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THE FUNCTIONALITY OF INTEGRALITY AND CONTINUITY IN THE EDUCATION OF 6-9 YEAR OLD CHILDREN

531.01. GENERAL THEORY OF EDUCATION

Summary of the doctor habilitatus thesis in educational sciences

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CONTENTS

CONCEPTUAL MARKINGS OF THE RESEARCH

The actuality and importance of the theme. We know that one of the problems of reforming the education system in the Republic of Moldova is the preservation and development of a common educational space, ensuring continuity between all stages of education, thus neutralizing the discontinuous character of the personality formation process. In this sense, addressing the issue of school success in the context of integrity and continuity from preschool education to primary education and, implicitly, from the specific game activity to the school learning activity, represents a challenge with multiple implications both from a theoretical and methodological point of view , as well as practical-action.

The dialectic of the correlation between the level of preschool education and primary education is such that between these two levels there have always been some contradictions, which are characterized by discontinuity. These circumstances put the child in the situation of having to start from "zero" in the next phase (primary education), a fact that causes difficulties in adapting to the new learning conditions in school. The inconveniences of the child's adaptation are related to the typical characteristics of each stage, such as the psychophysiological peculiarities and trends in children's development, certain relationships and behavioral strategies regarding the organization of the educational process, the dominant activities of children at each stage of education, etc., aspects addressed in research signed by A. Michou and co-authors [64], A. Bandura [54], D. Borbelyova [55], L. Philips [66], L. Rupsiene [67], M. Bornstein [56], S. Cemortan [8], A. Bolboceanu [4], M. Cojocaru-Borozan [10], I. Racu [40], J. Racu [41], U. Șchiopu [47], M. Roco [42], M. Pavlenco [36], M. Farcaș [20], F. Golu [21], Г. A. Tsukerman, K. N. Поливанова [96], H. B. Dubrovinskaya, D. A. Farber, M. M. Безруких [83], A. Usova [95] etc.

Currently, in the practice of preschool education and primary education, two approaches to the problem of continuity can be found, being the most common. The first approach is characterized by exaggeration in preparing children for school. Most often, the educator substitutes the activities specific to preschoolers with learning ones, producing, in this way, their "didacticization". Thus, within the activities of the preschool institution, the specific features of the primary school learning subjects (mathematics, Romanian language, etc.) are outlined. In other words, educators emphasize the special preparation of children for school [84].

The second approach is based on the development in the 1st grade of those knowledge, skills, skills that the children have already formed in the preschool institution, producing the resumption of the contents [88].

In the above context, we must mention that both approaches do not offer solutions for solving the problem of integrality and continuity in children's education and, as a result, we find incongruities between these two levels of education.

The multidimensional approach to the phenomenon of continuity continuously concerns researchers from various scientific fields (philosophy, psychology, sociology, physiology, etc.) G. W. F. Hegel [24], Im. Kant [28], A. Boboc [3], P. Sztomka [71], J. Piaget [39], U. Șchiopu [47], P. Jelescu [27], П. K. Anokhin [77].

The development of an overall vision, conditioned by the educational interests of society and the practice of achieving continuity between the levels of the education system, including preschool education and primary education, emphasizes the idea of capitalizing on relationships of integrity and continuity in their many manifestations and openings from the perspective of the

integral formation of the children's personality and their adaptation to the new conditions of the next level of the education system, a fact mentioned in the publications of G. Spencer [70], T. Parsons [65], H. Werner [73], Șt. Buzănescu, 5, Vl. Guțu [23], V. Gh. Cojocaru [11], V. Cojocaru [12], V. Andrițchi [1], N. Petrovschi [37], I. Dafinoiu [17], S Cristea [13], I. Culic [16], Gh. Stanciu [49], M. Zlate [52], B. B. Davydov [81], A. N. Poddyakov [89], N. N. Poddyakov [90] etc.

Therefore, the actuality of the topic under discussion calls for the need to develop an overall vision, conditioned by the educational interests of society and the practice of achieving continuity between the stages of the education system, including preschool education and primary education, emphasizes the idea of capitalizing on the relationships of integrity and continuity in their many manifestations and openings from the perspective of the integral formation of the children's personality and their adaptation to the new conditions of the next level of the education system.

Description of the situation in the field and identification of the research problem

The issue of integrality and continuity concerns several areas of reference, which emerge from the current guidelines of education. First of all, the complexity of structuring the continuity between the levels of the education system and the relationships of integrity and continuity between preschool education and primary education. This field involves the substantiation of theory and methodology, approached multidimensionally, holistically: from notions, principles, factors one goes analytically to notions in a context of actions in which various strategic behaviors are produced from the perspective of a whole series of re/conceptualizations. Secondly, the acceptance of wholeness and continuity as a unified process of personality development, which at the preschool stage goes through several developmental crises, including the "7-year crisis". This fact can lead, inherently, to the establishment of a new quality in the development of the concept of integrality and continuity between the stage of preschool education and primary education. So, it is essential to address the integrity and continuity internally (within the same level) and externally (between the levels of the education system). Thirdly, it is imperative to know the pedagogical, psychological and physiological essence of integrity and continuity and, respectively, the development of strategies regarding the achievement of integrity and continuity that can help education actors to conceive and capitalize on this process, ensuring, in the way this, the success of children at every level of education. From this perspective, a series of re/conceptualizations regarding the integrity and continuity of the learning activity are claimed, which claim not only the evidence of children's skills, but also the style of teaching and communication, the strategies for organizing the educational process at each level of the education system, preparation for school by identifying critical periods of development and school adaptation and maturation factors in the transition from kindergarten to school, from play activity to learning activity, psychological analysis of the concept of school success at the beginning of schooling. In the same way, it is necessary to redefine the preparation of children for school, which is currently structured, in particular, on the cognitive dimension, to the detriment of the psychomotor, emotional and social ones. Fourthly, a realistic vision is needed on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the process of integrality and continuity in the conditions of the systemic changes that occur at each level of education but also in the dynamics of children's development at the transition line to the next stage, the evaluation of the child's acquisitions at the end of the period preschool.

The research problem. That situation determined as a research problem the need to identify the process of eliminating the discontinuity between the stages of the preschool and primary education system by elaborating the conceptual basis regarding the integrality and continuity in children's education from a philosophical, anthropological, pedagogical, psychological, physiological perspective.

The approach to functionality is a necessity both epistemologically and educationally, this field of knowledge having a limited legitimacy. In this way, it is obvious the importance of contextualizing the presentation in a psycho-pedagogical vision, concretizing it by discussing the place and role of integrity and continuity in solving a series of problems aimed at children's education. The consequences of this investigation concern all actors of education, for which opportunities to "limit" the tensions of the continuity process are a priority. The investigative approach to functionality, integrity, continuity, thus records educational phenomena at the level of educational policy.

The goal of the work is the pedagogical, psychological, philosophical, anthropological substantiation of the conceptual basis regarding the functionality of continuity-integrality in the education of 6-9 year old children and the outline of specific lines of action, in order to reveal the possibilities of application in the educational process.

Research hypothesis: If in the educational activity during the transition to the next level of education, the procedural coordinates of the functionality are based, then both the integrality and the pedagogical continuity will be ensured and the students will settle more easily at school and will had better results, a fact which is a direct effect of the cognitive functionogenesis of children/students, trained in a specific activity for the development of productive/creative imagination and theoretical/mental thinking, as basic elements of the *educational node preschool education-education early primary.*

Research objectives:

1. Determining the theoretical and methodological foundations of integrity and continuity in children's education by analyzing the specifics of basic concepts, re/defining essential concepts, with a denotative character, in a broad frame of reference.
2. Revealing the pedagogical, psycho-pedagogical meanings of integrality and continuity through interpretive analysis; synthesizing pedagogical principles and theses that reflect the process of integrity and continuity.
3. Identifying the needs for theoretical-applied research of the process of integrality and continuity in the education of 6-9 year old children from the perspective of the changes occurring within the education system, designing the methodological basis for the complex solution of this problem (stages, forms of connection , landmarks of the interaction of the stages of the educational process, structural-organizational forms).
4. Synthesizing the factors and resources that ensure the functionality of integrity and continuity; of the indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of integrality and continuity, in the sense of ensuring the success of children in school; of the indicators of children's preparation for school from the perspective of relationships of integrality and continuity.
5. The development of the *Functionality Model of integrity and continuity in the education of 6-9 year old children and the Technological Ensemble of functionality of integrity-continuity* based on conceptual benchmarks from the perspective of modeling the *internal position of the child.*
6. Pedagogical foundation and determining the coordinates of the *educational node* as a success factor in children's education; the development of strategic tools (*Cognitive Functionogenesis; The unique preschool-primary school educational complex*) to ensure the integrity and continuity between preschool education and primary education.
7. The configuration of the tools for the development of the reference elements of the educational node and the organization, implementation, validation of the pedagogical experiment at the level of children of preschool and early school age.

The theoretical support of scientific research. The research methodology consisted of an analytical series of laws, theories, conceptions, visions, ideas, principles, concepts, theses, rules in the field of education sciences, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, logic, among which the following are included: dialectical laws (В. Д. Шадриков, 97), the theory of functional education (Ed. Claparede, 9, J. Angell, R. Woodworth, apud 48); the theory regarding the mechanism of progressive development through the negation of the negation (G. W. F. Hegel, 24); structuring theory (A. Giddens, 59); the theory regarding the psychic development of the child (L. S. Vygotski, 50); the theory of psychological stages and continuity relationships (J. Fr. Herbart, apud 44); the theory of evolution (J. Spencer, 70); theory of functional systems (П. К. Анохин, 77); the sociological theory of continuity (T. Parsons, 65); the theory of psychological space (A. Kolb, D. Kolb, 63); the conception of classical and systemic functionalism (E. Durkheim, 74, T. Parsons, 65); the concept of functional physiology (К. В. Судаков, 93, Н. Н. Данилова, 82); the conception of the stages of integration of the parts (В. А. Енгельгардт, 99); the concept of adaptation (E. Erikson, 58); the concept of children's creative imagination (В. Т. Кудрявцев, 84); the conception of the relationship between differentiation and integrality (А. Н. Поддяков, 89); the conception of general preparation for school (E. Bernard, apud 34); the opinion on the types of continuity (Э. А. Балер, 78); the vision regarding the stages of child development (А. Н. Леонтьев, 86); the idea regarding formations from 6-7 years (Л. С. Vygotsky, apud 76); the ideas of integrality (Im. Kant, 28, J. Spencer, 70, H. Werner, 73, T. Callo, 7, Vl. Guțu, 23, etc.); the ideas of the node as a system of relations (Ю. С. Тюнников, 94, A. Badiou, 2, J-P. Astolfi and B. Peterfalvi, 53, G. Siemens, 69, etc.); ideas regarding the stages of the psychic development of the individual (P. Osterrieth, 32, J. Piaget, 38, U. Șchiopu, 46); the idea of E. Schein (68) regarding the genesis of the change process; the idea of the pupil's internal position (Л. И. Божович, 79); the concept of social integration (E. Durkheim, 74); ideas regarding school adaptation (N. Sillamy, 43); the concept of function in the view of J. Piaget, 39, J. Dewey, 19, M. Minder, 29, S. Cristea, 14, I. Nicola, 33, etc.; the process concept as a chain of changes of P. Sorokin, apud 71, and as a restructuring of K. Lewis, apud 45; the interactionist concept of adaptation (A. Bandura, apud 34); theses of H. Wallon (51) regarding ontogenetic development in preschool.

The scientific research methodology is focused on a set of methods: at the theoretical level: theoretical documentation, critical study, description, analytical-synthetic method, hermeneutics, deductive reasoning, systematization and generalization; *at the epistemological level*: conceptual conception, definition of concepts, data interpretation, convergent explanation, argumentation; *at the application level*: modeling, the diagraphic method, evidence of a factual nature; *at the experimental level*: testing, the package of practical samples, participatory observation, collection of factual material, mathematical and statistical methods.

The scientific novelty and originality of the research consists in the following: the scientific argumentation of new concepts in pedagogical science: *educational node, functiogenesis, unique functional complex, cognitive formation, internal position, mental thinking* and the *development of the preschool-primary school educational complex* that values the process and product of the experience and the internal position of the child/student; formulation of the principles of integrity-continuity functionality.

The scientific results that led to the development of a new research direction:

- Analysis of the notions of *functionality, integrity, continuity, integrative environment, development, centrifugal and centripetal functional system*;
- Foundation and definition of new concepts: *educational node, functiogenesis, unique functional complex, cognitive formation, internal position, mental thinking*;

- Formulation of continuity conditions in preschool-early school education; the particularities of integrality, of school adaptation are revealed; the specifics of functionogenesis, *the internal position* of the child;
- Formulation of the principles of functionality of continuity and integrality; identifying functionality resources;
- Conceptualization of the *Functionality Model of integrity and continuity in the education of 6-9-year-old children, the Educational Complex preschool-early primary school, the Technological Ensemble of functionality of integrity-continuity*.

The recording of a new direction of research: ***The theory of the educational node***, through which the foundations are laid for the evolutionary research of the facts/phenomena of the future and can serve as wide openings for further investigations, the following *educational nodes* being primary education-secondary education; secondary education - high school education, etc.

The theoretical significance of the research consists in the following: the essentialization of a series of concepts, such as those of *functionality, integrality, continuity, integrative environment, centrifugal and centripetal functional system*; some new concepts were identified: *educational node, functiogenesis, unique functional complex, cognitive formation, internal position, mental thinking*; through an analytical approach, the conditions of continuity in preschool-early school education were described and the particularities of integrality, of school adaptation were revealed. The interpretative synthesis led to the foundation of *the Functionality Model of integrity and continuity in children's education*, conceived on three basic coordinates, being an epistemological construction that values the respective phenomenon in a new, systemic vision.

The applicative significance of the research consists in: the development and validation of the *technological ensemble of functionality of integrity and continuity*, as a strategic construct, which dynamizes unitary pairs in the development/formation of imagination, intellectual emotions, in opening children to learning and reflection.

Implementation of scientific results was carried out in the educational institutions of the Republic of Moldova (Chisinau, Străseni, Durlești, Nisporeni, Orhei), on a sample of 383 subjects (194 preschoolers and 189 students, cl. 1 and 2) and 98 teaching staff (50 educators and 48 teachers).

