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## FOREST PEDAGOGY IN A PRIMARY EDUCATION AND ITS PERCEPTION BY THE PEDAGOGUES\*\*

**Abstract:** Currently, elementary education teachers and tutors in Slovakia express massive interest in collaboration with forest pedagogues. This collaboration focuses on fulfilling educational standards and meeting educational objectives tight to the topics of the forest environment. These are mainly the topics from the subjects of Human and nature, Human and society, Human and the world of labour. The object of the research was teachers' opinions on collaboration with forest pedagogues and the impact of forest pedagogy on the educational process.

**Keywords:** *forest pedagogy, forest pedagogue, educational areas, tutor, school collaboration.*

### INTRODUCTION

There is a significant potential of the Forest Pedagogy, by reason of bringing new knowledge and experience within traditional school environments from forestry sector professionals, who can educate pupils/children about forests, particularly in forest areas. The main objective of the Forest Pedagogy program is to support new trends of education aimed at innovative and activating approaches with special attention to the interconnection of the theory and practice. The young generation, in particular, needs to be prepared to react to new challenges concerning their future career in a flexible way. The school and school facilities therefore should give a priority to interdisciplinary educative space, where contact with specialists would be involved.

The young generation, in particular, was recently spending time indoors thus losing touch with nature which results in several physical and mental problems;

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although there is some show of interest towards outdoor activities among youth, and it is important to keep this trend developing. The Forest Pedagogy is learned on the principle of supporting methods and forms of learning by doing, research and project learning, which are currently one of the most modern forms of education. The learning by doing so is based on involving all human senses and built on teaching on own experience. We provide not only knowledge but also develop the psychomotor and socio-emotional page of children's/pupil's personalities. An integrated approach in education can bring lasting value to the general public by creating a space for trained forest pedagogues in schools and school facilities to educate the natural science topics.

### **THE CONCEPT OF THE FOREST PEDAGOGY AND ITS CONCEPT IN SLOVAKIA**

The definition of the Forest Pedagogy comes from the European concept and basic documents developed by the UN-ECE/FAO FCN Subgroup Forest pedagogy – Forest Communication Network and the Forest Pedagogy International Network ([www.forestpedagogics.eu](http://www.forestpedagogics.eu)). The Forest Pedagogy is understood as a pedagogical movement coming from the education of leisure time, which is widely supported by international initiatives, mostly in German-speaking countries. Concerning the system of pedagogical science, Forest Pedagogy is related to applied science.

In Slovakia, the official Conception of the Forest Pedagogy as a part of environmental education (Marušáková et al., 2010: 6) has been developed, which was approved by the Ministry of agriculture and rural development No. 2824/2011-710. The following definition was set: *“Forest Pedagogy as a part of environmental education is learning about the forest ecosystem and education of the people to continuously sustainable way of life by the example of the functioning forest ecosystems. Forest Pedagogy is provided by certified forest pedagogues and is intended for all target groups, especially children and youth, families with children, seniors, and persons with special needs. It uses activating methods and forms of learning by doing methods and project learning. It deliver not only knowledge but also the emotional part of personality and support practical skills and literacy”*.

Partial experience of the Forest Pedagogy programmes, mostly forest excursions with schools, has already existed but there is no clear attachment neither in pedagogical-didactical nor the theoretical level. Teachers' experiences hows that the Forest Pedagogy is reasonable and justified as an important part of the school process. For that reason, we consider the topic to be actual and extremely important. The topic needs to be solved not only on the practical level but also on theoretical and research levels for comparison with international research data.

The State Education Programme in Slovakia (see [www.statpedu.sk](http://www.statpedu.sk)) and the cross-cutting theme of environmental education offer us several nature-related themes that can certainly be taught by a qualified teacher. However, using the specific approach, we can raise the interest of children/pupils and teachers/educators in forest protection awareness of its meaning as well as expand their knowledge. For this purpose, it is necessary to use the experience of the forest pedagogue who will teach pupils by using specific topics set directly in nature.

