

**Munkácsy Tudományos Diákköri Konferencia**

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**TO GO OR NOT TO GO**

**The Dilemma of Changing School**

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## **Abstract**

When I was younger, I had many problems with communities I belonged to. I felt I was excommunicated, my classmates did not like me, and I was interested why. Am I "wrong", or are they? As I got older, I got many answers about it- not from books, just from life. And now with this research, I wanted to read books, articles about this topic, I was curious about the opinion of other people, and I wanted to tell mine, too.

## 1. Introduction

Last year me and my parents made a decision and I took the central entrance exam because I wanted to go on with my studies in the six-grade class education.

As I mentioned I have always had difficulties with making friends and joining communities, so the question can arise what my real motivation was. Did I escape, or did I really want to study at higher level? And what about the others in the same situation?

I wanted to make all this research because I thought it could be interesting and useful for other people and for me, too. I examined a kind of psychological topic which can be close to many people. Apart from this favourite field of mine I am also keen on learning English language so I decided to write my research paper in English to kill two birds with one stone.

This is my first year at the six-grade class education, and when I came here, I was eager to know that why exactly we came here. Only for our studies? Or just for a better community? What reasons led us when we wanted to leave our class and the primary school? And which of our goals can come true in the future?

I wanted to examine these questions in more ways. Besides my classmates I was curious about how senior six-grade class students describe this class-type, and what they think about us, the new-comers.. Moreover I was also interested what the teachers' opinion is all about the above topics.

Preparing for this research I read some specific books about talent and its ways of development. I enjoyed the books from dr. Harsányi Istán and dr. Buda Mariann in this topic, but I found *F.J.Mönks & I.H.Ypenburg's* thoughts the most interesting. They say that regularities of development are not always true, especially in case of children and young people with outstanding talent, because in such cases a confusion could arise in the mutual acceptance between the place (school or kindergarten) and the person. The children cannot get accepted by their mates, they get excommunicated, and teachers in the school or in the kindergarten do not really care about it, they just want everybody to integrate. There is a basic "principle": the child should adapt to the rules, the "traditions of the place", which -in many cases, especially in case of (very) talented students- can prevent them from rising their genius.

I agree with these thoughts. I do not know if I am talented or not but in the past I felt and still feel now the same the authors wrote in this part.

I agree with *F.J.Mönks & I.H.Ypenburg* saying talent and sensitivity are in a close connection with each other. Very intelligent and gifted people remark more from the outside world and want to examine it in more sides, more thoroughly, therefore they need more time to draw conclusions. People of this kind discover little parts, details of their surroundings. The examination, systematization of the information and their thoughts is timeconsuming and generally they need more time to be alone to meditate. Therefore, the outside world could think that these people are negligent and often accuse them of being confused and inhibited. I totally agree with every sentence they say here. After I had read it I got a better picture of myself - because many times, I just sit in my room and think about many things that come to my mind. As I was reading this article, I thought that the things they declared here could be about me, too. In my opinion, this part is the "best" of the three, this is the one I mostly agree with.

According to *F.J.Mönks & I.H.Ypenburg* there is a need to provide equal chances of development at schools. Students all around Europe are concerned in this problem. The laws of education put great stress on the development of a student, as a person, but in reality the school regulation and the education project do not really let students study by their own needs. Gifted students are also concerned in it in strong way: teachers in the school in many cases do not plan individual help for them, or it just fails by the lack of time. I am on the opinion that there is really a chance for the students to develop themselves, but unfortunately - as I can see it - in schools it does not come true in reality and I think it is a big problem.

I think students in my class feel better than in their former class, I think there are many good possibilities for learning, and there is a mature and better community here. About elder students, I have double opinion. On one hand I do not really think that they just know my class. As I can see some of them think that it is a very good and useful class for talented and hard-working students, and they still feel good here. On the other hand some of them could change their mind in six years, or got bored during such a long time there.

I think teachers have a good opinion of the six-grade class. To my mind they teach thoroughly and also with pleasure, which is necessary to make students study and believe in success. I suppose there is a very good relationship among students and teachers.

## 2. Methods

In order to receive much information I thought I could give questionnaires for my classmates, elder students and teachers in my class.

