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# The perceived significances of interdisciplinarity at students in educational sciences

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## Abstract.

Interdisciplinarity is an interesting approach of modern curriculum, especially at university levels. It merges beyond the conceptual line towards the practical elements that students should assimilate, towards the competencies that are formed at the university level. University professors use in their teaching an entire system of methods, strategies, tools, support materials, data, etc. in order to achieve interdisciplinarity. The direct beneficiaries of all of these are the students. This paper tried to reveal the significance of interdisciplinarity for students from educational sciences, in particular, at students from special education department, a field that is, by excellence, an interdisciplinary one. The collected data generated from students' answers give the experts the opportunity to adjust their teaching/training strategies.

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## 1. Introduction

The issue of interdisciplinarity has preoccupied philosophers and teachers since ancient times: the Greek sophists, Pliny, Comenius and Leibniz, and modern Romanian scholars such as Spiru Haret, G. Văideanu, C. Cucoş, D. Potolea, I. Neacsu, L. Ciolan, etc.

There are some definitions of the concept of interdisciplinarity: a) "Interdisciplinarity is realized between two or more subjects, which can go from simple communication of ideas to integrate fundamental concepts concerning epistemology, terminology, methodology, processes, data and research orientation." (OECD, 1972); b) Interdisciplinarity is a form of cooperation between different disciplines of a problem whose complexity cannot be captured only by a convergence and a prudent combination of several points of view." (Cucoş, C., 1996)

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The basic idea of interdisciplinarity is that the conceptual and methodological themes of several disciplines are used in the interconnection in order to examine a topic, an issue, especially on the development of integrated / cross / key/ cross –curricular.

In the educational interdisciplinarity there are sought common themes for different subjects, which can lead to the higher achievements such as decision making, problem solving, methods and techniques of effective learning etc. . These generic skills can be easily transferred from a disciplinary context to another, but, what is more, they can be transferred from the contexts of everyday life to outside the classroom. .

From the point of view of how learning occurs we can distinguish between two types of interdisciplinarity ( Legendre , 1993) : 1) centripetal interdisciplinarity that emphasis on the interaction of different disciplines which are used to operate a theme or integrated skills formation; 2) centrifuge interdisciplinarity: in which the accent is moved from the courses/ subjects to the learner, in particular to the integrated / interdisciplinarity skills that it will be acquired through the learning process.

The interdisciplinarity pedagogical model defines, at the theoretical level, a new type of education which steers the student's learning in the direction of simultaneous acquisition of knowledge, abilities, attitudes joint and / or complementary university disciplines. On a practical level, interdisciplinarity teaching model becomes a distinct type of training that boarded contents which requires necessarily special demands of a teaching situations according to some correlations between different university's courses/ school disciplines.( apud. Moran, J. 2010).

In these contents, at the university level of training, the pentagonal building curriculum model includes the following components: objectives; contents; training time allocated to training process; strategies used in the training process; strategies used in the assessment process. Definition of "targets" in terms of competence is the general trend in both the European and Romanian education. The Romanian reality gives us, in official documents, a concept of diversity in setting "targets". In daily pedagogical language, at initial training of students in educational sciences- university level, we operate with: key competences from the European Space; generic skills - Romanian equivalent in education of European' key competencies; objectives in each discipline; specific professional competences; instrumental skills; interpersonal skills; systemic competences; transversal.

## 2. Objectives and Hypotheses

The importance of the interdisciplinarity in initial formation of students from educational field, in Romania has increased due to a dynamic market labour, due to the diversification of the educational services that a child can benefit from. In the last 5 years, at University of Bucharest, due to an increasing involvement of the students in the academic life, they have become an active and equal partner in university and faculties development strategies. So, in this context, the question that arises is: How does interdisciplinarity is perceived by the students in the education field?

To answer this question we developed an investigative research that had the aim to investigate the students' perceived significance of interdisciplinarity in special education field (as a part of educational sciences) reflected in their initial formation.

Our research focused on three major objectives: a) investigation of perceived significances of competencies that are in their initial formation; b) investigation of perceived relevance for interdisciplinarity of disciplines that are in the curricula of their initial formation; c) investigation of perceived most efficient methods used in training from interdisciplinarity approach. We started from the following hypothesis: *taking into consideration the main features of special education field, we assume that we will find, at graduated students, a specific way of perception of interdisciplinarity in their initial formation.*

The research had the following stages: a) investigation of the students' perceived significances of initial formation competencies; b) investigation of students' perceived relevance for interdisciplinarity of disciplines that are in the curricula of their initial formation; c) investigation of students' perceived most efficient methods for evaluation from interdisciplinarity approach.

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