

The Importance of Organising and Conducting Tourism Instruction in Early Childhood and School Education Based on the Example of the CEIP Villa Romana in Spain

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Abstract — Tourism is defined as social and spatial mobility and a school trip is one of its multiple forms. Most teachers consider school trips one of the most important methods of working with pupils. Tourism and sightseeing fulfill a number of social functions, which is why proper planning and conducting a trip are so significant. The analysis of the interviews and questionnaires conducted among the teaching staff of a Spanish primary school, along with the observation of pupils, shows that the actions taken are concentrated on local and international mobility, the latter owing to the Erasmus + program. According to 85 per cent of respondents, the alternation of local and international trips offers young people greater opportunities for development, although it undoubtedly requires more effort and involvement.

Keywords — Children Mobility, Erasmus + Program, School Tourism Education, School Tourist Activity.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is defined as social and spatial mobility involving a voluntary and temporary change of location and living environment. Another important definition describes tourism as "travelling and temporarily staying away from one's place of residence for exploratory, economic, socio-cultural, leisure and entertainment purposes" [1] thus reflecting the multidimensional character of the phenomenon. School trips are intentional, planned and properly conducted outings [2]. To be more precise [3], they are occasions on which pupils leave school premises to pursue exploratory, educational, pedagogical and leisure goals. Such a form of educational and pedagogical work enables them to acquire first-hand knowledge of their local environment and region. It is particularly important to distinguish between a trip and an outdoor class [3]. Classes taught outside school comprise one or two lesson units and are related to the curriculum. On account of the natural surroundings, outdoor locations can be compared to laboratories. They not only provide first-hand experience but also accelerate the acquisition of knowledge, taking advantage of the natural environment [4]. The organization of trips and outdoor activities for young people is examined in the literature in terms of three aspects: subjects, physical activity as well as local history and exploration [5], [3], [6].

Owing to the complexity of the subject, local history contents should be divided so as to correspond to different age groups. The primary goal of schools' educational work is the comprehensive development of young people. School curricula, especially in early childhood education, provide various contents related to children's family environment and the specific character of the region they

inhabit. Tourism instruction can also be organized in leisure time or as part of extracurricular activities. School trips teach young people how to handle difficulties as a group. As for teachers, they should pay attention to pupils' proper and polite behavior in public places, means of transport, objects of historic importance, and protected areas.

II. SUBJECT OF STUDY

The issues discussed in the present article are related in particular to school tourist activity, to the mobility of teachers and pupils, and to the consequences of tourism. The article aims to assess the use of the sightseeing and tourist potential of the nearest neighborhood for the purpose of school trips and outdoor activities. The study was conducted in the Spanish school of CEIP Villa Romana. Taking into account the spatial aspects of the phenomenon, the article examines the organization, conducting, intensiveness forms and structure of school tourism. The study involved 21 teachers from the CEIP Villa Romana school located in Catarroja (the Spanish province of Valencia) in the 2015-2016 school year. The staff is comprised of 32 teachers. The CEIP Villa Romana is a public school created in 2008. At present, there are 20 groups of pupils from nursery and primary education and around 540 pupils in total. The school offers three language learning paths, teaching the non-linguistic subjects in three languages: Valencian, Spanish and English. There are only six public schools in the Valencian Community with this kind of learning program. Their two main values are innovation and openness to Europe (The school website).

It should be emphasized that one-time selection and the idiosyncrasies of the teachers surveyed makes it impossible to draw generalized conclusions based on the sample. Due to its qualitative character [7] the study used a targeted sample. The choice of school was determined by the author's cooperation with the CEIP Villa Romana as part of Erasmus+ (an international internship program). Twenty teachers and the deputy head were asked to answer a questionnaire (Appendix 1). Due to their direct participation in organizing trips, only class tutors were included in the study. The questionnaire consisted of 21 questions related to trip planning e.g. what do teachers take into account while choosing a particular tourist event for their pupils, do they organize trips based on original ideas etc. The principal method used in the study was participating observation, which consists in a planned and systematic perception of facts which are then used to determine the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the

findings. The objects of the observation were: one group of 38 pupils, nine groups of 28 and 30 pupils respectively, and 14 teachers. Observation took place during a one-day trip and three theater outings.