I decided to ask my classmates because I wanted to know how they felt in the same situation. I could only turn to the advanced group of my class since the language of my research is English and the other group started learning English only at the beginning of this term. Firstly, I sent them the questionnaires in e-mail, but I got it back from only two students, because they just did not watch their e-mails. So, I talked to my teacher of English, we printed out the questionnaires, and we did it together in one of the English lessons. It may mean students are busy, or uninterested, or simply tired with their work. Altogether fifteen questionnaires were sent and I got back all of them. Their answers were honest and easy to use.

Afterwards, I interviewed twelve school leavers of the six-grade class also with the help of a questionnaire in English. I do not really have any connection with them, so my teacher helped me and they -similarly to my classmates- filled it in one of the English lessons with my teacher.

Finally I inquired about the opinion of thirteen teachers teaching my class with another questionnaire written in Hungarian. Many of the asked teachers took the chance of the '*any other views*' option and wrote their own opinion about the question. Teachers gave me back the questionnaires in a short time, so I could work with them well and easily.

As for the analysis I focussed on the majority and minority of the answers, what significant elements were mentioned and what important conclusion could be drawn.

I know that forty questionnaires are not enough to get impact results, but one of my basic aims with this research-like paper was to get acquainted with the genre itself. The other goal of mine is to continue the examination of the topic in the future with all of my gained experience during this work.

### **3.FINDINGS**

#### **The analysis of my classmates' answers**

I was interested in my classmates' reasons of choosing the six-grade class to continue their studies. I prepared a questionnaire consisting of six questions. The questionnaire was filled in by the students of the advanced group because the questions are in English and it would have been too difficult for the beginners. After analysing the answers I can conclude the following.

Students chose this class for different reasons. Some students did not like the teachers, classmates or the teaching methods used in the primary school. Other important reasons were family reasons. Parents, elder sisters or brothers and cousins also attended this secondary school and they recommended to study here. Being in a better community is also frequently mentioned.

All of the students say that they prefer studying in this class because the atmosphere in the class is better than in the primary school and they think that it is the most important factor. No one says that it is worse here than in the previous class or school. My classmates do not even mind being the youngest ones in the school, they rather see the benefits of this situation e.g. they can make new friends, the older students can help them etc. According to my classmates the senior students are kind and helpful, only a few have mentioned that they do not have any relationship with the upper-grade students.

A group of questions referred to the difference between the teaching methods and the teachers' personality in the primary and the secondary school. Most students agree that they prefer the teaching methods in the secondary school because most teachers give extra information and teaching materials in their subjects. The student-teacher relationship is better because secondary school teachers are open and friendly, they treat students as adults.

The only problem is that some students in the class cannot behave properly in the lessons and they disturb the teaching and learning process. Probably, they are not mature enough for secondary education.

To sum up, students in the seventh class are satisfied with the new school, the new community, the teachers and the methods used by them. Nobody has regretted that they decided to change schools.

#### **The analysis of the questionnaire for elder students**

Firstly, I asked the elder students' opinion about the new class in the six-grade class education. All of them told that they do not really have any communication with us so they cannot make an opinion. To my mind it could be in close connection with the next

question dealing with the big age difference among students at school. Eleven out of twelve think it is not bad, however they do not see many good things in this. As I can see it is because new-comers and school-leavers typically do not keep in touch with each other. I think it could be a good chance for very good friendships, but sorrily it does not work in reality.

In the third question I examined if they still feel good after six years, or they have changed their mind. Each of them thinks that it is still good and advantageous to attend this class, they got many chances and successes, so this six-grade class was a very good decision for them, and it could be a success for us, too.

Next, I asked them about the benefits of the six-grade class against four-grade classes in the school. Although the answers are varied here, most students put human relationships on the top of the list. I am on the opinion that they can think it is the most important thing in their class. Some of them also mentioned the benefit coming from the fact that teachers use better teaching methods in that class-type. In my little experience I agree with them. Few students say that they can know people, the place, all the school better, which they consider a positive factor. I totally agree with this opinion, I keep it a beneficial and important thing

Finally, I examined the disadvantages, too. Most students think that they do not see anything that could be a disadvantage against any other classes. No one thinks that they felt badly among elder students, and neither do I. The only thing that may have some negative aspects - in some of their, and in my opinion, too - is that we have to keep in mind six years' study materials for the final exam. Nevertheless I know it is a bit childish approach of the 'problem' that is not a problem at all, since we study for ourselves.