Approval of scientific results. The scientific value of the research was confirmed in international and national scientific conferences, as follows: *Specifics of independence formation in preschool children: psycho-pedagogical reflections*. International Scientific Conference "Creative orientations in Romanian education and research 30 years after the revolution", "George Bacovia" University, Bacău (2019); *The specificity of self-control in children of preschool age*. International Scientific Conference "Innovation technologies in science and education", г. Penza, (2019); *Emotional regulation in preschool age: Meaning and necessity*. International Scientific Conference "The teaching-promoting framework of educational policies", Chisinau: IȘE (2019); *Value dimensions of cognitive interest in preschool age*. International Symposium "Traditions and Innovations in Education". Chisinau, UST (2019); *Approaching the internal position of the young pupil: psychopedagogical dialogues.* International Symposium "Modern didactic technologies", Chisinau: IȘE (2016); *Reflections on self-esteem in 6-7-year-old children from the perspective of gradeless assessment in primary education*. International Scientific Conference "Evaluation in the educational system: current needs", IȘE, Chisinau (2017); *Criterion assessment through descriptors: visions and perspectives of implementation in primary education*. International Scientific Conference, dedicated to the anniversary of 75 years of activity, Chisinau: IȘE (2016);

Preparing children for school in the context of the idea of continuity. International Scientific Conference "Modern school: challenges and opportunities", Chisinau: IȘE (2015); *School adaptation-condition for the formation of the identity of the young pupil.* International Scientific Conference "Efficiency of education - vector of modern educational policies", Chisinau: IȘE (2014); *Current connotations of preparing children for school.* International Scientific Conference "Education for sustainable development: innovation, competitiveness, efficiency", Chisinau: IȘE (2013); *Significant aspects of learning skills in 6-8 year old children.* International Scientific Conference "Current problems in the professional training of specialists in psychopedagogy and theatrical art", Chisinau: Slavonă University (2011); *Independence versus learning activity at early school age*. National Scientific Conference with international participation, Chisinau: UST (2018); *Continuity – an inherent condition of the education of 6-9 year old children.* National Scientific Conference with international participation "Higher Education: traditions, values, Chisinau: UST (2020); *Adaptation of the child to the school environment depending on the type of pedagogical interaction of the teacher*. Republican Scientific Conference of Teachers, Chisinau: UST (2018).

Publications on the topic of the thesis. 37 scientific papers were published in the investigated field.

The volume and structure of the thesis. The thesis is structured from the introduction, five chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography of 359 titles, 10 appendices, 266 pages of basic text, 15 figures, 18 tables. The results obtained are published in 37 scientific papers.

Key words: functionality, integrality, continuity, contextual integrality, integrative environment, functionogenesis, cognitive formation, internal position of the child/student, imagination, educational node.

THESIS CONTENT

In the **Introduction,** the actuality and importance of the research topic are argued, the purpose, objectives and hypothesis are formulated, the theoretical support of the research is stated, the novelty and scientific originality of the research are presented.

In chapter 1, *Theoretical approaches of functionality: continuity and integrity in education,* the conceptual framework of functionality is highlighted, the conditions of continuity of preschool and primary school education are recorded from the perspective of continuity as a pedagogical phenomenon, the configuration of integrity as a factor ensuring the educational process. From the theoretical approaches of functionality - the theory of functional development, the theory of the functional system, the law of functional alternation, the law of functional preponderance, the paradigm of functionalism, the paradigm of systemic functionalism, the concept of functional education, the idea of functionality emerges as practical utility, as a possibility of adaptation to the environment and assimilation, like entity interdependence and ensuring correspondence between elements of an entity. The scientific approaches of the researchers suggest the idea of the need to examine *the functionality in education as a system, as an integral process,* because it involves the development of more effective common actions, which serve as a basis for children's adaptation to the new school environment.

The ***pedagogical*** value of the functionality is signified by the fulfillment by a pedagogical-educational entity of certain conditions to be used and, even more, to be useful. In this context, if we refer to the theories, conceptions, visions of specialist researchers in the field of education, such as W. James [26], J. Dewey [19], Ed. Claparede [9], M. Minder [29], S. Cristea [14], C. Cucoș [15], I. Neacșu [30], I. Nicola [33], A. Nicolau [31], M. Ștefan [48], Callo [6] etc. a series of proofs

were formulated for the fact that t*he phenomenon of continuity is one of the basic principles* of organizing the educational process. As a result, we found that: (a) each previous level of education ends with the child's preparation for the level of the next level; (b) the previous stage is oriented towards the basic content and technologies typical of the next stage. Considering the complexity of continuity, evidence has been formulated for the fact that this pedagogical phenomenon is a process of evolutionary human development at each step of the continuous education system, it is based on the relationship between the stages of learning and child development, which is carried out on the basis of and through the evidence of the ***new formations*** of the previous stage, and, as a result, a system of conditions is created that can favor the easier passage of children from one stage of the learning and development process to another.

Therefore, ***functionality in education*** implies the analysis and examination of at least the following important aspects: the possibility of fulfilling a role; destination; the possibilities of use; utility (practical application); adaptation to the environment; the independence, but also the interaction of the entities; satisfaction of needs; ensuring the correspondence between the elements of an entity.

In this way, ***the functional system***, starting from the fact that functionality means a series of production possibilities (functions) represented by a certain entity and from the ideas of J. Dewey, T. Parsons, R. Angel, implies gradual dosing of the influences on children in the learning process and establishing a system of relationships between subjects, which will serve as a basis for children's adaptation to the school environment. Therefore, the cognitive, affective, actional, reflexive, physiological functions form a functional system, which contributes to maintaining certain conditions in the realization of the learning process at the next stage: *teaching children to "function" independently* in solving life's problems.

The philosophical aspect of the problem of continuity boils down to the definition of this term, which is directly related to the concept of "development", compared to the concept of "movement". All development is movement, but not all movement can be called development. If in what occurs in development (as in any movement) the changes are irreversible and qualitative, then we can conclude that development is an irreversible movement and has qualitative relationships.

The phenomenon of continuity is generated by the connection between various stages and stages of development of both social existence and knowledge, the essence of which consists in keeping some or other elements of the whole or some separate sides and changing the whole as a system. Being a link between past and future, *continuity conditions and stabilizes the whole*. So, continuity is manifested where the process of development and interaction takes place. Thus, continuity is an objective legitimacy of the development process, being conditioned by the dialectical character of negation, it is a characteristic feature of the general development process, a fact represented in Figure 1.1.

Elucidating the theoretical aspects of integrality [T. Callo, 6], we separated the idea of ***integrality as a totality***, and among the forms of integrality the most eloquent is the approach of common factors, because it involves the elaboration of actions to build the common system (preschool education-primary education). Hence the importance of integrality in the education of 6-9 year old children, the identification of the *common points* and the *fundamental similarities* of these two levels of education.

The idea that integrity must be approached through the lens of the context was argued. *The context* is used in the sense of the set of circumstances and conditions that influence a phenomenon

at a given moment, specific situation, state of affairs at a certain moment, in which a thing, a fact falls.

Here is the finding that the operation of contextualization is imperative in determining integrality. By explaining several aspects, a series of *fundamental benchmarks* were formulated, which ensure the promotion of the notion of contextual integrity. Therefore, contextual integrality is a pedagogical phenomenon, which denotes the state of being a totality of these components in the integrative system, concretized, based on common factors, in an integrative system, divisible into autonomous component parts, but superior to the components and dependent on integrative system, which produces better effects. So *the integrative system* assumes continuity in the formation of the learning activity for 6-9 year old children.

Starting from the characteristics of children's psychological formations at the beginning of school, which serve as a generator in the learning activity [J. Piaget, 38, L. C. Выготский, 80], we infer the manifestation of the following characteristics of the ***educational node*** preschool education-primary education: (a) *reconstitution*, as a possibility to reconstitute "again" children's learning; (b) *elasticity*, as a matching phenomenon of cognitive accumulations prior to the current ones; (c) *cohesion*, as a capacity of the child who learns to "take his personal self" from kindergarten to school; (d) *coherence* as the possibility to take the necessary elements for the learning activity at the next level (primary education), which can be deducted from each other.

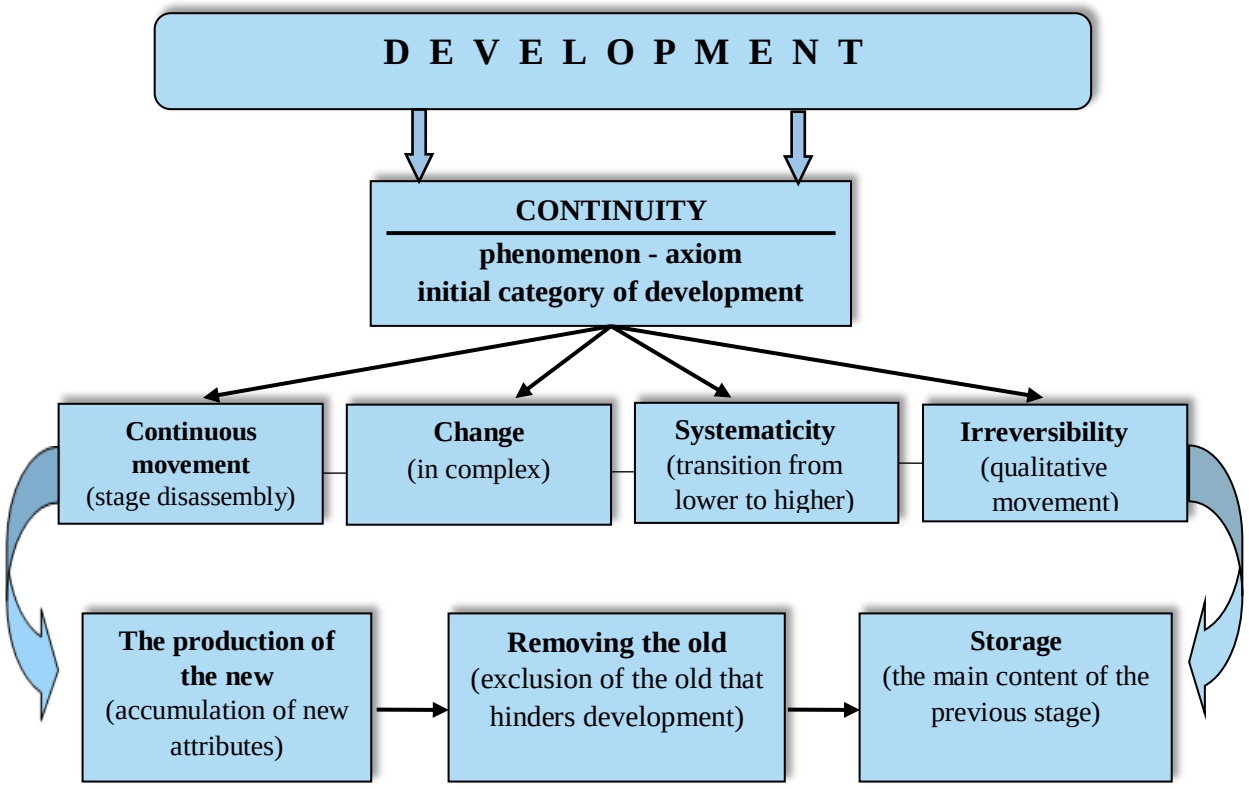

Figure 1.1. Philosophical coordinates of continuity

Chapter 2, ***Educational priorities in the context of integrity-continuity***, includes the analysis and interpretation of ideas regarding the psycho-pedagogical peculiarities of 6-9-year-old children, the educational space for children's development as an *integrative environment*, the specifics of preparing children for school in the context of the idea of continuity. Studying the issue announced

in the title, allowed us to ascertain certain educational priorities in the context of integrity-continuity in the education of 6-9 year old children. The ordering action of research carried out in psychology, physiology, anthropology [J. Piaget, 39, H. Wallon, 51, A. Zazzo, 75, E. Erickson, 58, C. Jung, 61, E. Deci, R. Ryan, 57, U. Șchiopu, 46, P. Golu, 22, V. Pavelcu, 35, M. Zlate, 52, L. S. Vygotski, 50, D. B. Эльконин, 98, etc.] contributed to the elucidation of some important characteristics of 6-9-year-old children: It was established that the process of stadial development is determined by internal contradictions, within which "uniform" evolutionary periods are replaced by "jumps", " gradually interrupted", and the functionality of integrality and continuity implies the optimal development and capitalization of the age possibilities of 6-9-year-old children. At the same time, it is important to react flexibly and in time to the *personal transformations* occurring in children, structuring the educational process in the key of this dynamic.

The chapter also contains an analysis of the specifics of the dominant activity in 6-9 year old children. In the conducted research it is found that the particularities of the activity and education of children differ significantly at different stages of their lives. The change of the dominant activity corresponds to the laws of transition from one age period to another and, as a result, the integrity and continuity of these activities ensure the integral development of the child's personality. Therefore, the characteristics of the age periods and the changes that occur during the transition from one stage of the child's development to another are a condition of the process of integrality and continuity of the education of children aged 6-9, aspects that are presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Configurations of cognitive activity in the context of the educational node

Mechanisms	Actions / Elements
Reflection (6-7 years)	➢ the ability to select information and reflect on it ➢ critical attitude towards information (formulating questions, structuring arguments, supporting the opinion) ➢ the development of thinking operations through practical actions (concrete intuitive operational thinking, causal thinking, elements of logical thinking) ➢ the game
Conscious organization of activity (6-7 years)	➢ developing a structured plan ➢ the premises of verbal communication (concrete character) ➢ pronounced sensitivity (intellectualization of the emotions)
Productive imagination The child tends to put everything in order (7-8 years)	➢ the development of productive thinking ➢ the transition from symbol to sign ➢ knowledge of categories (shape, color, size)
Internal position (6-9 years)	➢ discovering the inner life ➢ reporting on own experience ➢ selfcontrol ➢ planning skill ➢ objectivity

Directed learning (7-9 years)	➢ the fundamental motivation vector ➢ problem formulation and solving ➢ meaningful reading ➢ verbal-logical and notional thinking (systematization, generalization, abstraction, schematization) ➢ didactic game

By analyzing the particularities of children's development at the age of 6-9, we adhered to the idea of *sensitive periods* in their mental development [L. S. Vygotsky, 50, E. Knudsen, 62, M. Johnson, 60, M. Bornstein, 56, etc.]. In this sense, the child is particularly sensitive to various influences of the environment in which he is and receptive to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, has sensitive possibilities to form specific and general skills, etc. It has been inferred that sensory generalization is basic at preschool age, but also at the beginning of the young school age.