III. TOURIST ACTIVITY – RESEARCH RESULTS

School trips may have different forms and serve various purposes. They can be divided according to numerous criteria, such as the aim of the trip or the type of activities included in it [8]. Trips organized by class tutors play an important part in the tourist activity of youth. However, teachers are reluctant to admit lack of expertise in conducting outdoor activities. The results of the study show that only two teachers (9 per cent) feel fully competent to organize a trip, 38 per cent (21 teachers) claim to know the domain, while 20 per cent admit they would find it very difficult to organize a trip. The facts presented in this summary may result from the scarcity, or a virtual lack of top-down guidelines (laws, etc.) concerning the organization of school trips; without legal regulations, it becomes virtually impossible. According to the deputy head, there are no written rules, only conventions with which the entire teaching staff are familiar. A trip requires the participation of at least 80 per cent of pupils from a class. It is obligatory to include a trip in the curriculum announced at the beginning of each semester ("In general terms, they just have to be linked to the curriculum taught"). Teachers must not exceed the number outings in one semester (i.e. one trip or one out-of-school cultural event). The responsibility for each trip lies with trip coordinators (teachers), who must first obtain permission from the Pedagogical Committee formed by the head teacher, the deputy head and the coordinators of each cycle.

Lack of legal regulation leads teachers, who also fear responsibility for pupils, to use the services of travel agents offering package trips. It should be noted that, due to the economic crisis and a double reduction in salaries earned by Spanish teachers, school trips have become scarce [9]. Teachers point out that tourist activity requires more work and effort, usually at the cost of their own free time, which is in no way reflected in compensation (according to class tutors). Since 2014 a slight increase in salaries has been noted [10].

Contrary to the unofficial principle of discontinuing trips, the teachers at the school surveyed organized weekend outings with pupils so as not to collide with classes. A class tutor of the third year recalls one such occasion: "While discussing with my first-year pupils the diversity of flora and fauna, I decided to take them to Valencia's Bioparc. I feel that this small gesture on my part has strengthened the relations between me and the children. Sometimes it takes very little to earn children's and parents' respect and gratitude – something for which you have worked for years."

In the 2015-2016 school year, thirteen teachers (62 per cent) declare their intention to organize trips for their pupils; in the majority of cases (74 per cent), these are going to be one-day outings. On account of repetitiveness

in the preceding 2014-2015 school year, fifteen teachers took their pupils on a trip, 81 per cent of which lasted one day.

For the maximum reduction of costs, teachers try to benefit from the school's nearest neighborhood (due to low transport fares). The studies show that the price of trips grows annually (according to 71 per cent of respondents).

In order to choose the right trip, teachers must take into consideration various aspects, such as the price or the program (Fig.1). The indicated cost of a one-day trip is 5-30 euro; a trip lasting several days may cost 60-180 euro.

The analysis of 21 questionnaires shows that thirteen class tutors (62 per cent) have organized outdoor activities or longer outings with their pupils. However, it is very common (71 per cent) to use the services of independent travel agencies for this purpose. This is caused by low levels of theoretical and practical knowledge among teachers, including the rules and methods of organizing outdoor activities. Teachers tend to use professional trip programs and their answers to the questionnaire reflect apathy and passiveness towards organizing and conducting trips. The responsibility is usually delegated to qualified guides and tour leaders; in some cases (57 per cent) parents are consulted about the matter. Teachers believe that contact with nature and outdoor exploration are the optimal recipe for a school trip. Over half the respondents confirm that the organization of outdoor activities requires many preparations but the results are incomparable to those obtained during regular, indoor classes.

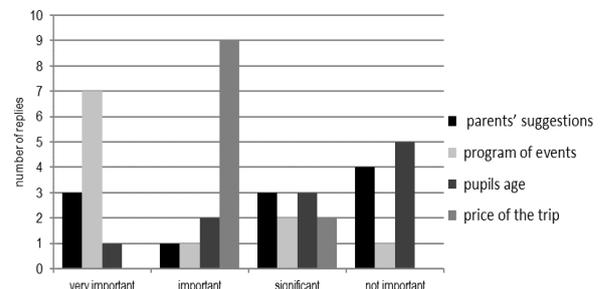


Fig. 1. Most important criteria of choosing a school trip
Source: Author's own work.

Do you treat a trip as a form of reward for good behaviour among your pupils?

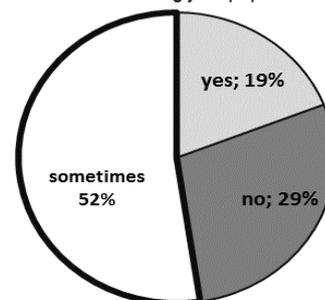


Fig. 2. The trip as a form of reward for good behavior
Source: Author's own work.

Once the organization process was determined, the respondents were asked if they treated such trips as a reward for good behavior among their pupils. The chart (Fig.2) demonstrates that over half the teachers (52 per

cent) sometimes use this kind of motivation to make young people work harder and help them develop positive character traits.

