education (half of them were already working as pre-school teachers in kindergartens), all of them were in a regular employment relationship; 10% of pre-school teachers already had a high professional qualification and were in a regular employment relationship; and 6% of them did not have the relevant qualification and only had a job for a limited time.

On average, pre-school teachers from Koper had 14.6% years of service, 61% of them were regularly employed, 11% of them were in the process of gaining high professional qualification, 4% of them had inadequate qualifications, 24% of pre-school teachers from Koper had a job for a limited time during the

research, and the rest of them were in working relations his for an indefinite time.

The sample in Breganca in Portugal contained 11% of students of pre-school education and 61% of pre-school teachers working in nearby kindergartens who were regularly employed full time workers. A total of 24% of pre-school teachers had limited time working-agreements and 4% of pre-school teachers did not have the relevant qualification and had a job for a limited time. On average, pre-school teachers in Portugal had 10.6 years of service.

Description of Measurement Instruments Used

A teacher questionnaire¹ was used in the study, which covered the five problem-based sections selected: (1) assessment of the importance of individual curriculum goals connected with movement activities, in which a three-point assessment scale was used (less important goal, medium important goal, and very important goal); (2) assessment of the importance of selected movement activities for children three to six years old (a five-point assessment scale ranging from “1 = Activity not important for the child’s development” to “5 = Activity very important for the child’s development”) and actual implementation of proposed movement activities (open-question); (3) the environment and place of implementing movement activities, in which a five-point assessment scale was used (ranking according to the frequency of implementing activities at a specific place, from “1 = Most frequently” to “5 = Only rarely”); (4) problems and obstacles during and regarding the implementation of movement activities (open-question); and (5) assessment of their own professional competence to implement movement activities (a five-point assessment scale from “5 = Very good” to “1 = Very bad”), desire to undergo additional training and education in movement activities (Yes-No questions), and areas in which pre-school teachers would like to learn more (open-question).

Collecting Data

In Slovenia, pre-school teachers completed the questionnaire during the programs of continuing education and training from October 2007 to June 2008. In Portugal, pre-school teachers completed the questionnaire in kindergartens from May 2009 to March 2010.

Processing Data

The data were processed for individual groups of pre-school teachers with Windows Excel software. Answers were sorted and entered into a frequency and structural table; percentage frequencies were also used.

In order to statistically process the data connected with the curriculum goals (for a comparison between units, as seen in Table 1), the pre-school teachers’ answers were scored as follows: number 5 for answer “Very important goal,” number 3 for answer “Medium important goal,” and number 1 for a “Less important goal.” For the purpose of statistical analysis, answers connected with the examples of movement activities for children from three to six years of age, carried out in kindergarten, were graded: “1 = Activity very important for the child’s development” with 5 points, “2 = Activity not important for the child’s development” with 4 points, and so on to the answer “5 = Activity not important for child’s development,” which we graded with 1 point. By

¹ The questionnaire was developed at the beginning of 2000, soon after the new Slovenian Preschool Curriculum was adopted in 1999. It was designed by Tatjana Devjak and Mojca Juriševič for the purposes of the study “Osebna stališča vzgojiteljic predšolskih otrok in študentk predšolske vzgoje do nekaterih ciljev kurikula za vrtce za področje gibalnih dejavnosti” (Personal Views of Preschool Teachers and People Studying Preschool Education on Certain Goals of the Preschool Curriculum Connected with Movement Activities). The findings of this study were presented in the authors’ article “Igre in gibanje: odnos vzgojiteljic do ciljev in dejavnosti iz kurikuluma predšolske vzgoje za področje gibalnih dejavnosti” (Games and Movement: The Attitude of Preschool Teachers Towards the Goals and Activities Set in the Preschool Curriculum with Regard to Movement Activities), published in the *Proceedings of the 1st Child in Motion International Conference*, which took place in October 2000.

comparing the relative values, the ratio between the degree of agreement with regard to the importance of individual recommended movement activities and their actual implementation in a concrete pre-school group was determined. Answers to open-questions were processed in a qualitative manner and ranked into categories when this seemed appropriate.