Within the priorities of integrity-continuity in the education of children aged 6-9, the concepts of *"educational space", "educational environment", "developmental environment", "integrating environment"* are valuable, which, on the one hand, can be perceived, explored , exploited, on the other hand, interact with each other [J. Dewey,19, K. Levin, 85, A. Kolb, D. Kolb, 63, R. Tauber, 72, etc.]. By synthesizing, the idea was reached that the *educational environment* reflects the interaction of the conditions that ensure the child's development, it assumes the presence of the subject, the mutual influence, its interaction with the environment. Based on these researches, we can conclude that postmodern education promotes the approach to the *educational environment* from the *personal-oriented* perspective of the educational process, which involves creating the conditions for the full manifestation, and, respectively, the development and self-development of the subject's personal functions. One of the current orientations of the organization of the educational process in preschool and primary education is the need to organize the *integrative environment*, which implies the *ordering of the learning space*, in which the *developmental education* is carried out. Starting from the characteristics of the educational space, the educational environment and the developmental environment, the relationship between these phenomena was established, which determines the foreshadowing of the integrative environment in the organization of the education of 6-9 year old children.

A line of evidence has been formulated for the fact that *productive/creative imagination* and *mental/theoretical thinking* are part of the child's unique developmental context, which is the basis of the phenomenon of integrality and continuity between preschool and elementary school from the perspective of the *integrative environment*.

In chapter 3, ***Factors of integrality and continuity in children's education***, a series of aspects are recorded that aim at the school adaptation of the child as a dimension of functionality, a new psychopedagogical concept is advanced, that of the *internal position* of the young schoolchild, and the criterion evaluation is approached synthetically in the context of continuity-integrity. A primary role in the functionality of children's education is played by *adaptation*, which establishes the balance between the child and the environment and constitutes a starting point for *development*. Correlative to adaptation are the processes of *assimilation and accommodation*. Assimilation involves fitting new information into existing schemas, which do not change, but only expand. Accommodation, in turn, constitutes perceptible changes in schemes. In the framework of *active adaptation* in students, conscious regulation of behavior and awareness of the goal are formed. As a factor of continuity and integrity in children's education, *adaptation* is distinguished based on the *vector of activism*, ensuring the functional evolution of the organism, its ascent towards school maturity. In this way, the advantages of capitalizing on adaptation consist

in addressing the changes that occur at different stages of the child's development. School adaptation involves the action of modifying and transforming the child to be able to respond to school demands, compatible with the new learning environment, in accordance with the internal position, suitable for school. Therefore, the key factor that determines *the efficiency* of adaptation is the functional state of the child in the learning activity.

The chapter also includes an analysis of another factor of *integrality and continuity in the education of children - the internal position* of the young pupil, which involves the principles of the *outside through the inside* [91] and the *inside through the outside* [86], reveals the unity of existence and consciousness. Namely, in the context of the refraction of the outside by the inside, the logic of the child's development takes shape. In this sense, the dynamics of the child's formation through mutual relationships and the mutual influences of the processes of internalization and externalization are described as follows: "Internalization as a transition of external actions into internal ones, the formation of the internal plan of activities is carried out with all the processes of accumulating experience life and work. Externalization as the transition of internal actions and operations to the outside does not only represent objectification, but also means the transformation into ideas, the realization of plans to build new objects - in general, creative" [76 p. 56].

Therefore, we can talk about the existence of internal sources of child activism. In the context of the refraction of the outside through the inside, the logic of its development is outlined: in the process of activity, the child accumulates such properties that are not unequivocally predetermined either by external influence, or by internal natural characteristics. They are the result of the interactions of the child's activity as an integral self-regulating system. This system subjective reality, which possesses a relative independence. The system is formed under the influence of objective conditions, but later the system begins to influence the conditions and create its "small developmental environment", which denotes "the beginning of the child's activism" [87, pp. 50-67]. Therefore, the culmination of the *genesis of the human being* is its *transformation into a creator of new social experience, into an educator of personality properties.*

The internal position is a neoformation that defines the child's behavior and activity, as well as the system of his relationship with reality. Due to the internal position, the child's psychological profile changes, the orientation towards a certain goal appears, the tendency to achieve it, the voluntary regulation of activity, etc.

Most often, the concept of *internal position* is used as a new formation that records the conception of the child's personality between 6-7 years ("internal position of the pupil"). At the same time, we can also use this concept as a personality characteristic, in a wider age range. This particularity of the personality appears in ontogenesis, as a result of external influences, reflecting on the structure of the psychological particularities, previously established in the child, being gathered in a new formation, which characterizes the child's personality in general. Research shows that the internal position, which appeared as a new personal formation in high preschool age, does not disappear at the next stage, but only its content changes. The internal position of the pupil implies the active attitude towards two poses of reality – *learning activity and social relations.*

An analytical view of the ***internal position*** allows us to understand that *it represents the totality of the characteristics of a system of internal factors that mediate environmental influences, conditions the development of new psychological formations in the child during this age period*. We must emphasize that changing the child's social position is not enough to change the direction and content of his development. So it is necessary for the new position to be adopted and realized by the child, to reflect on the accumulation of new meanings in the learning activity and the new system of school connections.

Also here the problem of criterion evaluation is addressed, starting from the idea that the three-dimensional structure of the evaluation includes measurement, congruence, judgment, occupying a key position in the educational process. Also, the school child's *self-esteem* plays a certain role, which represents his satisfaction or dissatisfaction with himself, his attitude towards himself. The task consists, therefore, in the formation in preschoolers of the premises of self-assessment, which, later, becomes a basis for the valorization of the criterion evaluation in primary education (1st, 2nd grade). The child must be taught to correlate his learning actions and their results, to make the connection between the quality of these results and the level of achievement of the learning actions.

Chapter 4, ***The preschool-early school education system*** analytically illustrates the coordinates of the *educational node*, as a new pedagogical concept, includes the *Functionality Model of integrality and continuity in the education of 6-9-year-old children and the unique preschool-early primary school educational complex* as theoretical-applicative benchmarks in the context of wholeness and continuity. As a result of the analytical synthesis, the mechanism of the functionality of the integrity and continuity of the preschool education and primary education stages is illustrated. The complexity of this process calls for the notion of an educational node, as a new one in local pedagogical science. From this perspective, the ***educational node*** comes from the general meaning of integration, as the harmonization of some elements into a whole and the place of *intersection of two paths*, the intersection assuming *a lot of common elements* of two levels of education, in the given case, preschool and primary education, as the first in the educational system as a whole.

Some terminological distinctions are highlighted, the mode of operation of this particular process in the interval of this initial educational intersection, which in our research we called an *educational node* (from the Latin ***nodus***-loop), which essentially comes from computer science , from graph theory. Here a node is a fundamental unit from which graphs are formed. Graphs are, in turn, made up of (nodes and edges or arcs). The node also comes in the sciences of integrity and education: the ***relative nodes*** in the integrative process, which is characterized by a system of relationships and by the fact that the formation of each node is decisive in order to move the elements into a qualitatively new state and which has the following characteristics as a whole: *reconstitution, elasticity, cohesion, coherence* [94]; the idea of Sh. Powers of ***learning node*** from his book of the same title (2016) and a number of other researchers (S. Overflow; M. Wandschneider, M. Casciano); the idea of ***noeuds didactiques*** developed in a guide of the same name signed by H. Dahmouche, S. Daro (2021). In addition to this, the node in education is addressed by J-P. Astolfi and B. Peterfalvi [53].

Arguments were also formulated that highlight the fact that within the *educational node*, *functionally*, imagination is integrated into the structure of abstract thinking, and abstract thinking is supported by the imaginary. Both images and notions are formed in the process of *internalizing* material or materialized actions. So, imagination is *a mediator* of different thinking activities (conceptualization, understanding, problem solving, creation). That is why imagination is considered a *form of intelligence* related to understanding. Through its dynamism, *imagination* is a source of *enrichment of thought*.

From an analytical point of view, it is mentioned that in ontogenesis and *functionogenesis*, as a correlative notion with ontogenesis, which designates the functional development of the human being (in the given case of the child), a kind of "division of labor" emerges between imagination and theoretical thinking : the first provides a form of *fixing* some development tendencies of the perceived content, the second – the reproduction of notions as the primary support of the general principles of this development. The imagination of preschool children still

does not "know" *the trend* as a principle, in most cases, it just "grabs" it. While *theoretical thinking* allows the young schoolboy not only to perceive principles in trends, but also to specify their application in solving a wide range of tasks. However, the *adequate reconstruction* of the image of one or another perceived object is a mandatory starting point in *rational* knowledge. Therefore, it is impossible to design the genetic conditions of interaction of imagination with thinking outside the common context of creative development of the child. The vector of this development is not a side branch of the common path of the child's evolution as a subject of culture. Moreover, the *beginning* of creation is the immanent process of cultural appropriation in ontogenesis.

Thus, we arrive at the idea that *the unitary context of creative imagination and theoretical thinking can constitute the basis of continuity between preschool and school level (primary education) or the benchmark of development in the segment of the educational node*. The activity of the child of high preschool age must be organized in such a way that those mental functions that are valuable for the learning activity and that would constitute a logical transition from play to learning really appear and develop within it. It was also found that at the age of 6-9, there is a *repositioning* of interests: from those *towards oneself* to those oriented *towards the outside*. It was also shown that the common elements are represented by the *integrative environment* at the *border between preschool and primary education*. *The integrative environment* must include such forms of work with children that are qualitatively different from the previous period (preschool) and the later period (small school).

Synthetically speaking, we can say that after 7-8 years, *during the educational node*, *the imagination* becomes anticipatory and, consequently, even better as a support for operations. The child's abstract thinking emerges progressively, starting from a symbolic and magical intelligence.

It is also specified that within the educational node, in a *functional* aspect, the imagination is integrated into the structure of abstract thinking, and abstract thinking is supported by the imaginary. In this way, images become imbued with meaning, and notions (with their meanings) lead to images. So, in our opinion, within the educational node, the nature of imagination is related to the nature of play through the concept of "imaginative situation". In this order of ideas, the unitary context of creative imagination and theoretical thinking can be the basis of continuity between preschool and school level (primary education).

The synthesis of the exposed approaches were the basis of the scientific foundation of the ***Functionality Model of integrality and continuity in the education of 6-9-year-old children (FMICEC)*** (Figure 4.1), which is made up of several concretely defined and designed entities, in order to expose the dynamics of transformations and highlight contributions and results in relation to the demands of the problem addressed. FMICEC provides a starting point for the review of approaches, reconsidering the premises of the education of children aged 6-9 from the perspective of integrality and continuity at the preschool and primary education level.

The first component of FMICEC. Capitalizing on the functionality of the integrality and continuity of the education of 6-9 year old children aims at the ***Functional System*** (centrifuge/centripetal), which we examine as a basic concept in achieving integrality and continuity at the level of the education system. This fact is justified by the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the approaches to theories of functionality (the theory of the functional system, the law of functional alternation, the law of functional preponderance, the paradigm of functionalism, the paradigm of systemic functionalism, the concept of functional education), from which the idea of functionality as practical utility, as a possibility emerges of adaptation to the environment and assimilation, such as the interdependence of entities and ensuring the correspondence between the elements of an entity. We found the need to examine *functionality in education as a system, as an integral process*, because it involves the development of more effective common actions, which

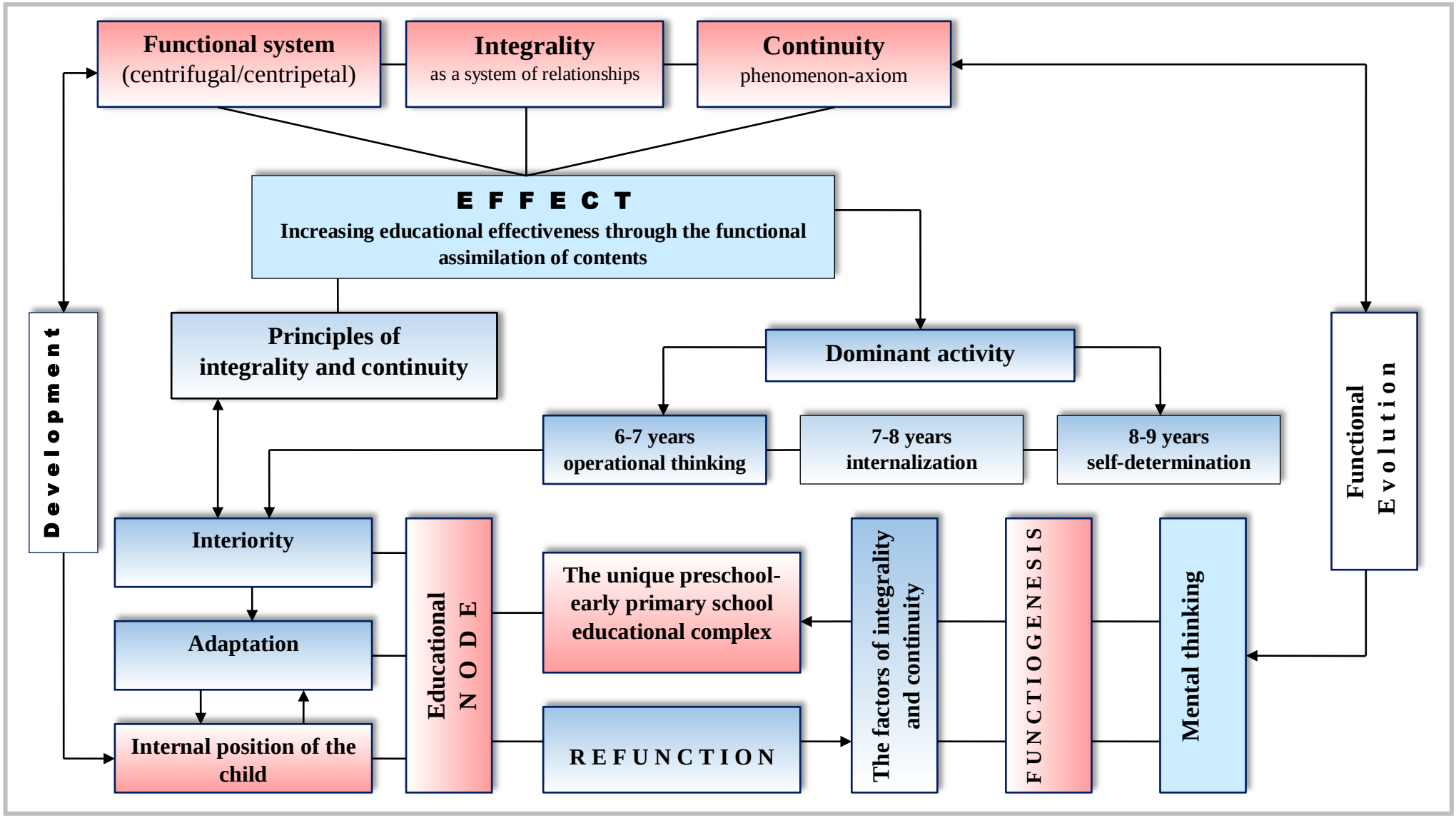

Fig. 4.1 Functionality Model of integrality and continuity in the education of 6-9-year-old children (FMICEC)

serve as a basis for children's adaptation to the school environment; increasing educational effectiveness through the functional assimilation of contents.