IV. SCHOOL TRIPS

School trips at the CEIP Villa Romana are organized in two periods: October-November and March-April (due to weather conditions). Older pupils (the fifth and sixth year) and in the 2015-2016 school year also pupils from the third year (for the first time) went on a trip with one overnight stay. Each of 20 teams participated in workshops in Almàssera (at a farm and at the Historic Museum of Porcelain founded by the Lladró brothers). In addition to organizing regular trips, for the last three years the school has been part of the international exchange program, Erasmus+. Through cooperation with other European schools, pupils and teachers participate in mobility programs in such countries as Italy, Ireland, Slovakia, Poland and France. In the 2015-2016 school year pupils can also benefit from the offer prepared by the Teatre Auditori Catarroja Francisco Chirivella (located in the school's vicinity, 15-20 minutes on foot). The theatre offers free-of-charge plays for children attending schools in Catarroja for the entire school year. In the first semester pupils attended plays in English (which is treated as a language project, on account of the school's profile). In the summer semester plays are performed in *valenciano* (a dialect spoken in the province of Valencia). The plays can be watched on days specified by the organizers from 9 to 11 am. The young people from CEIP Villa Romana have seen six different plays (three in the first semester and three in the second). The subject matter of plays varies according to the age of the audience (Fig.1). The first ones to attend were older pupils (the fifth and sixth year) followed by the second, third, and fourth year. The last, youngest group comprised pupils from the first year and five-year-olds from nursery education.

One of the previously mentioned one-day trips to Almàssera in the province of Valencia took place on 3 March 2016 from 9 am to 4 pm (i.e. class time). It was attended by 38 pupils and 4 trip coordinators. It cost 10.50 euro per participant. The group consisted of two classes, from the fifth and sixth year, although three fifth-year pupils stayed at school to attend regular classes. The trip comprised three stages, including a visit to a farm and to Museu de l'Horta (translated as The Field Museum), where an exhibition on rural life was displayed. The young people became familiar with sowing and harvesting; they observed farming from the historical and contemporary perspective, at the museum and on a field trip respectively. During the second stage of the trip the participants visited the family house of famous artists, Juan, José, and Vicente Lladró (now converted into a museum). In 1953 the three brothers started to create porcelain figurines in a Moorish furnace. They first worked in a factory of tiles and porcelain tableware, at the same time developing artistic interests at home. With time, the demand for Lladró figurines started to grow beyond expectations. The first shop with Lladró porcelain in Valencia was founded by

the end of the decade. In 1967 the construction of the City of Porcelain began and can still be partly admired thanks to multicolored tiles preserved until today on the city buildings (Lladró porcelain). During the third stage of the trip pupils learned through play (doing experiments and explaining the laws of physics and chemistry) and spent time actively in a park.

The group was divided into three teams, supervised by three adults. Each group followed the same schedule, but they worked alternately to maintain order.

- On little fields, prepared for them in advance, the pupils planted vegetables and fruits found daily on supermarket shelves and market stalls. Each participant was in charge of one plant, which had to be properly taken care of, i.e. planted and watered. Later on, the supervisors explained in detail how to look after the plants.

- While still on the premises, the pupils visited a museum of agriculture where they learned about sowing and harvesting as well as the division between male and female chores.

- The pupils and their supervisors went out on an excursion to see what plantations of potatoes, artichokes and cauliflowers look like nowadays. The instructors took this opportunity to explain the processes of watering and feeding of arable land. Having explained the process of food production, the teachers made a reference to pottery production. The children had the chance to create make their own symbols of wisdom, little owls, from clay.

After a small lunch the group went to the Lladró museum, where they could hear the story of the three gifted brothers told by the guides. At around 2 pm the pupils were given thirty minutes to rest and snack. After the break they took part in educational workshops during which they were divided into two groups. The outdoor class, which enjoyed great popularity, was related to the laws of physics and chemistry. At around 3 pm the whole group went to a park for about 50 minutes of leisure involving climbing walls, ropes and swings. The scheduled return time was 4.30 pm.

Such and similar trips are often organized at the CEIP Villa Romana. They aim to confront the knowledge acquired in the classroom with the knowledge applicable in everyday life. The pupils themselves often pointed out contents which they had learned earlier and which could finally be put into practice.