In Slovakia, we have accredited a further education of teachers, in the form of a continuous education, which aims to improve the quality of a teacher's teaching conception. A special emphasis is put on the educational program for pre-elementary teachers of the Forestry study – environmental education on the example of the forest. This program is accredited and implemented by National Forest Centre and the guarantor for this program is the Faculty of Education of Constantine The Philosopher University in Nitra. This educational program's objectives are to strengthen and deepen the pedagogical knowledge and skills of pedagogical employees in the environmental education area. Such can be obtained by an example of the forest environment with the use of experimental learning in forestry pedagogy in the context of sustainability, and by implementing the acquired knowledge in an educational process in a pre-elementary and elementary education.

In 2019, we started a research project in Slovakia. The core of it is applied pedagogical research – *Forest Pedagogy and education for sustainable development in pre-primary and primary education*. We based its starting points on the results of some of both our and foreign pedagogical research (Kollárová, 2018; Warden, 2012) as well as the results of cooperation between the Faculty of Education of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and the National Forest Centre – Institute for the Forest Consulting and Education. The key idea of the project is to support new trends in education that aim at innovative and activating approaches, with an emphasis on linking theory to practice.

The project is aimed at the development, realisation and verifying of the Forest Pedagogy model – a methodology and its implementation at school, school facilities, and families. Our purpose is to increase the interest of children in kindergarten and younger-age pupils in the natural environment, develop their skills and literacy in nature through activating methods used by forest pedagogues directly in natural woodland areas. At the same time, the project is focused on increasing environmental awareness, popularisation of the Forest Pedagogy between pedagogical staff and broad public and supporting the idea of an active lifestyle and spending time outdoor within the frame of family education.

## COOPERATION OF TEACHERS WITH FOREST PEDAGOGUES

The education of forest pedagogues together with the coordination of the Forest Pedagogy activities in Slovakia is provided by the National Forest Centre (see [www.lesnapedagogika.sk](http://www.lesnapedagogika.sk)). It is an accredited educational program named Forest Pedagogy which is in the range of 80 hours and can be completed by experts – foresters. At the request of kindergartens or primary schools within the frame of formal education, graduates of the Forest Pedagogy program can teach topics related to the forest environment – *animals in the forest, deciduous and coniferous trees, anthill, trees and fruits, living and in animate nature, the profession of a forester, hunting, bees, etc.* Natural science topics canals be found in the curricula of the subject Elementary Realia in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of primary school, about which A. Nagyová, D. Kollárová (2020: 51) write too. If the forester/forest pedagogue covers the topics of the National Educational Program and respects all didactic principles, we can talk about forest pedagogy with in formal education. However, it has its place mainly in non-formal education. The school can contact a forest pedagogue also to pursue hobbies in the field of environmental education, or we can carry out various activities with foresters in cooperation with parents, or there can be established hobby departments (hunting, forestry, beekeeping) in leisure centers. Since its establishment in 2006, the National Forest Centre has also been working actively in the field of environmental education (further in [www.nlc.sk](http://www.nlc.sk); [www.lesnapedagogika.sk](http://www.lesnapedagogika.sk)).

It cooperates with all types of schools. It has experience in implementing national and international projects that focus on environmental education and education for sustainable development. We can mention the following nation wide projects – *Les ukrytý v knihe* (The Forest Hidden in the Book), *Detská lesnícka univerzita* (Children's Forestry University), *Lesná olympiáda* (Forest Olympics), etc. (further in Chlpošová et al., 2020).

It is necessary to start in pre-primary and primary education since we consider this period as the most important in terms of personality development, for the formation and structuring of the cognitive and value system. Currently, there are 220 accredited forest pedagogues within Slovakia. We propose, therefore, a process in which we address kindergartens, primary schools, forest pedagogues and agree on topics that might be taught by a forest pedagogue, concerning the content of the topic.

## **PARTIAL RESULTS OF RESEARCH – OPINIONS OF TEACHERS AND TUTORS (EDUCATORS IN AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB) ON FOREST PEDAGOGY**

In 2021 we have conducted research, in which we focused on opinions of pedagogues – teachers in elementary schools and tutors (educators in After-school club) – on using the Forest Pedagogy in schools. We were interested to hear the opinions of those teachers, who use the Forest Pedagogy in the education process as well as educations tutors, who utilize it outside the education process.