The second component of FMICEC includes ***Integrality*** *as a whole*, which involves the interaction of the component elements. In the given case, the model contains three entities that form a trialism (the common basis of integration): the integral elements correspond to certain criteria; the integrative environment; common factors. As a result, the construction of the *common system* (preschool education-primary education).

In the context of the previous analyses, the idea is promoted that integrality ensures the coherent transposition of children in the integrative environment (1st grade), at which point the norms of integrality should no longer seem like limits to the teaching staff, but conditions that favor the manifestations of adaptation and affirmation of the child .

The integrative force depends on how the integrative factor can stimulate the adaptation needs of the child in relation to the *new integrative educational environment*. So, we conclude that the ***FIMCEC*** provides a safe starting point for revising the modalities of comprehensiveness of preschool and early school education, reconsidering the premises of the education of children aged 6-9.

The model enriches preschool education, as well as general education, with new meanings, by promoting the concept of an educational node at the preschool-primary level.

All the elements within the ***Educational Node*** undergo significant changes: they solidify, expand, unify. The formation of each node is decisive for the transition of elements from the previous stage (preschool) to a qualitatively new state (early school). The structure gives special importance to the transition of the elements in the integrative process to a *certain stability*. This distinctive feature is relevant from the point of view of the reproduction of the integrative process, its multiple repetition in the educational process (1st grade). Hence the importance of integrality in the education of 6-9 year old children, t*he identification of the common points and the fundamental similarities* of these two levels of education, which determine the creation of the ***unique preschool-early primary school educational Complex***. As a result, the elements from the previous step are ***reworked***.

The third component of FIMCEC focuses on the phenomenon of ***continuity*** and is justified by the conclusions drawn from the examination of multiple analyzes and syntheses about continuity as an *axiom-phenomenon,* which disperses into three elements: *conditioning of the whole, morphostasis - preservation of the current state and morphogenesis - change*.

At the same time, continuity is a condition of the development process. In the context of this structuring, the grouping of elements within *development* includes: *continuous movement* (dismemberment of the previous stage); *change* (in context); *systematicity* (transition from lower to higher); *irreversibility* (qualitative movement). In this order of ideas, at each stage of education new elements appear, the accumulation of new attributes takes place, the elimination takes place, the exclusion of the old that prevents development, the main content of the previous stage *is preserved*. So at each stage, a specific measure can be identified that would define the level of development, thus ensuring the passage of children to the next stage of education and development, to a qualitatively new state. In this vein, we note that for each educational level in the education system, a certain potential can be specified that would characterize the size of one or another level of education. Therefore, it is important that the functionality of the integrality and continuity of the education of 6-9 year old children is approached in the context of the integral process of

developing the child's personality; the establishment at the beginning of school of the rational elements in the organization of the educational process and their transfer from preschool to primary education.

It is specified that the nature of the manifestation of continuity in the education process of 6-9 year old children is conditioned by the specifics of the dominant activity, which reflects, we believe, the dialectic of content, strategies, respect for the psychophysiological age characteristics of children and the demands made at each stage of learning , in our case, the level of preschool and primary education.

In the same analytical context, it is argued that the process of integrality and continuity of the education of 6-9 year old children becomes effective when a series of principles are respected, which are analyzed as pedagogical vectors of the research approach and served as an axiological essence in the approach to children/ students, teachers, from the perspective of the ***unique preschool-early primary school educational complex***. In this sense, the following principles were formulated: 1) the principle of systemic assurance of completeness and continuity; 2) the structural-systemic principle of personality; 3) the principle of coherence and progressive-amplifying dosage; 4) the principle of adaptability in relation to the integrative environment; 5) the trialist principle of relating within the integrative environment.

Also, the ***Unique preschool-early primary school educational complex was developed*** (Figure 4.2), which is a process in which the integrality mechanism triggers various developmental activities, in which imagination, as a "tool" of creativity and the formation of the internal position lead to the internalization of activities objects and the formation of children's *mental thinking*. Mental thinking is based on mental models, according to the American psychologist P. Hollins [25]. A mental model is a pattern that makes a person draw attention to the most important elements in a given situation. By regulating these mental models, the person gains some understanding of the situation, even if he *does not have the necessary experience*. As early as 1927, G-H. Luquet claimed that children create inner models. Children's mental models can contribute to development and learning, as well as restrain this process. These mental models are ideas with increased utility because they regulate the behavior of the child/student. Therefore, the result we want to achieve within the *Unique Educational Complex* is this possibility of opening up to the student's mental thinking, which will be useful to him throughout his schooling. But in order to get a picture as close as possible to what the 6-9-year-old child is, the signs must be looked for along the path of his preschool evolution. The acquisitions whose origins are in the previous phase (preschool) are integrated in the next step (primary school), complementing each other and producing better effects, in the sense of the child's behavior in the learning activity.

Following the logic of the investigative route, we find that the learning activity at the age of 6-9 involves an appropriate behavior of the child towards the learning task, which involves the exploitation of operational procedures. One of the premises for the conscious perception of the learning task is adult orientation, which formulates the task of understanding and taking into account all the conditions presented, without omitting anything. But the ability to listen and understand the teacher's instructions is directly related to the voluntary behavior of the child. At the beginning, the subordination of one's own actions, to the verbal instructions of the pedagogue occurs, and only towards the end of the seventh year of life, it gradually transforms into the potential to successively realize one's own intentions. In this sense, the instruction of the pedagogue can be directed towards the finality of the action or towards the processes of its valorization.

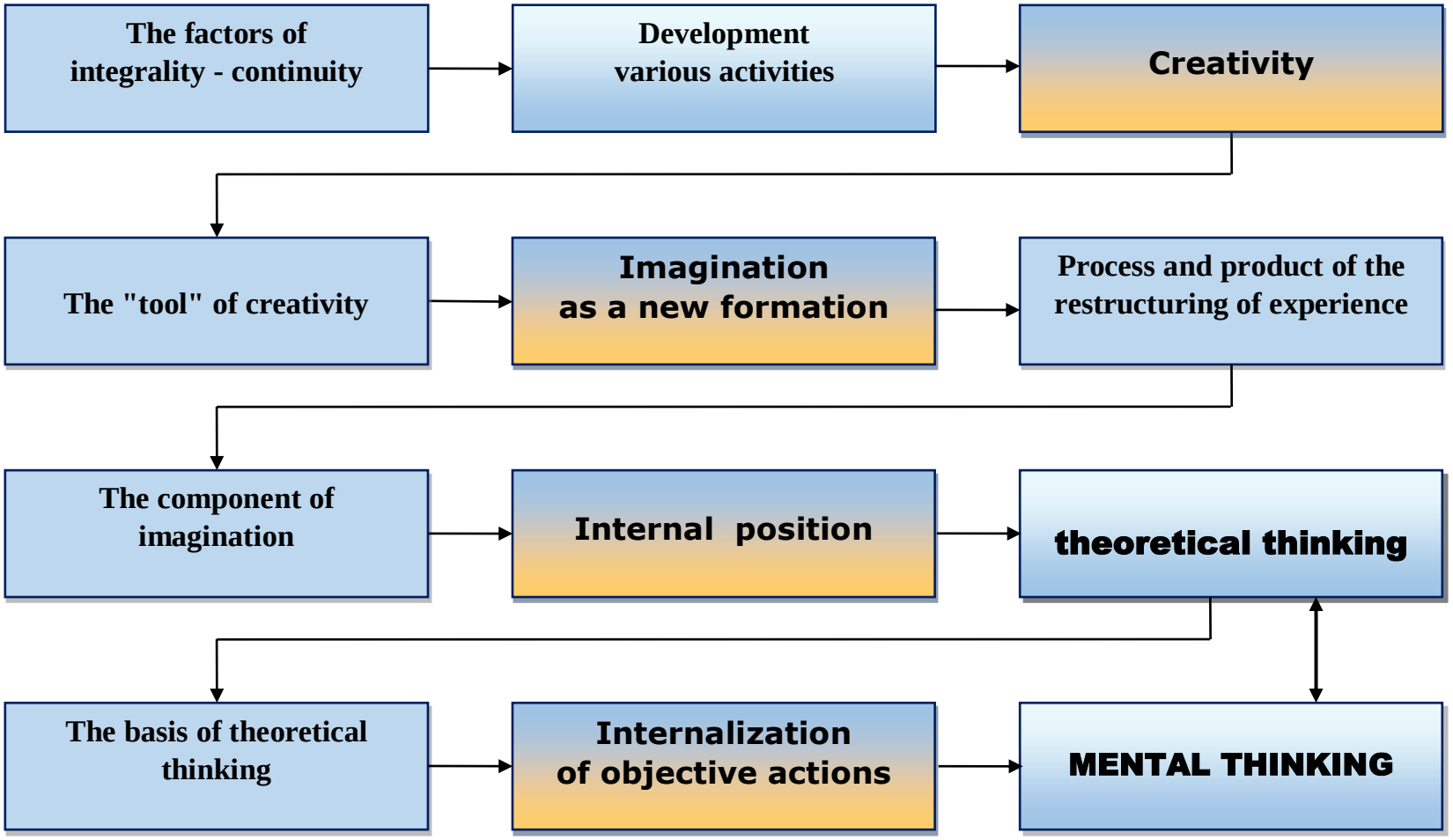

Figure 4.2. The unique educational complex preschool - early primary school

COGNITIVE FORMATION					
Coordinates	***The unitary pair A***		**Indicators**	**Formative objectives**	**Package of practical tests**
	Preschool	**Early primary school**			
	Criteria				
Imagination "absorbs" the experience of thinking	*Productive imagination* • to see the world around in pictures	*Theoretical thinking* • to see the surrounding world through notions • to operatively change his vision	• to notice the parts of the whole • to perceive clearly, fully the objects, the phenomena • to understand the meaning of things	• to form the skill of selecting information and reflecting on it • to form the skill of elementary analysis and synthesis • to form modeling skills	Name Distinguish Discover
	The unitary pair B				
	Criteria				
Building "Smart" Emotions	*Elementary problematization* • to see the surrounding world as a "calling". • to create verbal images (creativity)	*Alternatives in problem solving* • to "shape" the surrounding world through reflection • to express one's own opinion in an original way	• regulation of learning actions • research actions (elementary) • content collaboration in "new"reproduction	• to form the skill of asking and answering • form the habit of looking for several options • to develop the ability to generalize	Ask-Answer Research Generalize
	6 years - great creative ability	**• 7-8 years high creative capacity • 8-9 years, the evolution Is interrupted • 11 years, decreasing**	**It is not so much the process that is of interest, but the finality**		

	The unitary pair C				
	Criteria				
Children's openness to learning	*Creative potential* • to see the surrounding world more "broadly". • to imagine own world	*The learning initiative* • to show motivation for learning • to confidently express one's own vision (creativity)	• to act creatively with the objects of the surrounding world • to display intellectual (reflexive) "fantasy" • to include objects in new situations	• to form the flexibility of thinking • to develop expressive inventiveness • to form the ability to "coagulate" thought	Resolve Develop Discover
	The unitary pair D				
	Criteria				
Developing reflection (what I know, what I don't know)	*The curiosity of knowledge* • to "experimentally" see the world around • to act independently in various situations	*Learning independence* • to actively position oneself in relation to the surrounding world • to take an unusual position in relation to those capitalized	• self-control of one's own knowledge • the tendency to set new goals • personalization of knowledge (impressions)	• to develop the skill of acting freely • to form skills of conscious organization of the activity • developing the skill of self-analysis	Realize Organize Describe
Functional result ❑ Development of children's cognitive formation (CF) and mental thinking.					

Table 4.1. The technological ensemble of functionality of completeness - continuit

From the perspective of the technologies of the integrality-continuity functionality, scientific arguments were formulated for the *Technological ensemble of the integrity-continuity functionality* (Table 4.1), which involves a *systemic* approach to structuring the educational process, includes a system of principles, *strategies and techniques*, which facilitates the transition of children from one level of learning to another (preschool education - primary education), creates conditions for adaptation to the new educational environment, respecting their *psycho-physiological peculiarities. The technological ensemble of the functionality of the integrality - continuity* is composed of several basic coordinates: Imagination and the experience of thinking; "Smart" emotions; Openness to learning; Developing reflection. At the same time, *The technological ensemble* includes the following unitary pairs:

A – productive imagination – theoretical thinking;

B – elementary problematization – alternatives for solving problems;

C – creative potential – learning initiative;

D – curiosity of knowledge – independence of learning.

According to the logic of the research, an important element is the structuring of functionogenesis in the activity process, which includes six alternative structures and three cognitive structures specific to the educational node (Table 4.2 and Table 4.3).

Table 4.2. Alternative structures of functionogenesis

Structure	**Activity**			
S – 1	game	game	game	learning
S – 2	game	game	learning	learning
S – 3	game	learning	game	learning
S – 4	game	learning	learning	game
S – 5	learning	game	game	game
S – 6	learning	game	learning	game

Table 4.3. Cognitive functionogenesis

Structure	**Activity**			
S – 7	game	learning	learning	learning
S – 8	learning	learning	learning	game
S – 9	learning	learning	learning	learning

Chapter 5, ***Praxeological approaches to the functionality of integrality and continuity in children's education***, aims at the stages of the pedagogical experiment on the ascertaining coordinate of the level of functionality of the integrality-continuity of the education of children aged 6-9 years, describes the ways of application and the formative values of the *Technological Ensemble of the functionality of integrality - continuity*, records the value of the results of formative research. The implementation of the *Technological ensemble for the functionality of integrality - continuity* at the level of first grade students in the formative pedagogical experiment involved activism, creativity, originality, diversity, efficiency in the perception and awareness of the learning task, systemic thinking, their intrinsic motivation, independent actions and responsible, promptness in expressing thoughts, diverse interventions by teachers as experimenters.