V. CONCLUSION

Most contemporary teachers treat school trips as any other educational method. Some even consider them to be one of the most important forms of working with pupils and, in the hierarchy of importance and usefulness, place it right behind regular, indoor classes. School trips also aim to give young people the opportunity to acquire learning skills and time to relax. Educational trips allow teachers to implement their curriculum in an attractive and unconventional way. As a pedagogical and educational tool, trips are considered exceptionally efficient, as they not only encourage learning but also the proper development of young people's personality [11]. From the

pedagogical perspective, they create conditions for team building within a class, helping young people to bond and get to know each other. Trips also promote a passion for learning, as they help correlate the goals and contents of trip programs with pupils' interests and the requirements specified in the curriculum. A perfect example of a comprehensive development program is Erasmus+ (Foundation for the Development of the Education System) in which the author participated herself and which can be classified as a form of educational tourism. While staying in another country, pupils and teachers discover that all people are alike and, despite geographical differences, they display similar behaviors, have similar problems and interests etc. Such programs promote a friendly and open attitude to cultural differences.

To conclude, tourism at the studied school has considerable exploratory and pedagogical importance. However, its insufficient popularity and, quite often, low quality as an element of the educational system remain a problem [12]. Another obstacle, one which has a direct effect on teachers' contribution to tourism, are vague regulations issued by the ministry responsible for organizing school touristic events. Work for an eventual success in this field is equally teachers' and pupils' responsibility. Teachers should invite young people to cooperate in organization and involve them in planning a trip which will allow them to use the acquired knowledge and to expand their horizons. The diversification of trips shows that the school complies with the methodology, the rules of organizing tourism and local history education, and opinions expressed in the literature on the subject [13]. The role and importance of tourism is intrinsically linked to schools' multiple functions as educational institutions. Although it is impossible to point to one dominant role of schools, the pedagogical and educational functions are certainly among the principal ones. The former can be defined as the entire influence shaping a young person, while the latter as acquiring orientation in natural and social surroundings.

APPENDIX

The questionnaire addressed to teachers:

Please provide answers to these questions, concerning the organization and conduct of school trips and tourism at school. The anonymous results of this interview will be used only in the form of statistic breakdown in a scientific article publication by Magdalena Kugiejko

1. Location of the school

- urban school
- village school
- please provide the name of the city and municipality where the school is located.....

2. Self-assessment of the competence in the field of organizing and conducting tourism in school (rate by checking the appropriate characteristics, for each 1-5, MAX= 5)

- I am a specialist in the field
- I am competent in the field
- I know the field in question

- I am familiar with the basic problems of the field
 - I do not know the field
3. Are you planning a school trip in the following year 2015/2016?(select one answer if yes, please indicate the location and its duration)
 - yes
 - no
 4. This tour will include:
 - one day
 - a few days
 5. Did you go on a school trip in the previous year 2014/2015?
 - yes (go to question No. 7)
 - no
 6. If you were on the trip, how long did it last?
 - one day
 - a few days
 7. What do you think is the most important criteria when choosing a school trip(assign the appropriate points in the scale each 1-4, 4 =MAX)
 - parents' suggestions
 - program of events
 - pupils age
 - price of the trip
 8. Are parents' suggestions important to you?
 - yes
 - no
 - sometimes
 9. What form of a trip do you prefer? (please choose one)
 - discussion in class
 - search in the catalogs of travel agencies
 - to plan your own trip
 - parents impose their proposals
 10. Do you use ready-offers from travel agencies? (if yes, please indicate how often)
 - yes
 - no
 11. Does it happen you to replicate proven offers?
 - yes
 - no
 12. Preferred location of a short, one day school trips? (please assign the appropriate points on a scale of 1-6, 6-MAX)
 - subject excursions (lessons in the field)
 - museum
 - cinema
 - swimming pool
 - theatre
 - visiting large cities (eg. Valencia, Murcia, Madrid)
 13. Preferred location of long school trips? (please assign the appropriate points on a scale of 1-4, 4-MAX)
 - lake
 - mountains
 - seaside
 - subject tours (eg. school camps)
 14. In your opinion, the lesson carried out in the field are: (please select one answer)

- interesting and give more valuable information
 - interesting and require more preparation from the teacher
 - they require more preparation from the teacher and do not provide measurable benefits
 - they do not provide measurable benefits and are problematic for the teachers
15. Have you ever organized a school trip(including transport, accommodation, needed benefits, meals, free time animation)?
- yes
 - no
16. If you have the opportunity to organize a one-daytrip, where are you mostly taking your pupils?
.....
17. Are you trying to interest children in any particular form of activity? (horse riding, wall climbing, paintball, etc.) (if yes, please provide the name of the activity)
- yes
 - no
18. Most popular price ranges of short tourist events?
.....
19. Most popular price ranges of long tourist events?
.....
20. Do you think that the costs of school trips are increasing each year?
- yes
 - no
- 21 Do you treat a trip as a form of reward for good behavior among your pupils?
- yes
 - no
 - sometimes

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