Our research was inspired by several theories. As shown by research studies of P. Daniš (2016), D. Loyová (2018), Kollárová (2018), the education process in nature brings many positives – it increases pupils' interest in learning, and the completion of the Forest Pedagogy program has a positive impact on pupils' natural science literacy. In 2015, as a part of the project *Forests for the society, forests without barriers* ([www.nlc.sk](http://www.nlc.sk)) the opinions of elementary and pre-elementary school teachers were being observed to find out their interest in experiencing the forest pedagogy programs. The results have shown that there is a greater interest in such forest pedagogy program which is conducted in the forest environment.

Based on these results, we formulated the topic of our research, questions and objectives. There can be different perspectives on a given topic, therefore we narrowed down our research to a research problem: *How do teachers in elementary schools and tutors (educators in After-school clubs) perceive the meaning and the possibilities of utilizing the Forest Pedagogy in their teaching praxis*). The research problem is descriptively formed. When approaching a given research problem, we intended to choose the research strategy in which we utilize quantitative-qualitative methodology.

### **THE OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Our main objective was to: *Find out the opinions of teachers and tutors on possibilities of utilizing the Forest Pedagogy in their teaching praxis and what level of importance they assign to it.*

We also chose the partial objectives of our research, while having the main research objective in mind. Due to the amount of collected data, in this research study we will present results to answer partial objectives:

- Find out where in their teaching praxis did the teachers and tutors come across forest pedagogy;
- Find out what level of importance do teachers and tutors assign to the Forest Pedagogy in the education and teaching process.

To obtain the data for the above-mentioned partial research objectives, the quantitative-qualitative research strategy was selected. By this strategy, needed information was obtained, which could be then used to draw conclusions. In the initial phase, the methods were prepared together with related research tools – identical questionnaires for both teachers and tutors. These were distributed to elementary schools within one selected region. The questionnaires were then statistically evaluated. Based on these statistics, the questions were then formulated for a subsequent interview – a qualitative component of the research. After the realization of individual interviews (altogether 12), these were transcribed into the protocols. From these protocols, the results were then using the open-coding method to find out the answers to the research questions.

The research questions were following:

- To what extent is the Forest Pedagogy wide spread among teachers and tutors?
- Do teachers and tutors understand correctly who is the forest pedagogue?
- In which areas do elementary teachers and tutors see positive ideas of the Forest Pedagogy for teachers/tutors development?
- In which areas do elementary teachers and tutors see positive ideas of the Forest Pedagogy for pupils' development?
- Which forms of the Forest Pedagogy application would teachers and tutors prefer?

The answers to these questions were to be found among teachers and tutors. For this reason, 100 teachers and 100 tutors from the Trenčín region (one of the eight Slovak regions) were asked. This region was selected due to the fact, that it has numerous forest areas and schools in this region already working with forest pedagogues more than in other Slovak regions. Important to mention is the fact that the return rate of questionnaires among teachers was 74% and among tutors, it was 72%.

To find out the answers to the research questions, research methods, tools and research samples were carefully selected. For the needs of the quantitative part of the research, the questionnaires were used, mainly because this research method provides an easy and fast collection of data from 146 participants. Moreover, the questionnaire provides initial opinions of participants on the Forest Pedagogy and therefore served as a leader to develop the interview questions for the subsequent part of the research. The questionnaire consisted of 15 open-ended, close-ended and multiple-choice questions. Likert scales were also part of the questionnaire with five possible answers (Never – Rarely – Sometimes – Often – Always). These were used to identify the intensity of the observed phenomena. The questionnaire was administered mainly in a print version.

The interview was selected as the second research method. In order to gain a deeper insight into the observed topic (phenomena). Opinions of teachers and tutors and the level of importance they assign to the Forest Pedagogy were evaluated via interview questions. Performed interviews were structured, with open-ended questions, which were prepared in advance and the participants were asked the questions in the same order. The qualitative part of the research was evaluated using open coding, one of the techniques of the Q-methodology.

## THE RESEARCH OUTCOMES

When evaluating the results, earlier formulated research questions were followed. Data obtained using the quantitative method – questionnaire, will be presented using tables and their interpretation. Data obtained by a qualitative method – interview will be presented and explained by constructive comparison as a component of the techniques of the Q-methodology.

### Experience of teachers and tutors with the Forest Pedagogy

Research shows that 89.20% of teachers and 88.90% of tutors have experience with the Forest Pedagogy in their teaching praxis. Most common is the experience of work with forest pedagogues.