In this logic, the pedagogical experiment ***aimed*** to validate the *Functionality Model of integrality and continuity in the education of 6-9-year-old children,* having as the basic unit the *unique educational complex preschool - early primary school* in order to adapt the child without difficulties to the new learning environment , demonstrated by solving various situations and *determining the ratio between the level of preschool education and early primary school*. As part of the experimental approach, we proposed the following ***working hypothesis***: the identification and determination of *the effect, the degree of influence of completeness and continuity* in the education of children aged 6-9 can be effective by training the unique educational complex preschool - early primary school and capitalizing on the technological ensemble of functionality of integrality - continuity, in relation to the adaptation of children to the new learning environment without difficulties.

The experimental research was carried out during the 2015-2016 study years; 2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019; 2019-2020, which included 3 phases: *ascertainment, training, control/validation*. Three categories of subjects were involved in the experiment: children from the preparatory group (6-7 years old), students from cl. I and II. *The investigative sample* included: 383 subjects, among them 194 (8 groups) preschool children (6-7 years old) and 189 (7 classes) students, including 131 (5 classes) 1st grade students and 58 (2 classes) second grade students.

We must specify that the pedagogical experiment was a *natural* one, with specific activities for children from preschool institutions, students from cl. 1st and 2nd (early education institutions: no. 142, Chisinau municipality, no. 2, Strășeni town, "Regina Maria", Ialoveni town, Kindergarten school "Abeceluș", Durlești town, Theoretical High School "Mircea Eliade", "Ștefan cel Mare" Theoretical High School, Nisporeni city, "Alecu Russo" Theoretical High School, Orhei city). The experimental research included ***50 educators*** from preschool institutions and ***48 teachers***, participants in professional training courses (Department of Primary Education and Early Childhood Education within the Institute of Education Sciences, State University of Tiraspol); after the time period it was a *longitudinal* experiment.

The subjects were divided into two blocks.

Block I. (228 subjects)

(a) Academic year 2015-2016: Preparatory group (end of academic year) – 118 subjects who participated in the finding experiment;

b) Academic year 2016-2017: Students cl. 1st (during the academic year) – 80 subjects who participated in the observational experiment (80 subjects); training (60 students); validation (60+20 subjects);

(c) Academic year 2017-2018: Students cl. 2nd (first half of the year) – 30 subjects who participated in the ascertainment experiment (with validation function).

Block II. (155 subjects)

(a) Academic year 2017-2018: Preparatory group (end of academic year) – 76 subjects who participated in the observational experiment;

b) Academic year 2018-2019: Students cl. 1st (during the academic year) – 51 subjects who participated in the observational experiment (51 subjects); training (26 students); validation (26+25 subjects);

(c) Academic year 2019-2020: Students cl. 2nd (first half of the year) – 28 subjects who participated in the ascertainment experiment (with validation function).

In the selection of the experimental sample, previous analyzes were taken into account, the essences of which have already been interpreted above, through a frame of reference regarding the issue of integrality and continuity of the education of 6-9 year old children. In this way, the selection of experimental subjects focused on the main characteristics of psychic neoformations at preschool and early school age; the stadial-functional characteristics of age (preschool – early school), which have an uneven character: there are periods of gradual quantitative growth and periods of qualitative development with leaps. The latter mark the transition periods from one stage to another: from the beginning of the 6th year of life to the beginning of the 7th year of life; the beginning of the 7th year of life – the beginning of the 8th year of life; the beginning of the 8th year of life – the beginning of the 9th year of life.

Each of the functions of these steps successively opens the corresponding phase of psychic development, by modifying the previously appeared psychic function, which is the basis for the beginning of the development of a new functional line of psychic development.

The ascertainment stage in the experimental investigation focused on the following actions:

(a) initial evaluation, in order to determine the function of children aged 6-9;

(b) identifying the unity and mutual connection of the educational process between the preschool and early primary education levels;

(c) identifying the degree of awareness of professional competence and the need for the involvement of teaching staff in the process of completeness and continuity of preschool education and early primary education levels;

(d) the development of samples for the initial evaluation, which were applied to the experimental sample (preschool children and students from cl. I and II);

(e) determining the methods applied in the experiment: *analysis, synthesis, comparison, hermeneutics, (participatory) observation, question-answer method, explanation, statistical processing of experimental data.*

At the first stage of ascertainment, 6 tests were applied in order to evaluate the level of manifestation of *imagination, creativity, thinking and the personalization of learning* in correlation with the type of activity used. Thus, three playful activities (games) and three learning activities were applied, according to the alternative structures of functiogenesis.

In carrying out the verification tests, a number of psycho-pedagogical conditions were taken into account that can constitute relevant ways of increasing the educational effect at the level of preschool and primary education:

- The tests proposed to the children/students were combined with those of a problematic, complex type, with a certain degree of difficulty;
- The involvement of some aspects of the task that highlight the intellectual possibilities of the children/students, asking them to make an effort to flexibly and creatively express their thoughts;
- Operating with some well-argued and exciting content for respondents;
- The constructive involvement of the educator/teacher-experimenter, whose points of view are personalized so as to ensure the interpretation of the operational action of the child/student;
- Avoiding the imposition of personal opinions, duplicitous behavioral attitudes.

STAGE I. Finding experiment: ***Determinant variations***

Assessment test I (three+three). Including subjects in an integrated activity of 3 didactic games and 3 learning activities. We specify that the monitoring of the level of inclusion and manifestation of the subjects in solving the tasks took place on the basis of the initial evaluation sheet and the sheet for observing the children's activity (play/learning activity).

The evaluation criteria and indicators were selected according to the stage-functional characteristics of older preschool-aged children and younger school-aged students (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. Subject evaluation reference (Finding Phase)

The criteria of assessment (dependent variables)	**Evaluation indicators (independent variables)**
Imagination See the surroundings in images	***Capacity:***
	1. to notice the whole
	2. to fully perceive objects, phenomena
	3. to understand meanings
	4. to discover things already known in a different way, anew
	5. to express his opinion promptly
Creativity Create word pictures	***Capacity:***
	1. to create verbal images
	2. to adapt to different instructions to solve the task
	3. to think independently
	4. to combine the contents in the reproduction of the new
	5. to express one's original opinion
Thinking It actively positions itself in relation to the surrounding world	***Capacity:***
	1. to see the surrounding world through notions
	2. to take an active position in relation to the knowledge task
	3. to carry out elementary research actions
	4. to reflect on the information
	5. to show flexibility in solving a task
Personalization of learning He is motivated to learn	***Capacity:***
	1. to motivate learning actions
	2. to act independently, creatively with objects
	3. to show flexibility in expressing thoughts
	4. to show confidence in expressing one's own opinion
	5. to adopt various action procedures in realizing new situations

Reference levels: N I (unsatisfactory); N II (below average); N III (satisfactory, average); N IV (high). The quality of the answers was assessed according to the qualifications: *to a very high extent; satisfactory, average; below average; unsatisfactory*. The degree of success of the subjects was evaluated in percentages: 100%; 50%; 25%, according to the qualifications in Table 5.2:

Table 5.2. The success rate of subjects

Levels	**Caracteristici ale nivelurilor**	**Evaluation descriptors**
I (unsatisfactory)	Lack of interest towards the task; the subordination of the actions, the conditions for the accomplishment of the task fails; did not complete the task	

II (below average)	Selectively understands the meaning of things; poor attitude towards the task; in certain cases he thinks independently; partially shows flexibility in solving a task; with difficulty acting creatively with objects/information; the response is below average in terms of correctness, consistency, relevance and originality.	The correctness of the performance of the task Consistency of response The relevance of the answer The originality of the thoughts
III (satisfactory, average)	Adapts without confidence to various instructions in solving the task; shows instability in the exposition of thoughts; less discover anew the things already known; show less confidence in expressing their own vision; the answer is satisfactory, average, with some inaccuracies, less correct, consistent, relevant and original.	
IV (high)	Expresses his opinion operatively; shows flexibility in solving the task; rediscover things already known; it motivates the actions it performs; the answer is correct, consistent, relevant and original.	

We specify that a general analysis of the answers given by the children/students at the ascertainment stage are close in level to both the experimental and control samples, with small differences, as we noticed (Figures 5.1, 5.2, 5.3), a fact that it does not in any way influence the objectivity of the results presented along the way.

If we extend the analysis to other aspects of the experimental and control sample that were highlighted during the evaluation, then we find that the subjects understood and adapted to the task within the game more easily. These results were also found in subjects from the previous group (6-7 year old children).

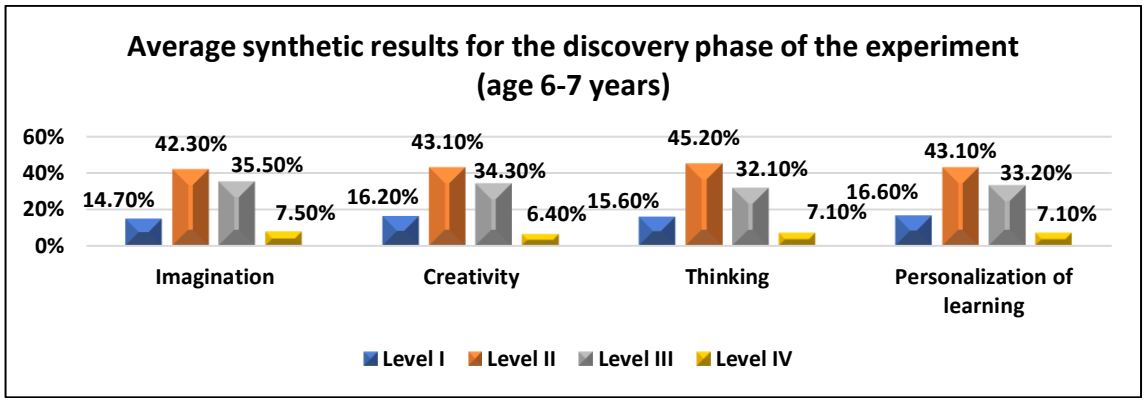

Figure 5.1. Average values at the detection stage (6-7 year old children, Block 1 and 2)

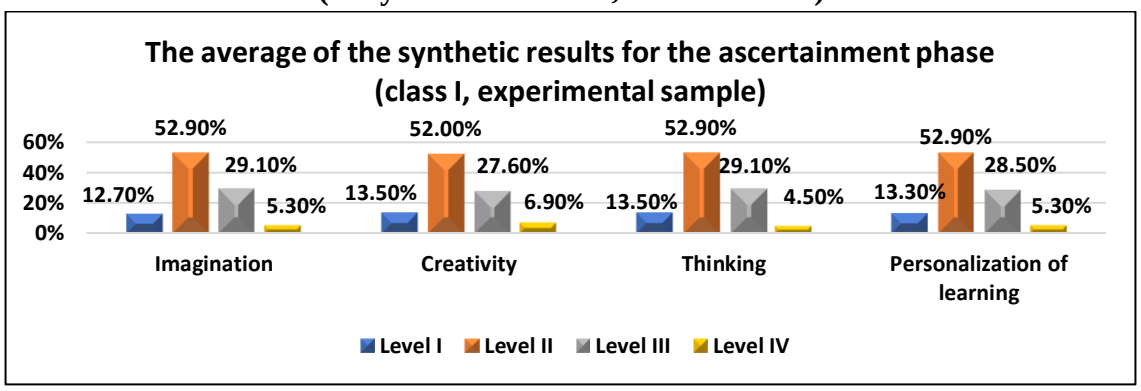

Figure 5.2. Average values at the ascertainment stage, the experimental sample (1st grade students, Block 1 and 2)

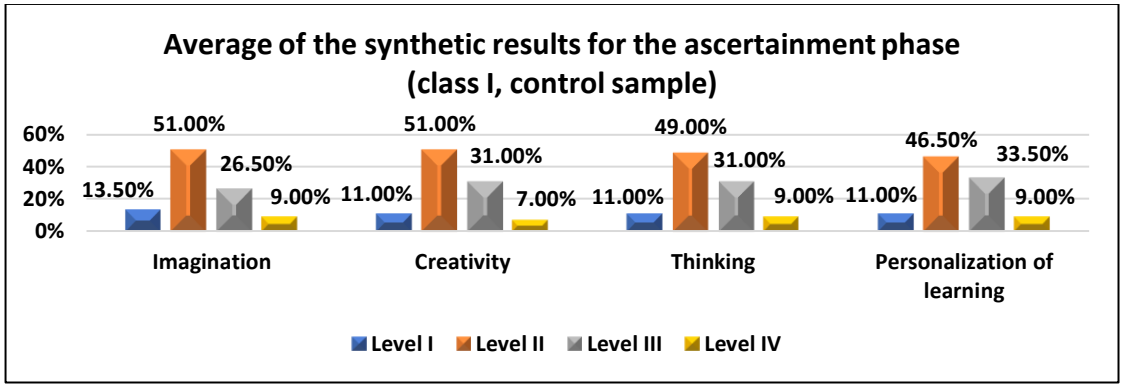

Figure 5.3. Average values at the ascertainment stage, the control sample (1st grade students, Block 1 and 2)

Depending on these characteristics, the need for the activity to be emphasized in the formative stage of the pedagogical experiment was outlined: on the maximum involvement of the subjects and on the creation of learning contexts, by integrating game activities with learning activities. In this way, the orientation towards a more intense concern for reflection becomes one relevant, becoming an objective in terms of developing children's skills. The recovery must be produced on the coordinates: imagination, creativity, thinking, personalization of learning, a fact that more and more clearly suggests the need for periodic modeling, in order to timely intervene in the process of preparation and adaptation to the learning activity. Therefore, the findings based on the initial evaluation of the children/students illustrate the veracity of the assumption of the need to reorient educational actions towards the development of the *unique educational complex preschool - early primary school* in relation to the adaptation of children to the new learning environment without difficulties, in relation to the approach system of the educational process (6-9 years).