To put everything together as elder students can see the six-grade class, they generally think it is full of chances and successes, it is a right decision for the starters. It has many benefits against other classes, mainly in human ways, and it does not really have disadvantages. It is worth attending this type of education for the talented students.

### **The analysis of the teachers' answers**

First I wanted to get to know how teachers think about the advantages of six-grade class. They mostly think that they can teach curriculum more thoroughly in six years. They also feel that the teachers and students in this class-type are more interested and motivated. Moreover some teachers say that they are also motivated by the mutual work; the students' achievement is better and there is a close class community.. However they do not really think that students are more talented or the relationship between teachers and students (and their parents) is much closer, or there are fewer behaviour problems.

With the help of the second question I examined who this class is really for. Most of the teachers offer this class for students with outstanding abilities and (or) excellent success, or for diligent students with ordinary abilities. Some teachers think that this class can be good for students talented in just one subject, or the ones being very talented, but reserved. Teachers did not really offer this class for gifted students with special educational need.

Next I tried to have some information about the disadvantages of this class-type.

Most of the answers show that students have to be more independent. Three of the teachers think that students are overladen, and in three "others" view it has not got any disadvantages. Two of the teachers think that the study-material differs a lot from the one in the elementary school, and only two of them consider learning under one roof for different generations a problem. Only one teacher thinks that the teacher-student relationship is not so close here and another one mentions the potential break after the eighth year - in case of need of change - as disadvantage.

The fourth question focussed on how teachers can see our class. Two-thirds think that most of the students are gifted and interested, and seven of them are on the opinion that a good class-community is developing.

Although only few teachers took the chance to express their own opinion in the 'notes' part, I think some of them can be informative. One of the teachers thinks that there are students with quite different knowledge in the class; and another teacher thinks that the time we have spent together so far is too short to have enough information about the ability of the students.

Furthermore, I wanted to highlight the most important part of school-education, therefore the teaching method was put into centre. As the majority of teachers can see there is a need for systematic explanations of the materials, and nine of them say that they provide more practice tasks. Seven teachers think there is a need for detailed outlines. Eight teachers feel that teaching here is basically for joy and no one thinks that they use the same methods as in any other classes.

Then I turned to the topic of ambition of my classmates. To what extent are we hard-working or diligent? Almost all teachers think that we have thorough and hard-working attitude. Fewer than twenty per cent think that my class has a little "rough" attitude. As I can see, this is true. Most of students in my class are very studious and motivated with certain aims for the future. However a little part of us really seems to be a bit "rough". To my mind these students may be the ones who decided to come to our school having external reasons. They may not have inner motivation. None of the teachers is on the opinion that we are not so hard-working or we are passive.

Two teachers referred to the difference in abilities, talent and sometimes behaviour as problems. Another one thinks, there are some students who are overladen, therefore they do not have the chance to prepare well enough for the lessons. Although only few teachers mentioned the above topics, I think these problems are worth paying attention to in the future.

I also wanted to collect some information concerning the difference in the relationship of teachers teaching in this class-type, if any. Almost half of them think that there is no significant difference among classes in this way. However the other half say that there is closer relationship among them, and a quarter add that there are discussions, coordinations more often.

In the last question, I wanted to examine if teachers like teaching in this class, or not. All the teachers say that it is good to teach here. Almost everyone mentions that we are interested and more motivated than students in other classes. Some teachers even think that they can teach better in six-year classes, they think we are active, we have the thirst for knowledge.

I got only one negative remark about us saying there are too many students in the class.

All in all, teachers have a good opinion of the six-grade class education, and about my

class. Our teachers, just like elder students I asked, see many benefits in this type of education and they love teaching in these classes.

#### **4. Summary**

Although I did not ask too many people and the results may not be relevant enough, I think some conclusions can be drawn about the motivation of students before changing school.

About my classmates my hypothesis came true. Everybody has said that it is much better here than in their former schools. On one hand they need higher requirements, on the other hand it turned out that a good class-community is also important for them. What is more, that was the main reason why the majority decided to change school.

In the case of elder students, half of my "double opinion" has only been confirmed. All the school-leavers say that it is a very good and useful class and they still feel good here. However despite my thoughts no one has told that they have changed their mind in six years, or have been bored during the long time they have spent together. All in all it is worth choosing this class-type for talented students.

I supposed teachers have positive opinion of the six-grade class and their answers have shown the same. Teacher-student relationships are really much closer than in a primary school and they think it is important to be successful in studying, too.