*Table 1. Experience with forest pedagogy*

Types of responses (Answers in %)	Primary education teachers	Tutors (Educators in After-school club)
Cooperation with a forest pedagogue	35.13	36.12
School event (discussion, excursion)	22.97	8.33
School in nature	13.51	8.33
Children's summer camps	0.00	18.05
Visit of the special-purpose facility of the Forest Pedagogy	2.70	12.05
Activity in a kindergarten	2.70	8.33
Information from the media	0.00	2.93
From study to teaching	5.40	2.93
At occasion:		
Earth Day, Forest Moon	10.82	0.00
Environmental education	6.77	0.00
From colleagues	0.00	2.93

Presented results show that the most frequent answer was *cooperation/work with a forest pedagogue*. Teachers also often (22.97%) listed *organizational forms* such as *seminars or excursions*. Among tutors, the work with a forest pedagogue was specified by an *experience in (children) summer camp*. It can also be seen that tutors have quite a good experience with *specialized facilities for the teaching of the Forest Pedagogy*.

The level of cooperation was evaluated by using scales. The most frequent answer related to work with a forest pedagogue was among both groups “*quite frequently*”. On average, 34.26% of all 146 participants answered such. Up to 24.32% of teachers claim to work often with a forest pedagogue. Equally, 27% of both, teachers and tutors, have only partial or no experience with the Forest Pedagogy.

When comparing the results of participants among both groups, it is more frequent for teachers to have an experience with occasional cooperation with forest pedagogues. Further, the teachers’ group also answered more frequently that they engage in regular cooperation with forest pedagogues, compared to tutors. Tutors, on the other hand, stated in their answers that they are not aware of this kind of cooperation between elementary schools and forest pedagogues. These results are also supported by another observation that shows where did the respondent come across the Forest Pedagogy.

Regarding the cooperation of teachers and tutors with forest pedagogues, we were interested in their opinions, of what they expect from this cooperation. These opinions are presented in Table 2.

*Table 2. Expectations of pedagogues from cooperation with forest pedagogues*

Expectations from the Forest Pedagogy	
Tutors (Educators in After-school club)	Primary education teachers
Helping with choosing activities	Gaining new knowledge
Communicating information to children in a play fulway	Providing information to children through experimental learning
Teaching children how to behave in nature	A deeperintroduction of the topic to children
Applying new practical demonstrations	Enablechildren to gainpersonalexperience
Implementation not in the school environment	Implementation in a forest environment
Regular implementation	Implementation several times a year

The results showed that both, teachers and tutors agree, that they expected that pupils will be provided with information based on experiential learning activi-

ties. Similarly, they agreed that these activities should be performed in the forest environment. While tutors expected regular activities, the teachers did not mention the necessity of regularity of these activities. Other answers, in which, however, the consensus was not found, were the teachers' expectations to gain some new knowledge themselves thanks to forest pedagogy. Another expectation was that forest pedagogues will bring the forest topics closer to pupils and will have them gain their own experience with, for example, environment protection as well as animal care. Additionally, tutors expected help with activities selection in regard to the topic. This is supported by the fact, established by the questionnaire part of the research, that respondents would appreciate a set of activities they could utilize with pupils in the forest environment as a component of educational aids. Tutors expect from this cooperation character development among pupils too. Specifically, they state *"...in order for pupils to learn how to behave in nature, they teach them the love of nature, and nature protection [...] How to behave to forest animals, animal care [...] empathy with forest, fauna, flora, but also empathy to each other."*

We were also interested in what forms of cooperation respondents desire. Participants seek seminars, discussions, competitions, walks and excursions with forest pedagogues. However, they are interested in long-term projects, rather than one time activities. This is supported by the research observations stated above. Mainly teachers state that they would appreciate projects, which would be based on topics proposed by pupils, and which would allow observing of a natural phenomenon for a longer period of time. They say: *"...regular interaction in the forest environment and working on projects [...] longer-term observation of a forest phenomenon."*

We were curious how frequently do participants expect to work with forest pedagogues during a school year. The conducted analysis of interviews concludes that there is no consensus among participants in their answers to the above question. Tutors would be happy with monthly interaction, while teachers talk about five to six meetings a year *" [...] so that it can repeat several times and that it brings something to both parties."* "Some proposals were related to seasons of the year, therefore, four times a year.