Assessment test II (trichotomy questionnaire)

Also, at the ascertainment stage, an *oral questionnaire* was made with two categories of subjects: children from the school preparation group (6-7 years old), first grade students. When developing the respective questionnaire, along with the requirements regarding the content of the questions, I also took into account the language used, the way of expression, in relation to the age characteristics of the children/students. In this sense, we focused on questions with a trichotomous answer (yes/don't know/no). This type of questions was advocated in order to observe the general attitude of the subjects, but also to make the questions formulated for children/students accessible.

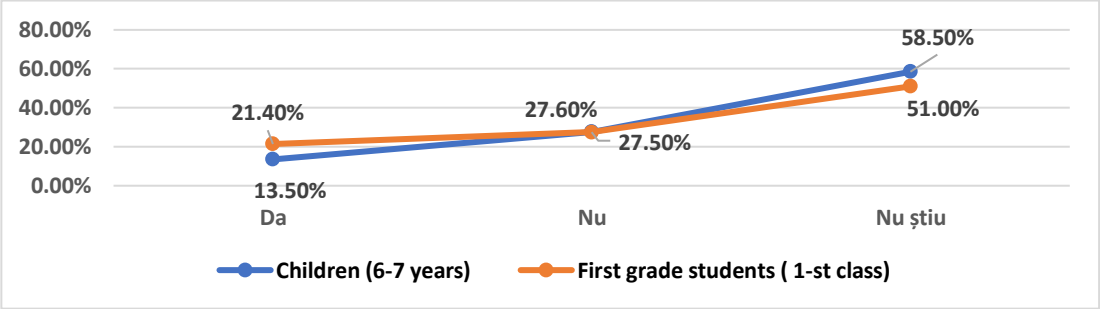

Figure 5.4. Averages compared regarding the subjects' answers (children 6-7 years old, 1st grade students)

The illustration of the data in Figure 5.4 indicated that no significant differences were recorded in all aspects. In this sense, the data illustrate that the dominant weight is held by subjects who presented negative answers (No) and undecided subjects (I don't know), which proves that the level of quality of the manifestation of imagination, creativity, thinking and personalization of learning by children/students leaves a lot of room for reflection. In our view, without making these data absolutist, we believe that we have a good basis for the conception and further valorization of the formative experimental activities.

Assessment test III (TS questionnaire (teaching staff))

From the list of research instruments of the ascertainment experiment, *the questionnaire* proposed to teachers from preschool institutions and those from primary classes (within the continuous professional training courses of the Institute of Education Sciences and the State University of Tiraspol) was also applied, through which the level of skills in the targeted issue was followed; knowing the conceptual-methodological milestones of the functionality of integrality and continuity at the preschool - primary school level; to determine the real needs for the given problem, the awareness of the degree of professional skills and the need for involvement in the realization of this process. The questions in the questionnaire were varied, direct and indirect, factual, opinion, knowledge, control.

The questions in the questionnaire were identical for both categories of subjects, except for one, which was proposed only for teachers: *How do you assess the level of children's preparation for school activities?* The questionnaire allowed us to determine to what extent teachers are aware of the functionality of integrality and continuity in the education of children aged 6-9, their attitude towards the specifics of integrity and continuity between these two levels of the education system, their understanding of the concepts of *school readiness*, adaptation to *the school environment*, the awareness of the needs with reference to the professional activity in order to effectively achieve the integrality and continuity of the preschool-primary school institution in order to educate 6-9 year old children.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data provided by the ascertainment activity leads to the following ***conclusions:***

- The comparative analysis of the three groups of subjects (6-7 year old children, 1st grade students and 2nd grade students) does not show big differences, both in Block 1 (academic year 2016-2017) and in Block 2 (academic year 2018-2019);
- For all subject categories, low results are recorded in relation to: understanding the pedagogue's task, adapting to the pedagogue's requirements, instability in expressing thoughts, re-operationalizing things already known, creating verbal images, showing flexibility in expressing thoughts;
- A greater receptivity of the subjects in solving the proposed tasks (children 6-7 years old, 1st grade students and 2nd grade students) was found to be more responsive to the "didactic game" test than the "learning activity" test, which indicates respondents' willingness to learn through play;
- The low level of knowledge of teaching staff with reference to the problem of completeness and continuity of education for 6-9 year old children is evident. Superficiality is found in the formulation of the answers in the cases of indicating the difficulties faced, the exposure of the opinions regarding the perspective of the problem of the integrality and continuity of the education

of 6-9 year old children. In this context, the lack of clarity in this regard increases the uncertainty and gives the process a chaotic, incidental character, lacking a clear direction for the teaching staff;

- There are contradictory opinions among educators and teachers regarding the preparation of children for adaptation to the school environment;
- The results of the ascertainment experiment were used in the conceptualization of the formative experiment in the context of the promotion of the *unique preschool - early primary school educational complex*;
- The findings based on the initial assessment of the children/students illustrate the veracity of the assumption of the need to reorient educational actions towards the development of the unique educational complex preschool - early primary school in relation to the adaptation of children to the new learning environment without difficulties, in relation to the systemic approach of the educational process (6-9 years).

The formative experiment took place on the key coordinates in the adaptation of children to the learning activity in school: *imagination, creativity, thinking, personalization of learning*.

The experimental samples were founded on *the technological ensemble of the integrality-continuity functionality*. The aim assumed the inventory by observation of the intermediate effects and the monitoring of their appearance/manifestation in the cognitive behavior of the subjects. The experimental approach was carried out in four organizational stages and corresponds to the four designed coordinates (Table 5.3).

The formative tests were analyzed according to the criteria presented below, based on which the children's progress was measured: the ability to select information, to analyze and synthesize it; the ability to shape a response; the perception of asking and answering questions; the habit of looking for several answer options; flexibility of thinking; expressive inventiveness; the ability to "coagulate" thoughts; the ability to act freely; the skill of self-appreciation.

It should be noted that the respective activities were carried out successively during the respective academic year, but in a different group of subjects from the 1st grade. The meaning of these activities, in part, relates to the idea of developing ***the cognitive formations of the subjects / functiogenesis*** and the mental thinking of the subjects.

The training experiment was carried out by the teachers (1st grade), the researcher being an experimenter-observer, monitoring the training activity. The teachers from the training classes (Block I, academic year 2016-2017; Block II, academic year 2018-2019) participated in 4 training sessions.

Table 5.3. Stages of the training experiment (subjects - 1st graders)

Stages, period, no. of subjects	Coordinates	Dependent variables	Independent variables	Formative tests
Block I. The year of studies 2016 – 2017 60 subjects **STAGE I.**	Imagination "absorbs" the experience of thought	Productive imagination – theoretical thinking	• Training the skill to select information and reflect on it • Formation of basic analysis and synthesis skills • To form modeling skills	Name the object Distinguish the objects Discover conections

STAGE II.	Building "Smart" Emotions	Elementary problem solving – alternative problem solving	• Formation of the skill of asking and answering • Formation of the habit of looking for several answer options • Developing the ability to generalize	Ask the hero How is it? Name as many as you can
Block I. The year of studies 2018 – 2019 26 subjects **STAGE III.**	Children's openness to learning	Creative potential – learning initiative	• Formation of flexibility of thinking • Development of expressive inventiveness • Formation of the ability to "coagulate" thinking	What would happen If I were… Compose the image
STAGE IV.	Developing reflection (what I know, what I don't know)	Curiosity of knowledge – independence learning	• Developing the ability to act freely • Formation of the skill of conscious organization of the activity • Developing the skill of self-analysis	Compose the image The cube tower Tell about yourself

The first session focused on the examination and awareness of *the Educational Complex preschool - early primary school* where the integrality mechanism triggers various developmental activities, the imagination, as a "generator" of creativity and the formation of the internal position lead to the internalization of objective activities and the formation of ***mental thinking*** of the subjects; *the second session* referred to the *technological ensemble of the functionality of integrality - continuity*, the capitalization of technologies to facilitate the transition of children to learning activity, *the creation of conditions* for adaptation to the new educational environment; *the third and fourth sessions* included a practical training for integrating the formative samples in the lessons.

Given the fact that the basic form of education in primary classes is the lesson, we consider the special organization of the process of developing cognitive formations and adapting the subjects to the school environment as a basic pedagogical condition of it. The tests were part of the lessons in the timetable: mathematics, Romanian language and literature, art education. We also relied on the idea of doing it in such a way that the experiment is perceived by the children as naturally as possible. In this sense, the application of tests by the teacher-experimenter was done depending on the behavioral manifestations of the students during the lesson (they were distracted, tired, lack of interest, indifferent to what the pedagogue is saying, low emotional state, etc.). At the same time, the experimental conditions were identical for all subjects in the experiment, in different years of studies, lasting 15 minutes.

We find that the utilization of the technological ensemble of the functionality of the integrality - continuity generates good results, because it directly addresses the formulated problem. We must mention that in all the actions taken, it was aimed for the children to be actively involved in what they are doing, to ask themselves questions about the activity they are doing, to perceive and be aware of the learning task, how they should act in order to accomplishing the task,

to justify their decisions, to rigorously plan the stages of carrying out the activity, to act independently, assuming responsibility. Based on the observations undertaken, we could see how the children's involvement in selecting information and reflecting on it, involvement in various discussions, the operative change of vision, the original exposition of one's own opinion, in search and discovery of solutions, motivated learning, acceptance of promoted ideas, in this way, they demonstrate their efficiency.

It should also be noted that during the formative experiment, we noticed a more pronounced responsiveness of the subjects to the samples that contained game elements. In the context of these circumstances, the game was used as a method of cognitive action, through which we followed the child's own logic. So, these games had a notional charge, the children created characters-notions. The notional characters of the learning games, which were exploited, had the meaning of notions, that is, they allowed the children to "clothe" the theoretical abstraction in feelings. Such a game becomes an emotional-symbolic entry into theoretical thinking for many first graders. This fact confirms the opportunity to create the integrative environment that determines the effective adaptation of children to the learning activity in school. For these reasons, we believe, cooperative games should not disappear with the child's school debut.

The control experiment aimed to measure the level of manifestation in students from cl. I of imagination, thinking, creativity and the personalization of learning in correlation with the type of learning used, by relating the final results to those of the observational experiment. As an evaluation tool, the same methodology was applied as at the ascertainment stage, with a different degree of complexity (modification of some tasks). The subjects were included in an integrated activity of three games plus three learning activities, according to the alternative structures of funcgenesis. The activities within the training experiment had essentially a heuristic character, the students demonstrating their capabilities through the prism of the need for knowledge and thinking.

The interpretation of the data of the final phase of the training experiment was made according to the essential criteria of the children's cognitive formations that reflect the key functions in the children's adaptation to the learning activity in school.

- Imagination (sees the surrounding world in images);
- Creativity (create verbal images);
- Thinking (it actively positions itself in relation to the surrounding world);
- Personalization of learning (has motivation for learning).

Based on the ideas contained in FIMCEC, *the technological ensemble of the functionality of the integrality - continuity*, of the results of the experiment of developing the cognitive formations of children, the evaluation grid of the samples of the validation experiment was developed, presented in Table 5.4.

From this perspective, through the activity of developing the cognitive formations of students from cl. The theoretical value of FIMCEC was confirmed, which, through its practical "outputs" in the educational process *(Technological Assembly)* confirmed its pedagogical validity through the obvious increase in the effectiveness of learning.

Table 5.4. Evidence evaluation grid (validation experiment)

Levels	Characteristics of levels	Evaluation descriptors	Operationalizations
I (unsatisfactory)	• lack of interest in the task; • do not understand the task; • the subordination of the actions, the conditions for the accomplishment of the task, fails; • he fails to rediscover the known things; • unable to act independently; • did not complete the task	The correctness of the performance of the task	Name
II (below average)	• selectively understands the meaning of things; • manifested poor attitude towards the task; • in certain cases thinks independently; • partially shows flexibility in solving the task; • with difficulty act creatively with objects/information; • accomplishes the task with more inconvenience	Consistency of response	Distinguish Discover Ask-response Examine Sum up
III (satisfactory, average)	• adapts without confidence to various instructions in solving the task; • adapts without confidence to various instructions in solving the task; • adapts without confidence to various instructions in solving the task; • much less rediscover things already known; • showed insecurity in exposing his own vision; • performs the task with some inaccuracies	The relevance of the answer Originality of thoughts	Resolve Develop Realize Organize Describe
IV (high)	• express his opinion operatively; • shows flexibility in solving the task; • rediscover things already known; • motivates the actions they perform; • the answer is correct, consistent, relevant and original		

Thus, the students were placed in a formative framework that greatly contributed to the systemic solution of the tasks of the educational process, correlated to their cognitive capacities, by transforming and operationalizing the active, creative elements in the learning process. The results obtained at the *post-experiment stage* demonstrate that the *technological ensemble of integrality-continuity* functionality facilitates the systemic organization of the process of developing cognitive formations, the transition of children from one learning stage to another (preschool education - primary education), respecting the *psycho-physiological particularities* of them. Thus, the valorization of the educational resources of the students (cl. I-a) vis-à-vis the cognitive formations, among which the skill to select information, the skill to rediscover things already known, the ability to understand the learning task, to respect the instruction to accomplish

the task, the ability to think independently, to show flexibility in solving a task, to adopt various action procedures in the realization of new situations, must be treated both from the perspective of creating the *integrative environment*, and from the perspective of integrating the activity ludic (represents the child's own logic) with the cognitive one.

The training approach demonstrated a significant increase in the number of students (experimental group) whose cognitive formations were fully exploited, in accordance with the implementation of the *technological ensemble of the functionality of integrality - continuity*, recording how important is the systemic approach to structuring the educational process, how the stages are followed in order to progress in order to adapt the children to the new school environment. Thus, representative for the purpose of the research are the experimental data of the *experimental validation* sample, illustrated in Figure 5.5., which show the considerable increase in the results regarding the development of cognitive formations: for *high level* (IV), on average by about 35.2% and a decrease of about 44.4% at the *lower average level* (II); also, progress of the subjects in the medium with 22.5% at the *satisfactory level*, *medium* (III); in the validation experimental sample, no students with an unsatisfactory level (I) were recorded, compared to the pre-experimental stage. This fact demonstrates the importance of the systemic organization of the process of developing students' cognitive formations, in order to effectively adapt them to the school environment.

