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Laboratory Experiment as a Motivational Factor to Learn in Roma Elementary School Children

Abstract

In Serbia alarmingly few Roma children go to school, and they perform far worse compared to their non-Roma peers. In this paper, effects of laboratory experiments on acquiring knowledge in Roma children were investigated. Pedagogical experiment with parallel groups was conducted with third-grade elementary Roma and non-Roma students. Both control and experimental groups attended lectures on topics related to environmental protection, and the experimental group also conducted laboratory experiments. After final testing, the experimental subgroup of Roma students exhibited better progress. Results indicate that engaging in students' laboratory experiments is an adequate strategy of teaching Roma school children, and the raised interest in school subjects through practical work is a guarantee of their completing primary education.

Key words: *environmental protection, learning strategy, practical work, the Roma, laboratory experiment, motivational factor.*

1. Introduction

With a population dispersed across much of Eastern Europe, the Roma are the Continent's poorest citizens and largest minority. There are between 10 million and 12 million Romany people in the EU, in candidate countries and potential candidate countries in the Western Balkans. A significant number of the Roma live in extreme marginalization in both rural and urban areas and in very poor social-economic conditions. They are disproportionately affected by discrimina-