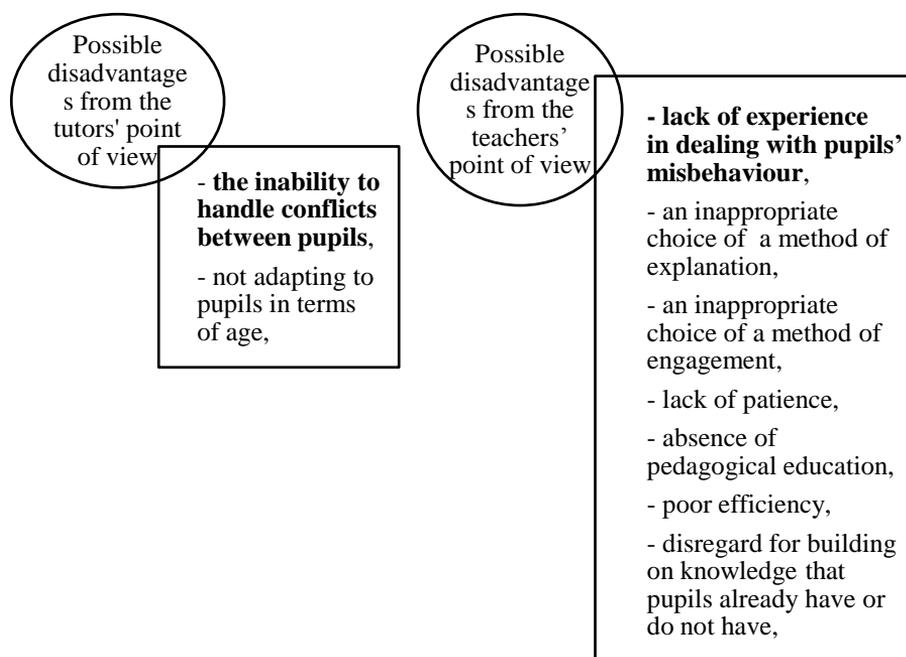
## **EDUCATION BY FOREST PEDAGOGUES**

As a part of the research, the authors were interested in whether teachers and tutors consider the Forest Pedagogy to be an important part of pupils' education. Respondents were given the opportunity to express their attitudes on a five-point scale. It turned out that both teachers and tutors equally gave it the highest degree, which was expressed by the scale – *definitely yes*. 58% of the participants expressed this opinion. If the statement – *rather yes* was added to these responses, there is approximately 92% of pedagogues who attribute the importance of forest pedagogy

for the pupil in the classroom. Only 8% did not have a strong opinion. The authors also surveyed whether pedagogues consider it to be a fulfilling education if forest topics are taught by a forest pedagogue. It showed that on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being *definitely yes*) as many as 73% of the teachers would trust forest pedagogues to teach that lesson. Of this, 51.40% chose the *rather yes* option. The educators also expressed their responses, the highest number being 6 on the scale, however, it was 33.33%, but if *definitely yes* option was added, it would be only 55.55%. Exactly 13.91% of the educators did not express confidence in forest pedagogues. Thus, teachers trust forest pedagogues more than educators do.

In this context, the authors were interested in what disadvantages the educators see when a forest pedagogue teaches the pupils. Here, it was found that as many as 94.45% of the educators said that they could not name a specific disadvantage. Only 5.55% gave an example. In the following diagram, the statements of the educators are presented.

*Diagram 1. Disadvantages of education by a forest pedagogue*



It turned out that although teachers trust forest pedagogues in their teaching more, they are aware of some risks in their pedagogical work. These are disadvantages related to the didactic aspect of teaching and the personal and professional competence of the forest pedagogue. Despite these findings, the research results also showed that both teachers and educators can trust the forest

pedagogue's teaching if the forest pedagogue consults his/her teaching strategy with the teacher or educator beforehand. This opinion is held by up to 84% of teachers and 66.66% of educators. The educators were again more critical of this attitude.

Based on the above results, it can be concluded that the majority of the participants think that teacher's/tutor's (educator in the After-School club) consultation with a forest pedagogue can lead to better teaching of forest topics, which can be considered a positive finding from the perspective of the Forest Pedagogy.

From the results of the research, one more interesting finding should be mentioned. The pedagogues' comments on whether they know who is called a forest pedagogue. Participants could choose from the answers offered. Their statements are documented in the table below.