Table 1

Pre-School Teachers' Assessment of the Importance of the Curriculum Goals Connected With Movement Activities

	Goals	SLO	SLO	SLO	PT	PT	PT	$M_{SLO}-M_{SPT}$	z
		n	M_{SLO}	SD_{SLO}	n	M_{PT}	SD_{PT}		
1	Developing coordination/symmetry of movement (coordination of the entire body, arms and legs) balance.	132	2.94	0.27	72	2.83	0.41	0.11	1.970
2	Connecting movement with elements of time, rhythm, and space.	131	2.49	0.52	72	2.71	0.49	-0.22	-3.007
3	Developing finger or fine motor skills.	131	2.84	0.39	70	2.86	0.39	-0.02	-0.30
4	Developing strength, accuracy, speed, flexibility, and perseverance.	131	2.59	0.52	69	2.29	0.52	0.30	3.853
5	Relaxed performance of natural forms of movement (walking, running, jumping, etc.).	126	2.81	0.43	71	2.66	0.51	0.15	2.069
6	Learning basic movement concepts: awareness of space (where the body moves), manners of movement (how the body moves), getting to know various positions and relations between body parts, objects and people, and between people.	129	2.59	0.52	70	2.66	0.54	-0.07	-0.86
7	Learning and performing various elementary movement games.	130	2.40	0.58	71	2.56	0.55	-0.16	-1.968
8	Learning the basic ways of moving with a ball.	131	2.37	0.57	69	2.22	0.62	0.16	1.75
9	Finding own solutions to movement problems.	131	2.72	0.50	69	2.57	0.56	0.15	1.908
10	Relaxed movement in water and learning the basic swimming elements.	131	2.27	0.61	69	2.25	0.60	0.02	0.23
11	Learning the skills of riding a bike, rollerblading, etc..	131	2.26	0.60	70	2.00	0.64	0.26	2.804
12	Learning winter activities	131	2.15	0.57	69	2.12	0.56	0.04	0.44
13	Learning the basic elements of traditional (folk) movement games and other dance games.	131	2.23	0.52	70	2.30	0.62	-0.07	-0.81
14	Introducing children to games in which rules must be followed.	132	2.82	0.41	68	2.81	0.40	0.01	0.16
15	Becoming accustomed to the importance of participating in a playgroup, mutual help, and good sportsmanship.	131	2.82	0.40	69	2.78	0.48	0.04	0.62
16	Becoming accustomed with various pieces of sports equipment, their names, and usage.	131	2.13	0.63	69	2.23	0.55	-0.10	-1.19
17	Learning the basic principles of personal hygiene	132	2.88	0.35	71	2.85	0.40	0.03	0.60
18	Becoming accustomed with the clothes and footwear suitable for movement activities.	130	2.45	0.64	72	2.33	0.63	0.11	1.22
19	Becoming accustomed to the elementary games and sports typical of Slovenia and other cultural environments in the past and present.	130	1.98	0.59	72	2.36	0.56	-0.38	-4.559
20	Learning about the role of nature and a clean environment in connection with outdoor movement.	131	2.81	0.45	71	2.54	0.56	0.27	3.567
21	Learning about the basic safety measures required in performing movement activities, and increasing the awareness of taking care of one's own safety and that of others.	131	2.82	0.42	71	2.66	0.51	0.16	2.310

Findings and Their Interpretation

The Importance of Curriculum Objectives Connected With Movement Activities

Pre-school teachers assess curriculum goals for movement activities as important. Table 1 shows that Slovene pre-school teachers evaluate the following three goals as the most important for children's development: (1) developing coordination/harmony of movement (coordination of the entire body, arms, and legs) balance; (17) learning the basic principles of personal hygiene; and (3) developing finger and fine motor skills. As the three least important goals pre-school teachers cite: (11) learning the skills of riding a bike, rollerblading, etc.; (13) learning the basic skills of traditional (folk) movement games, and other dance games; and (12) learning winter activities.

Portuguese pre-school teachers on average assessed the same three goals as the most important but in different order: the most important objective was: (3) developing finger skills or fine motor skills; (17) learning basic principles of personal hygiene; and finally (1) developing coordination/coherence of movement (coordination of body movement around arms and legs) balance. Among the less important major objectives they classified (to cite the last three): (4) developing power, accuracy, speed, flexibility, and endurance; (16) recognizing different sports gear and tools, their description and use; and (8) acquiring basic modes of movement with the ball.