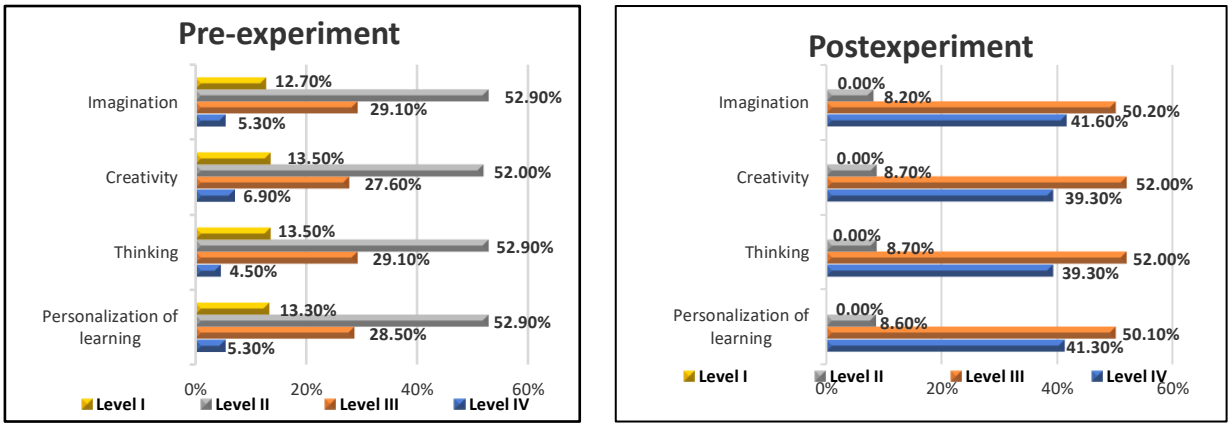

Figure 5.5. Comparative results recorded by students of first class (experimental sample)

The final data highlight the increase in the level of development of cognitive formations in the training classes (Figure 5.6), in relation to subjects from the 2nd classes, Figure 5.7 (finding sample, with validation function).

Thus, from these figures, a significant difference is found (39.2% between the subjects from class II and the students from class I (in favor of the students from the experimental sample, class I) for the lower middle level (II); at the satisfactory level, medium (III) the difference is 19.7% for the subjects in the experimental classes.

It is important that the subjects in the experimental classes managed to develop their level of cognitive formations, a fact that can be observed from the increase in the values for the high level, the difference being 23.1% in relation to the subjects in cl. the II. There is also an increase in the values for the high level (IV) in the subjects of the experimental sample (40.7%), while in the students from cl. of the II are 17.3%, the difference being 23.4%.

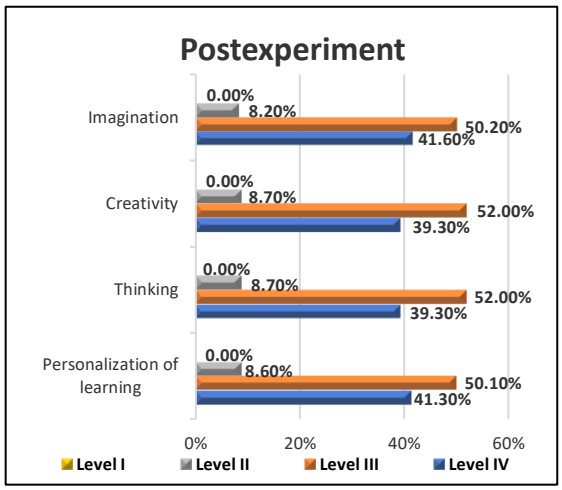

Figure 5.6. Distribution of final results (1st grade students, experimental sample)

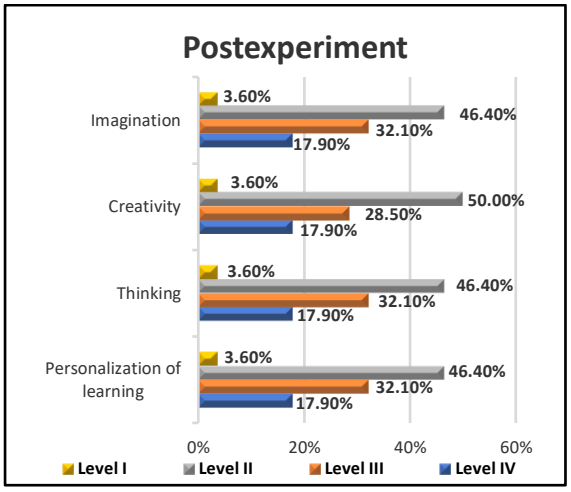

Figure 5.7. Distribution of final results (2nd grade students, control sample)

The applied-experimental research, with all its components, *confirmed* the hypothesis from which we initially started, the *identification and determination of* ***the effect, the degree of influence*** *of integrality and continuity in the education of 6-9 year old children; the training of the unique educational complex preschool - early primary school in relation to the easy adaptation of children to the new learning environment; the directions of action* in relation to the *systemic* approach to the educational process (6-9 years) in the positive conditioning of the results in the development of the cognitive formations of the students in the experimental sample.

Therefore, the achievement of completeness and continuity in the education of 6-9 year old children in line with the implementation of the *unique preschool - early primary school educational complex* in relation to *the children's easy adaptation to the new learning environment* illustrates how important the development of cognitive formations is, how the stages to progress in the new learning environment at school. This route, which is based on the *technological ensemble of the functionality of the integrality - the continuity* directs the training of the students and illustrates how to work, from the awareness of the learning task to the exploratory one (planning of the actions to achieve) and to the final one, it shows how the tasks are solved in the learning process and how to overcome some difficulties.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research of the problem of the functionality of integrality and continuity in education highlighted its theoretical-practical complexity, the development of appropriate benchmarks for experimental validation, the development of theoretical-methodological benchmarks relevant to this field. Thus, the conclusions formulated on the elaboration of the conceptual framework of the integrality and continuity of preschool education - primary education represent a vision inscribed in the area of novelty, achieved through an effort to reorganize concrete research in the field of relationships from various perspectives: philosophical, anthropological, sociological, psychological , pedagogical, physiological and recording in a defined methodological framework, in particular, in relation to the education of 6-9 year old children and in relation to their adaptation

to the school learning environment. The most important values of the research are summarized in ***the following conclusions***:

1. It has been analytically demonstrated that functionality represents a practical utility, a possibility of adaptation to the environment and assimilation, an interdependence of entities and the assurance of correspondence between the elements of an entity. The fact of examining the *functionality in education as a system, as an integral process*, was illustrated, because it involves the development of more effective common actions, which serve as a basis for the adaptation of children to the school environment. Through research, a series of evidences have been formulated for *the fact that the phenomenon of continuity is one of the basic principles* of organizing the educational process. Sufficient arguments have been brought to visualize the phenomenon of continuity as a process of evolutionary development of the child at each stage of the education system, which involves the relationship between the stages of learning and development of the child, which is carried out on the basis of ***new formations***, and, as a result , creating a system of conditions that can favor the easier passage of children from one stage of the learning and development process to another (Chapter 1, subchapter 1.1.; subchapter 1.2.).

2. Scientific evidence has been formulated to elucidate the theoretical aspects of integrality, from which the idea of ***integrality as a totality*** emerges, and among the forms of integrality the most eloquent is the approach to *common* factors, because it involves the development of actions to build the *common system* (preschool education-primary education). The idea that integrality must be approached through the lens of the *context* was argued. Several *fundamental benchmarks* have been formulated, which ensure the promotion of the notion of *contextual integrality*. The following characteristics of the ***educational node*** preschool education-primary education were analytically illustrated: (a) *reconstitution*, as a possibility to reconstitute "again" children's learning; (b) *elasticity*, as a matching phenomenon of cognitive accumulations prior to the current ones; (c) *cohesion*, as a capacity of the child who learns to "take his personal self" from kindergarten to school; (d) *coherence* as the possibility to take the necessary elements for the learning activity at the next level (primary education), which can be deduced from each other (Chapter 1, subchapter 1.3.; chapter 4, subchapter 4.1).

3. It was analytically illustrated that the *educational environment* reflects the interaction of the conditions that ensure the child's development. At the same time, *the educational environment* implies a *mutual accommodation* between the *active individual* and the *change of the environment* in which the developing personality lives. Adhering to the ideas of postmodernism in education, it was deduced that one of the basic orientations of the organization of the educational process in preschool and primary education becomes the necessity of *organizing the integrative environment*. In this sense, the opportunity of foreshadowing the integrative environment in the organization of the education of 6-9 year old children was established. A series of evidences have been formulated for the fact that *productive imagination and creative thinking* are part of the unique context of child development, which is the basis of the phenomenon of integrality and continuity between preschool and elementary school from the perspective of the *integrative environment* (Chapter 2, subchapter 2.2.).

4. It has been analytically demonstrated the role of *adaptation* in the functionality of children's education, which establishes the balance between the child and the environment and constitutes the starting point of development. The concept of school adaptation refers to the action of modification and transformation of the child in order to be able to respond to school demands,

compatible with the new learning environment, in accordance with the *internal position*. The key factor that determines *the efficiency* of adaptation is the functional state of the child in the learning activity. The mechanism of the functionality of the integrality and continuity of the preschool education and primary education level was illustrated. The concept of an ***educational node*** in relation to that of integration, which is unprecedented in pedagogical science, was substantiated. In this logic, *the educational node* is recorded in the general sense of integration, as the harmonization of some elements into a whole. In this sense, a series of ideas have been formulated that highlight the fact that within *the educational node*, in a *functional* aspect, imagination is integrated into the structure of abstract thinking, and abstract thinking is supported by the imaginary. So, imagination is *a mediator* of different thinking activities (conceptualization, understanding, problem solving, creation). As a result, we came to the idea that *the unitary context of creative imagination and theoretical thinking can be the basis of continuity between preschool and school level (primary education) or the benchmark of development in the segment of the educational node* (Chapter 3, subchapters 3.1; 3.2; chapter 2, subchapters 2.1; 2.3).

5. It was successful, investigative and argumentative, the elaboration of the *principles* of the functionality of the integrality - the continuity of the preschool and primary education stage, which represents a regulatory norm, orienting the activity of this process. As a result of the approach to determine the theoretical representations, the ***Functionality Model of Integrity and Continuity in the Education of 6-9 Year Old Children (FMICEC)*** was elaborated and scientifically substantiated, which points the way to an educational approach as effective as possible, which reproduces the main elements of the valorization of integrality and continuity preschool education - primary education: Component 1 - ***Functional system*** (centrifugal/centripetal); Component 2 – ***Integrality*** as a whole, which involves the interaction of the component elements; Component 3 – ***Continuity***, which refers to three elements: *conditioning the whole, morphostasis – preservation of the current state and morphogenesis – change* (Chapter 4, subchapters 4.1, 4.2.).

6. It has been scientifically argued the ***unique educational complex of preschool - early primary school***, which is constituted by a process in which the integrality mechanism triggers various developmental activities, in which imagination, as a "tool" of creativity and the formation of the internal position lead to the internalization of objective activities and the formation children's *mental thinking*. Also, scientific arguments were formulated for the ***technological ensemble of functionality of the integrality - continuity***, which is composed of several basic coordinates: Imagination and the experience of thinking; Intellectual/"smart" emotions; Openness to learning; The development of reflection and which involves a *systemic* approach to structuring the educational process, which facilitates the transition of children from one level of learning to another (preschool education - primary education), creates *conditions* for adaptation to the new educational environment, respecting the *psycho-physiological peculiarities* of them (Chapter 4, subsection 4.3.).

7. The results obtained experimentally demonstrate that the *technological ensemble of the functionality of integrality - continuity* facilitates the systemic organization of the process of development of cognitive formations, the transition of children from one level of learning to another (preschool education - primary education). Thus, the valorization of the students (cl. I-a) vis-a-vis cognitive formations, among which is also the skill to select information, the skill to rediscover the things already known, the competence to understand the learning task, to comply

with the instruction to carry out the task, the ability to think independently, to show flexibility in solving a task, to adopt various procedures of action in the realization of new situations, must be treated both from the perspective of creating an *integrative environment* and from the perspective of integrating the playful activity (represents the child's own logic) with the cognitive one. It was found that in the experimental classes the results regarding the development of cognitive formations increased: for *high level* (IV) an average increase of about 35.2% and an average decrease of about 44.4% at the *lower average level* (II); the subjects' progress was also noted in the medium with 22.5% at the *satisfactory level, medium* (III); in the experimental validation sample, no students with an unsatisfactory level (I) were recorded, compared to the pre-experimental stage (Chapter 5, subchapters 5.1, 5.2, 5.3).

8. Determining the theoretical and methodological benchmarks of the functionality of the integrality and continuity of the education of 6-9-year-old children, based on the *unique preschool-early primary school educational complex* effectively solves the ***research problem***, ensuring the theoretical and methodological basis specific to education and significantly developing the content of general pedagogy.

The research carried out theoretically and the experimental results: ***the conceptualization of the Educational Node and the internal position of the child/schoolchild; formulating the principles of integrity and continuity functionality; the elaboration of the Functionality Model of integrity and continuity in the education of 6-9 year old children; The design of the unique preschool-early primary school educational complex; the development and validation of the technological ensemble of functionality of integrity and continuity*** confirmed the configuration of a *new direction of research in the general theory of education*: ***The theory of educational nodes***, which indicates that the integration and harmonization of some elements into a whole occurs at *intersections*, the intersection assuming a lot of ***common element***s of these levels of education, as being decisive in the educational system as a whole. The following *educational nodes* are primary education-secondary education; middle school - high school education and can serve as wide openings for further investigation.

From the perspective of education theory, the following arguments are made for the formulation of the new research direction - ***The theory of educational nodes*** - through the scientific results obtained in the research. *First*, the theory of education: it *operates with a distinct terminology* and with new concepts, notions. Results obtained: *the notions functionalized, integrality, continuity, integrative environment, development, centrifugal and centripetal functional system* ***were analyzed***; ***some new concepts were defined***: *primary educational node, functiogenesis, unique functional complex, cognitive formation, internal position, mental thinking; educational node*. Also, the theory of education *observes* certain specific phenomena, explains them. *Results obtained*: the conditions of continuity in preschool-early school education were formulated; revealed the particularities of completeness, of school adaptation; the specifics of functionogenesis, *the internal position of the child*, etc. Last but not least, *it structures models, principles, concepts*. Results obtained: the principles of functionality of continuity and completeness ***were formulated***; identified functionality resources; ***the Functionality Model of integrity and continuity in the education of 6-9-year-old children was developed, structured Preschool-Early Primary School Educational Complex,*** Technological Ensemble of Functionality of Integrity-Continuity. The theory of education reflects *new acquisitions*, new transformations. Results: A new direction of research was developed - The theory of the

educational node. If we refer to the *circumscription of a continuous process of knowledge*, the results are recorded by formulating recommendations for further research.