*Table 3. Knowledge of professional competence – forest pedagogue*

Answer (in %)	Primary education teachers	Tutors (Educators in After-school club)
A forester who is interested in working with children/pupils.	4.62	5.83
A forester who can come to the school to tell the children/pupils about the forest.	4.62	3.89
A forester who rather cooperates with the educator in extracurricular activities.	0,00	8.75
<b>A forester who has completed a training course in the Forest Pedagogy.</b>	<b>47.76</b>	<b>35.42</b>
Teacher/educator who has completed a training course in the Forest Pedagogy.	32.22	41.25
A forester/hunter who does talks and activities for schools.	10.78	4.86

In the table, the row with the correct answer is marked. It was surprising to find that the educators who are less trusting of forest pedagogues are the ones who do not have an accurate knowledge of who a forest pedagogue is. 35.42% is considered to be a low percentage. Another interesting finding is that a relatively high percentage, on average as high as 36.74% consider a teacher/educator who has taken a training course in the Forest Pedagogy to be a forest pedagogue. In Slovakia, there is such an accredited course only for kindergarten teachers. There are only 50 graduates from all over Slovakia so far, but they know that if they want to do the Forest Pedagogy with pupils, they should also invite a forester, preferably a forest pedagogue.

### Benefits of the Forest Pedagogy for the pedagogue

To ascertain the views of teachers and tutors (educators in the after-school clubs) on the benefits of the Forest Pedagogy for their professional development, responses from their statements were extracted, which then were grouped into categories. They are presented in Table 4 also with quantitative expressions.

*Table 4. Benefits of Forest Pedagogy*

Categories of responses (Answer in %)	Primary education teachers	Tutors (Educators in After-school club)
New knowledge (expertise, new information and experience)	78.38	79.17
A new (better) look at the topic	5.41	5.56
An inspiration for a further pedagogical activity	6.75	12.50
Demonstration of teaching aids	5.41	0.00
Less burden on the teacher to prepare for teaching	4.05	0.00
Cannot assess	0.00	2.77

The most represented response was that it leads to their increasing expertise. An average of 78.78% of all respondents thought so. Although to a minimal extent (9.62%) of pedagogues reported that attending such a class would subsequently lead them to be inspired to further pedagogical activities and 7.56% to change (or shape) their opinion on the topic.

On the benefits of the Forest Pedagogy for the pedagogue, the following opinions were expressed: “...I would learn something new that I have not encountered before. [...] everything, the knowledge that one learns moves one somewhere.” Only teachers, not educators, see this as a positive inspiration to choose and use teaching aids, but also as an advantage in a lower burden on the pedagogue. Teachers also commented specifically on which topics they are lacking teaching aids – *Tree construction, Forest protection, Forest functions, Forest species and their inhabitants, Forest fruits, Animal protection, Forest community*. Although, in the questionnaire finding the authors did not observe any need for supplementing teaching aids among the educators; in the qualitative method, the authors were able to find out that the educators lacked teaching aids for the following topics – *Forest fruits, Forest life, Inanimate nature, Forest care, Forest animals and their way of life, Climate change, Water cycle, Environmental system*. Based on the above answers, it could be argued that it is of these topics that a forest pedagogue and the implementation of a program directly into the forest environment could be helpful.

### Benefits of the Forest Pedagogy for the pupil

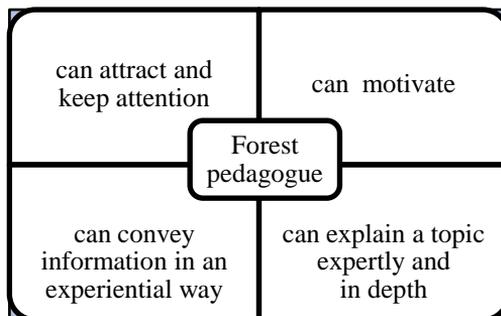
The Forest Pedagogy programs are primarily oriented towards the development of the pupil's personality. The authors were interested in how pedagogues see this. Their view is presented in the table.