With the help of a *z*-test, we determined the statistical significance of differences between the estimates of Slovenian and Portuguese pre-school teachers. Their estimates are statistically significantly different in almost half of the objectives (the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th, 19th, 20th, and 21st objectives). Due to the fact that no new objectives were suggested, we can assume that the curriculum for the field of movement activity covers all the important objectives relevant to the development of children and their motor abilities and skills.

The Environment and Space in Which Movement Activities are Performed

One of the questions was about where movement activities usually take place. Pre-school teachers were choosing among these alternatives: playroom, the hall (dressing room or hallway), kindergarten playground, gymnasium, natural environment (pasture, forest, etc.), atrium of the playroom, and others (see Figure 1). We have asked them to indicate how often they use each space (from "5 = Usually" to "1 = Only rarely").

Figure 1. Places where pre-school teachers most often implement movement activities.

Slovene pre-school teachers most often implement movement activities in the atrium or the multipurpose room, in the dressing room or hallway, and in natural environments. Portuguese pre-school teachers implement most of the activities in a natural environment, in the atrium or a multipurpose room, or in the hallways and dressing room. The fewest movement activities are implemented in the playroom, probably due to the lack of space.

Table 2

Problems and Obstacles That Hinder the Implementation of Movement Activities, According to Pre-School Teachers

Categories	<i>F</i> SLO	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>F</i> PT	<i>F</i> (%)
Inappropriate space	53	55	20	40.8
Too many children in the group	6	6	0	0
Inappropriate equipment, insufficient sports equipment	21	22	6	12.2
Funds	4	4	21	42.9
Lack of expertise and motivation	4	4	2	4.1
The presence of an additional teacher, assistant in the group, while movement activities are being performed.	5	5	0	0
Lack of time	3	3	0	0
Total	96	100	49	100

Note. Not all pre-school teachers answered this question.

Problems Hindering the Implementation of Movement Activities

Pre-school teachers in Slovenia and Portugal believe that the environment in which they work with their pre-school group is usually inappropriate for performing movement activities due to the lack of available space. Many of them believe that kindergartens should have gyms and more appropriate equipment for movement activities. In Portugal, 42.9% of pre-school teachers feel that the problem hindering the implementation of movement activities is the lack of funds; in Slovenia, 6% of pre-school teachers believe that the size of the group is usually too large² for performing movement activities (see Table 2).

The problems that cause pre-school teachers difficulties in performing movement activities can be listed among the possible reasons for the discrepancies between their viewpoints on movement activities and their actual implementation.

Professional Competence of Pre-School Teachers for Implementation of Movement Activities

It is interesting that the majority of Slovene (82%) and Portuguese (91%) pre-school teachers consider themselves to be well or extremely well qualified to lead and implement movement activities: 13% of pre-school teachers from Koper estimate their professional competence as excellent, whereas only 4% of teachers from Ljubljana believe the same. It should be mentioned that undergraduate studies and further education and training programs in Ljubljana and Koper take place following the same programs and with the same instructors. Until recently, this had been even part of the same Faculty of the University of Ljubljana. Almost all of the pre-school teachers in Koper and Ljubljana, except for four, agreed with the need for additional professional training and education.

² Slovenian legislation stipulates that homogenous groups of children in the first (younger) age group (ages 1-3) consist of a maximum of 12 children, in the second (older) age group (ages 3-6) of a maximum of 17 children (for children three to four years old), and a maximum of 22 children in groups consisting of children 4-5 and 5-6 years old. In heterogeneous groups, the maximum number of children in the first age group should be 10, and in the second age group 19. For mixed-age classes, the maximum is 17 children (Article 34 of the 2005 Rules on the Norms and Personnel Conditions for Performing Preschool Activities).