As for more lines of this research, I could ask the teachers, classmates, and the school-leavers in the six-grade class education again. It would be interesting to know if people changed their mind in one, two, three or more years, and if this is so, in which ways. Besides, I am going to involve other classes in the school and turn to students in the sixth year of primary schools to get know what expectations they have from this training. In order to make a more reader-friendly survey, I tend to analyse their answers with using graphs.

Finally I would like to say thanks for all the ones who helped my work with their answers. It was my pleasure to deal with this topic I have always been interested in. Furthermore I also enjoyed the benefit originating from the friendly relationship that has formed during the work between me and my teachers.

## 5. Bibliography

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## 6. Appendix

### Appendix 1

#### Questionnaire for my classmates

I. Why did you decide to leave your primary school and come to our six-grade class?

1. In my primary school

- a, the teachers were not so good,
- b, students did not like me,
- c, the teaching method was too slow for me,
- d, I did not like the school at all.
- e. any other reasons:.....

2. For other reasons:

- a, I wanted to get to a place with more possibilities.
- b, I wanted to learn at a higher level.
- c, I wanted to get into a better community.

3. For family reasons:

- a, My parents told me to come here.
- b, My older sister/brother came here, too.
- c. I wanted to have a try at a grammar school.
- d. any other reasons:.....

II. Is it better here than in your former school?

- a, Yes, it is.
- b, No, it is not.

III. Why is/ is not it better?

1. It is better because:

- a, We can learn at a higher level.
- b, People accept each other's speciality and the students make true fellowships.
- c, We can get into a better class-community,
- d, We can be specialized in different subjects.
- e, We can have extra-curricular activities.
- f. any other reasons:.....

2. It is worse because:

Studying:

- a, The way of teaching is too fast.
- b, Studying is too difficult.
- c, We have to study too much.
- d. Teachers' explanations are difficult to follow and understand.
- e. there are students from different schools with different knowledge.
- f. any other reasons:.....

Human relationships:

- a, People and the community are different here, and I cannot get used to it,
- b. Teachers do not pay as much attention to students as in the primary school,
- c. Teachers do not keep in touch with the parents,
- d. Elder students are unfriendly with us.
- e. any other views:.....

IV. How does it feel to be one of the youngest students in this big school?

- a, It is better to be the 'young' among older students than to be "the oldest" in the primary school.
- b. I can make new friends and turn to elder schoolmates if necessary.
- c. The more we are, the stronger the race is to be the best.

d, It is not so good to be so young among many older students.

e. any other views:.....

V. How older students behave with you? (How do you feel it?)

a, They are very kind and helpful.

b, They are not so kind, and they do not really help me in the integration.

c. Older students make me respect them all the time, which is frustrating.

d, I do not really have any communication with elder students.

e. any other views:.....

VI. In what ways are teachers different at your present school?

1. They teach better because:

a, they tell us more and other things than in books.

b, they teach in more interesting way.

c, they have a thorough and clear way of teaching.

d. they pay attention to our problems, we can always turn to them if necessary.

e. any other views:.....

2. I cannot learn better because:

a, The speed of teaching and learning is too fast (we do not have enough time to confirm what we study about),

b, I can't understand what they teach (their explanation is difficult to understand)

c. There are students who disturb the lessons with their behaviour, I can't concentrate.

d. I don't get the help I would need for my development.

e. any other views:.....

3. As for teachers' personality:

a, I think they are stricter,

b, I think they treat children as adults.

- c, I think they are kind and friendly.
- d, They are not strict enough.
- e, Teachers are open and the teacher-student relationship is different here from the one in primary school.
- f, Teachers and students are equal.
- g. any other views:.....

## **Appendix 2**

### **Questionnaire for elder students**

1. What do you think about the new class in the six-grade class education?
  - a, I think they are very 'cute' and they are clever.
  - b, I think they are not enough mature yet to this six-grade class.
  - c, I do not really have any communication with them.
  
2. Is this big age difference good or bad?
  - a, I think it is a very good, interesting and exciting chance for many good
  - b, I think it is not bad, but I do not see many good things in this.
  - c, I think it is not so good.
  
3. Do you still think it was a good idea to come here? (Do you still enjoy studying here?)
  - a, Yes, I do. I got many chances and successes in this six-grade class.
  - b, No, I do not really. I did not really get more here than in any other classes.
  