*Table 5. Benefits of Forest Pedagogy for the pupil*

Answers (in %)	Primary education teachers	Tutors (Educators in After-school club)
Information	27.81	25.00
Better memorization	0.00	1.39
A more demonstrative explanation using aids	2.96	0.00
More expert exposition	13.99	25.00
Connecting theory with practice	0.00	1.39
Creative activities	0.00	1.39
Personal experience	10.85	8.33
A deeper relationship with nature	5.92	5.56
Interest in the topic/teaching	12.82	16.67
Experiential learning	25.65	15.27

It is evident that both teachers and educators see the greatest benefit in having forest topics taught by a forest pedagogue. They justify this by the fact that the pupils “*get new, expert and accurate information*”. Up to 26.41% of the participants have a similar opinion.

Also, in the process of conducting the interviews, the participants commented “*Pupils perceive someone new, an expert, as something interesting and then they can remember much more from them than from the teacher. [...] Forest pedagogues can tell interesting stories from the forest [...] they can talk about mushrooms, animals, interesting things about trees.*” They also recalled that “*few teachers have expertise in this area [...] teachers do not present this information in the way that a forest pedagogue does, in such an experiential way.*” In Diagram 2, the positives of this teaching that the pedagogues see are summarized:



*Diagram 2. Contribution of the forest pedagogue to the educational process*

When analyzing the data obtained from the questionnaires, the authors found that both teachers and tutors see the benefits of the Forest Pedagogy in terms of the development of pupils' personality not only in terms of knowledge but also in the social-emotional aspect. The following statements are proof of this: *“They would definitely develop a better relationship with nature, empathy towards forests, fauna, flora, but also empathy among the pupils themselves [...] Overall, such a mindset in global dimensions that they think about others and do not only tend to fulfil their own needs.”* They also report *“a better attitude towards animals [...] a deeper knowledge of the forest also encourages them to be more considerate, to save nature.”*

The following statements will indicate that the participants are also aware that the pupil can develop psychomotor skills within the Forest Pedagogy too. This is evidenced by the statements: *“especially the contact is important, that they do not get information in the classroom, but that they see the forest with their own eyes. [...] In the forest, there is a different terrain and, nowadays, children are not used to moving, walking in such terrain. Gross motor skills are developed there.”*

From the presented data, it can be claimed that both teachers and educators are aware of the positive benefits of the Forest Pedagogy in terms of the development of the pupil's personality. They will not only acquire knowledge about forests, animals, and the profession of forestry, but they will also develop a more lasting relationship with nature, encouraging their empathy for forests as well as empathy among the pupils themselves. They will also acquire the ability to move in more difficult terrain, in a forest environment.

## CONCLUSION

Results of research outputs can help teachers cooperate with forest pedagogues and transfer of learning content to the natural environment, where a child has to overcome the natural barriers, rules of conduct in the forest, to carry responsibility for someone, collaborate, etc., so it can lead to overcoming life barriers and ultimately to respect the rules in life.

Forest, in this case, is not just utilised as a studying place or a learning tool, forest is becoming a study object, the aim of the investigation and didactic tool. Forest is annually updating, constantly changing; it is a nature textbook that enables pupils to create a closer relationship with the natural environment to protect nature. At the same, time pupils can have real contact with the living organism in the forest area, observe, study and watch each detail in a forest, which will enable them to develop skills in nature and better understand the sustainable forestry principles and realistic views on the world. These educational approaches will reinforce such values as respect and responsibility for natural resources and the natural environment together with love and empathy with all living creatures including human beings.

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[www.statpedu.sk](http://www.statpedu.sk)

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## **ШУМСКА ПЕДАГОГИЈА У ОСНОВНОМ ОБРАЗОВАЊУ И ЊЕНО ПОИМАЊЕ ОД СТРАНЕ ПЕДАГОГА**

### **Резиме**

У данашње време у Словачкој учитељи и васпитачи на основном нивоу образовања показују велико интересовање за сарадњу са шумским учитељима. Сарадња се односи на област испуњавања образовних стандарда и циљева на теме везане за шумско окружење. То су углавном теме из области Човек и природа, Човек и друштво као и Човек и свет рада. У раду су представљени резултати истраживања са учитељима. Предмет истраживања су била мишљења учитеља о сарадњи са шумским учитељима као и мишљења о утицају шумске педагогије у образовању.

**Кључне речи:** *шумска педагогија, шумски педагог, образовне области, васпитач, школска сарадња.*