Among Portuguese pre-school teachers, 92% stated that they would join education and training programme in the field of movement activities of pre-school children. All of them are interested in topics that provide them with an opportunity to further develop, extend, and connect their knowledge in various areas (play, movement, sports, learning, developing children's abilities, and learning among pre-school children according to age), which are topics that would enable them to use a comprehensive approach to education (and learning) of pre-school children. They are well aware of the importance of movement activities for pre-school children, which is why they would like to achieve a higher level of competence in this area. Among the topics they listed were getting to know activities and games for the healthy development of individual parts of the body, the importance of sports for pre-school children, movement and rhythm, a healthy lifestyle, and the importance of movement for children's health, movement in relation to natural science, dance, rollerblading, folklore, mountaineering, and so on (Devjak et al., 2013).

Conclusion

The research results show that pre-school teachers of both countries pay special attention to play and movement when planning their educational work. According to Slovene pre-school teachers, the curriculum for Kindergartens in Slovenia in the area of movement is very good. They state that all the important objectives are recorded, so they did not add any that they thought were absent from the curriculum. However, in the implementation of movement activities for children from three to six years of age, there are, in their view, certain activities that are somewhat neglected, due to inadequate space, lack of finances, lack of adequate facilities for work, and other factors. One highly significant finding is that the majority of the pre-school teachers are prepared for further education and training in this area so that they may raise the quality of their work. Slovene and Portuguese pre-school teachers connect movement and play in the activities that are important not only for the child's development but for every person's development. They pay attention to movement activities, plan them and feel satisfaction in their implementation.

References

- Curriculum for Kindergartens*. (1999). Ljubljana: Ministry for education and sports.
- Devjak, T., & Juriševič, M. (2000). Play and movement: Pre-school teachers attitude towards curriculum goals and objectives in the area of movement activities for pre-school children. In R. Pišot, & V. Štemberger (Eds.), *Children in movement: Proceedings* (pp. 113-127). Ljubljana: Faculty of Education.
- Devjak, T., Berčnik, S., Devjak, S., & Castanheira, L. (2013). *Slovene and Portuguese pre-school teachers about play and movement activities of pre-school children: Report on the joint research of Faculty of Education University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Escola superior de educação, Instituto politécnico de Bragança (Portugalska) (In the context of the Erasmus exchange)*. Ljubljana: Faculty of Education.
- Early Childhood Education and Care Portugal*. (2016). Retrieved May 2, 2016, from https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Portugal:Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care
- Education System in Portugal*. (2006/2007). Retrieved April 26, 2011, from <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Portugal:Overview>
- Grbec, S. (2010). *Comparison of sports activities in the frame of Slovene and Portuguese curriculum*. Ljubljana: Faculty of Sports University of Ljubljana.
- Law of Organization and Finance in Care and Education* (1996). Ljubljana: Ministry for education and sports. Retrieved April 26, 2011, from <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=199612&stevilka=567>
- Marjanovič, L. (1981). Play and toys. *Collection Cicibanove Urice*. Ljubljana: Zveza Prijateljev Mladine.
- Organisation of Programmes for Children Under 3 Years: Portugal*. (2016). Retrieved May 2, 2016, from https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Portugal:Organisation_of_Programmes_for_Children_under_3_years

- Pre-School Institution Act.* (1996). Ljubljana: Ministry for Education and Sports. Retrieved April 26, 2011, from <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=199612&stevilka=569>
- Rules on the norms and personnel requirements for the performance of pre-school education activity.* (2005). Ljubljana: Ministry for Education and Sports. Retrieved April 3, 2013, from <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=200575&stevilka=3356>
- Saje, P. (2002). *Movement activities in the family for 3 years old children*. Ljubljana: Faculty of Sports University of Ljubljana.
- The Comprehensive Law on the Education System.* (1986). Retrieved April 3, 2013, from <https://dre.pt/application/dir/pdf1sdip/1986/10/23700/30673081.pdf>
- The Education System in Portugal.* (2006/2007). Retrieved April 3, 2013, from [http://www.dgeec.mec.pt/np4/97/%B\\$client7ServletPath%7D/?newsId=147&fileName=education_training_portugal.pdf](http://www.dgeec.mec.pt/np4/97/%B$client7ServletPath%7D/?newsId=147&fileName=education_training_portugal.pdf)
- Videmšek, M., & Kovač, M. (2001). Movement. In L. M. Umek (Ed.), *Child in kindergarten: Handbook to curriculum for kindergarten* (pp. 67-85). Maribor: Obzorja.