9. **The theory of educational nodes** assumes an integrative direction of research and has as a subject of reflection a field of action closely related to educational praxeology, with operations, actions, concrete educational situations, in order to solve weak points, vulnerable at the intersection of the two levels of education/learning . The theory of educational nodes represents a component that, through the effort of epistemological elaboration, aims to define the approach to the educational node, to indicate various ways of analyzing the educational node, to elaborate benchmarks and to formulate suggestions and flexible models, operational levers of action.

The problem: Finding the answers to the question "What are the educational benchmarks that must be brought to the forefront of the education (training/development) of students in order to solve the problem of children/students moving from one level of education to another (preschool education/primary education; primary education / secondary education; secondary education / high school education), so that the educational node does not represent an obstacle, but a strong incentive?".

Actuality: Actuality is based on the dizzying changes occurring at the socio-economic and cultural level (age of confusion, discontinuity, technological challenge, human irrelevance, technological skills, lack of visions, wider communication, integration of fields, etc.) from the perspective the formation of the fulfilled man, starting from both directions (both steps) to identify the most pertinent solutions. The actuality is also visible due to the increase in the complexity of the educational phenomenon approached from a social aspect, requiring a multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.

The object of the research: The process of solving *("unraveling", "untying"*) the problems in an educational node. The domain of the educational reality on which the research activity is directed is the phenomenon of the *educational node*, as an action of assembling/disassembling some elements, which must be determined as fundamental at each stage of transition from one level of education to another.

If *continuity* represents a *movement*, an uninterrupted succession of elements in time and space, without interruption, that is, the same elements are approached during the transition from one level of education to another, having as synonyms *constancy, extension; integrality* represents a *state* of what is whole, complete, which is not reduced to the sum of the component parts, it is a unitary whole, having as synonyms *completeness, totality*; then *the node* represents *the place of connection* where two or more elements are connected, coming from different directions, to hold together, through semantic transfer meaning an essential point on which the solution of a problem depends or an obstacle that must be overcome, having as synonyms *connection, joint*. It was found that in reality there are about 3,850 types of knots (Encyclopedia Book of Knots). *The educational node* is, possibly, one of these, to be researched not according to its "resistance", but according to the possibilities of "untying, unraveling" (problem solving). The link in an educational node is strong and secure, but it is quite complicated to link the component elements together.

Purpose: The epistemological foundation of the pedagogical phenomenon of the *educational node* as a basic, multidimensional construction, consisting of various "grains" of content, related to the specifics of age, learning, behavior, perception, attitudes, visions, etc. of the children/students, who, at the specific moment of the transition from one level of

education/education to another, are interconnected in order to solve the problem of accommodation/adaptation.

The principles of the educational node: (*at a presumptive level*) the principles of integration, continuity, functionality, contextualization, broadening the horizon, cohesion and coherence, reconstitution.

Dimensions: the descriptive-explanatory dimension (spotting the educational reality, ascertaining, analyzing, explaining the interdependence between the coordinates of the educational node in a systemic view); the prescriptive-normative dimension (elaboration of rules, norms, recommendations, prescriptions, criteria that would ensure the improvement of the students' situation in the transition stages and in order to structure the normative base of the educational node); the action dimension (structuring the operationalization mechanisms, formulating the ways of practical implementation); the prospective dimension (the theoretical anticipation of the aims of the approach to the educational node).

Mechanisms: *the mechanism of relation*, which reveals that what makes two things have a mutual relation, maintaining their mutual belonging, the "state of affairs" in which they are caught is precisely the revelation of the proper, *revealing what is proper* to them*; the mechanism of preparatory thinking (in the sense of M. Heidegger)*, by which one tries to bring into the present what has already been said, but has not yet actually been thought; *the mechanism of logical expansion*, as a safety element, with an additional functionality, based on specific connecting elements.

Usefulness: Promoting the scientific research of the educational node can ensure multiple connections of the components and their cooperation, thus generating the solution of the many problems that arise at the stage of transition and accommodation, acclimatization, ensuring easier overcoming of obstacles; the research of the educational node can configure a strategy for regulating the educational process in a fairly comprehensive framework; from a pragmatic perspective, the research of the educational node can reconsider the field in a new combinatorial approach of structures, models, methodologies, technologies, operations, actions, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS. The research results open up the following opportunities for research and application:

1. The scientific foundation and elaboration of the ***Concept of the integrality-continuity of the Educational Node***, which would record the particularities and the role of knowledge of each educational node in pedagogical practice, in which the psycho-pedagogical foundations of continuity and its relationship with the curriculum development process would be researched.
2. The conceptualization of the ***affective learning phenomenon*** for each educational node from the perspective of facilitating students' learning, learning with meaning and significance, so that they are as well prepared for life, depending on their age and existential needs.
3. The study of ***educational nodes*** at the following age stages (10-14; 14-16; 16-18 years) and at the following "transition" periods from one level to another: primary level - gymnasium; middle school - high school by essentializing age characteristics, learning specifics, cognitive formations, functional integrity and continuity, the integrative environment, the possibilities of adaptation and affirmation of students.
4. Development of the ***methodological guide*** for educators/teachers entitled *"Coordinates of educational nodes"*, in which the specifics of each educational node will be

explained and the methodological milestones in working with students will be revealed. This guide can be used in the process of initial and continuous training of school teachers.

5. Expanding the research of the ***educational node*** from the perspective of curricular integrity and *configuring its methodological referential* on the strategic axis of learning and training the skills/competencies of children/students.

Recommendations for decision-takers: Developing preschool and primary education curricula in terms of the integration and continuity of educational contents and technologies (fields of activity/disciplines), with the aim of effectively adapting children to the new school environment.

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ADNOTARE

Pascari Valentina „ Funcționalitatea integralității și continuității în educația copiilor de 6-9 ani", teză de doctor habilitat în științe ale educației, Chișinău, 2021

Teza este structurată din introducere, cinci capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie din 359 titluri, 10 anexe, 266 de pagini de text de bază, 15 figuri, 18 tabele. Rezultatele obținute sunt publicate în 37 lucrări științifice.

Cuvinte-cheie: funcționalitate, integralitate, continuitate, integralitate contextuală, mediu integrator, funcțiogeneză, formațiune cognitivă, poziția internă a copilului/elevului, imaginație, nod educațional.

Scopul lucrării îl constituie fundamentarea pedagogică, psihologică, filosofică, antropologică a bazei conceptuale privind funcționalitatea continuității-integralității în educația copiilor de 6-9 ani și conturarea liniilor de acțiune specifice, pentru a dezvălui posibilitățile de aplicare în procesul educațional.

Obiectivele cercetării: Determinarea fundamentelor teoretice și metodologice ale integralității și a continuității în educația copiilor prin analiza specificului conceptelor de bază, re/definirea conceptelor esențiale, cu un caracter denotativ, într-un larg cadru de referință; dezvăluirea semnificațiilor pedagogice, psiho-pedagogice ale integralității și continuității; sintetizarea principiilor și tezelor pedagogice ce intervin în procesul integralității și continuității; identificarea necesităților de cercetare teoretico-aplicativă a procesului de integralitate și continuitate în educația copiilor de 6-9 ani din perspectiva schimbărilor ce se produc în cadrul sistemului de învățământ, proiectarea bazei metodologice de soluționare complexă a acestei probleme; sintetizarea factorilor și resurselor ce asigură funcționalitatea integralității și a continuității; a indicatorilor de evaluare a eficacității integralității și a continuității; elaborarea *Modelului funcționalității integralității și continuității în educația copiilor de 6-9 ani* și a *Ansamblului tehnologic de funcționalitate a integralității-continuității* în baza reperelor conceptuale din perspectiva modelării *poziției interne a copilului*; fundamentarea pedagogică și determinarea coordonatelor *nodului educațional* ca factor de reușită în educația copiilor; elaborarea instrumentelor strategice (*Funcțiogeneza cognitivă; Complexul educațional unic preșcolaritate-școală primară* pentru asigurarea integralității și continuității dinre educația preșcolară-învățământul primar; organizarea, desfășurarea, validarea experimentului pedagogic.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică rezidă în argumentarea științifică a unor noi concepte în știința pedagogică: *nod educaţional, funcțiogeneză, complex funcțional unic, formațiune cognitivă, poziție internă, gândire mentală* și a elaborării Complexului educațional preșcolaritate-școală primară care pune în valoare procesul și produsul experienței și poziția internă a copilului/elevului; formularea principiilor funcționalității integralității-continuității.

Rezultatele obținute care au determinat noua direcție științifică: Cercetarea realizată teoretic şi aplicativ (Modelul funcționalității integralității-continuității, Complexul educațional unic, Ansamblul tehnologic, nodul educațional, poziția internă a copilului, principiile funcționalității integralității-continuității) au confirmat configurarea *unei noi direcţii de cercetare în teoria generală a educației*: ***Teoria nodurilor educaționale***, care indică faptul că integralizarea și armonizarea *unor elemente* într-un tot întreg se produce la *intersecţii*, intersecția presupunând *o mulţime de elemente comune* a acestor niveluri de educaţie, ca fiind determinante în sistemul educaţional în ansamblu.

Semnificația teoretică. Au fost esenţializate un şir de concepte, cum ar fi cele de *funcționalitate, integralitate, continuitate, mediu integrator, sistem funcțional centrifug și centripet;* au fost definite unele concepte noi: *nod educaţional, funcțiogeneză, complex funcțional unic, formațiune cognitivă, poziție internă, gândire mentală;* prin abordare analitică au fost descrise condițiile continuității în educația preșcolară-școlară incipientă și au fost dezvăluite particularitățile integralității, a adaptării școlare. Sintetizarea interpretativă a condus la fundamentarea Modelului funcționalității integralității și continuității în educația copiilor, conceput pe trei coordonate de bază, fiind o construcție epistemologică care pune în valoare fenomenul respectiv într-o viziune nouă, sistemică.

Valoarea aplicativă constă în elaborarea și validarea Ansamblului tehnologic de funcționalitate a integralității și continuității, ca un construct strategic, ce dinamizează perechile unitare în dezvoltarea/ formarea imaginației, emoțiilor intelectuale, în deschiderea copiilor pentru învățare și reflecție.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice s-a realizat în instituțiile educaționale din R.Moldova (Chișinău, Strășeni, Durlești, Nisporeni, Orhei), pe un eșantion de 383 subiecți (194 preșcolari și 189 elevi, cl. 1 și 2) și 98 cadre didactice (50 educatori și 48 învățători).

ANNOTATION

Pascari Valentina "The functionality of completeness and continuity in the education of children aged 6-9", Thesis of doctor habilitat in sciences of education, Chisinau 2023

The structure of the thesis consists of introduction, five chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography of 359 titles, 10 appendices, 266 pages of core text, 15 figures, 18 tables. The obtained results are published in 37 scientific papers.

Key words: functionality, integrality, continuity, contextual integrality, integrative environment, functiogenesis, cognitive formation, internal position of the child/student, imagination, educational node.

The purpose of the work is the pedagogical, psychological, philosophical, anthropological substantiation of the conceptual basis regarding the functionality of continuity-integrality in the education of 6-9 year old children and the outline of specific lines of action, in order to reveal the possibilities of application in the educational process.

Research objectives: Determining the theoretical and methodological foundations of integrity and continuity in children's education by analyzing the specifics of basic concepts, re/defining essential concepts, with a denotative character, in a broad frame of reference; revealing the pedagogical, psycho-pedagogical meanings of completeness and continuity; synthesizing the pedagogical principles and theses involved in the process of integrity and continuity; identifying the needs for theoretical-applied research of the process of completeness and continuity in the education of 6-9 year old children from the perspective of the changes occurring within the education system, designing the methodological basis for the complex solution of this problem; synthesizing the factors and resources that ensure the functionality of integrity and continuity; of the indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of completeness and continuity; the development of the *Functionality Model of integrity and continuity in the education of 6-9 year old children and the Technological Ensemble of functionality of integrity-continuity* based on conceptual benchmarks from the perspective of modeling the *child's internal position*; pedagogical substantiation and determination of the coordinates of the educational node as a success factor in children's education; the development of strategic tools (*Cognitive Functionogenesis; The unique educational complex preschool-primary school as a process towards mental thinking*) to ensure the integrity and continuity between preschool education-primary education; organizing, conducting, validating the pedagogical experiment.

The scientific novelty and originality resides in the scientific argumentation of new concepts in pedagogical science: *educational node, functionogenesis, unique functional complex, cognitive formation, internal position, mental thinking* and the development of the preschool-primary school educational complex that values the process and the product of experience and the internal position of the child/student; formulation of the principles of integrity-continuity functionality.

The results obtained that determined the new scientific direction: The research carried out theoretically and applied (The model of the integrity-continuity functionality, The unique educational complex, The technological ensemble, the educational node, the internal position of the child, the principles of the integrity-continuity functionality) confirmed the configuration of *a new research direction in the general theory of education: **The theory of educational nodes***, which indicates that the integration and harmonization of ***some elements*** into a whole occurs *at intersections*, the intersection presupposing ***a lot of common elements*** of these levels of education, as determinants in the educational system as a whole.

Theoretical significance. A series of concepts were essentialized, such as those of *functionality, integrality, continuity, integrative environment, centrifugal and centripetal functional system*; some new concepts were defined: *educational node, functionogenesis, unique functional complex, cognitive formation, internal position, mental thinking*; through an analytical approach, the conditions of continuity in preschool-early school education were described and the particularities of completeness, of school adaptation were revealed. The interpretative synthesis led to the foundation of the Functionality Model of integrity and continuity in children's education, conceived on three basic coordinates, being an epistemological construction that values the respective phenomenon in a new, systemic vision.

The applicative value consists in the elaboration and validation of the technological ensemble of integrated functionality, as a strategic construct, which dynamizes unitary pairs in the development/formation of imagination, intellectual emotions, in opening children to learning and reflection.

The implementation of the scientific results was carried out in the educational institutions of the Republic of Moldova (Chisinau, Străseni, Durlești, Nisporeni, Orhei), on a sample of 383 subjects (194 preschoolers and 189 students, cl. 1 and 2) and 98 teaching staff (50 educators and 48 teachers).

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