4. What are the benefits of a six-grade class comparing with the four-grade class education in your opinion?

- a, We could have better relationships with our classmates in six years.
- b, We could get used to people and the place better.
- c, We got more chances and successes in studying.

5. What are the disadvantages?

- a, I do not see any disadvantages against any other classes in the school.
- b, We have to remember more years' study materials.
- c, When we were young it was bad among elder students.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Questionnaire for teachers**

Tisztelt Tanárnő! Tisztelt Tanár Úr!

Kérem, segítse munkámat az alábbi kérdőív kitöltésével, melyet a 2014/2015. tanévben meghirdetett MTDK diákköri munkámban szeretnék felhasználni. Dolgozatomban melyet angol nyelven írok- az idei tanévben a hatosztályos képzésben tanulmányaikat megkezdő diáktársaim motivációját , az iskolaváltás mögött álló indítékaikat vizsgálom.

Segítségét előre is köszönöm!

Molnár Maja  
7.a osztályos tanuló

- 
- Jelölje be az alábbi kérdésekhez rendelt válaszok közül, amellyel leginkább egyetért. Több válasz is bejelölhető.

a. Miben látja a hatosztályos képzés előnyeit?

- a tanulók könnyebben motiválhatók
- a tanulók érdeklődőbbek
- a tanulók természetesebben viszonyulnak tanáraikhoz, diáktársaikhoz

- a tanulók tehetségesebbek
- a tananyag hat év alatt alaposabban megtanítható
- jobb osztályközösség alakítható ki
- kevesebb a magatartásbeli probléma
- a szülők szorosabb kapcsolatot tartanak az iskolával
- a pedagógusok motiváltabbak (kölcsonös motiváció valósul meg)
- jobb a tanulmányi eredmények
- egyéb:.....
- .....
- .....

b. Kiknek ajánlja a képzést?

- kiemelt képességű tanulóknak
- jeles, kitűnő eredményeket elérő tanulóknak
- átlagos tehetségű, nagy szorgalommal bíró tanulóknak
- jó képességű gátlásos, visszahúzódó tanulóknak
- egy-egy részterületen kiemelkedő eredményt elérő tanulóknak
- jó képességű, sajátos nevelési igényű tanulóknak
- egyéb:.....

c. Milyen hátrányokat tud megnevezni a képzéssel szemben?

- tanulók túlterheltsége
- tananyag átstrukturálása a korábbi általános iskolai tantervhez képest
- nagy korosztálybeli különbségek az évfolyamok között
- a tanár-diák viszony kevésbé szoros az általános iskolához képest

- nagyobb önállóságot vár el a tanulótól a képzés
- nincs hátránya
- egyéb:.....

d. Hogyan látja az idei hetedik osztály beiskolázását?

- az osztály többsége kiemelkedő képességű, érdeklődő tanuló
- átlagos képességű, kellő szorgalommal rendelkező tanulók
- a tanulók többsége felzárkóztatásra szorul
- összetartó osztályközösség formálódik
- egymást segítő tanár-diák kapcsolat alakult ki
- egyéb:.....
- .....
- .....

e. Ön szerint miben tér el a tanítási módszer a hatosztályos képzésben?

- lassabb ütemű, szisztematikus magyarázatok
- részletes vázlatkészítés
- élményalapú oktatás a fókuszban
- több gyakorló feladat
- nincs eltérés, egyforma módszerek kerülnek alkalmazásra
- egyéb:.....

f. Milyennek tartja a tanulók tanuláshoz való viszonyát az idei 7. osztályban?

- alapos, szorgalmas hozzáállás a jellemző
- a tanulók többsége
- kissé elnagyolt hozzáállás a jellemző
- a tanulók nagyobb része nem mutat kellő szorgalmat
- a többség kifejezetten passzív
- egyéb meglátás:.....

g. Van-e különbség az osztályban tanító pedagógusok egymáshoz való viszonya terén más osztályokhoz képest?

- az osztályban tanító tanárok szorosabb munkakapcsolatban állnak, mint a négy évfolyamos osztályokban
- gyakoribbak a szakmai megbeszélések, egyeztetések
- a kapcsolódó szaktárgyakat tanítók együttműködése szorosabb
- nincs különbség képzések szerint
- egyéb meglátás:.....

h. Szeret az osztályban tanítani? Miért?

- igen.....  
.....
- nem:.....  
.....  
.....