

Historical View of Games and Toys – Important Mean of Education.

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Games and toys belong to the cultural heritage of nation. Toys in wide understanding are considered all the subjects with which child used to play. Nor the idea of game is new. Its features could be found in some ancient pedagogists. Its wider use started, however, in modern times.

Toys are educational means, tools, devices, it means instruments of children activity in game. We generally consider toys those subjects and materials that appear ready in family environment and in nature, but also those subjects which primary function was different and their functioning as toys was secondary. Toys are also such subjects that were made with the aim to use them as the tools of children games at school and school playgrounds as well as in educational institutions and in education outside tuition. Scientific toy - the product of children creativity and the prototype of new toys for children, youth and adults - came into the minds of children and adults in last few years.

Quantity and variety of toys has been great from the oldest ages. We have the proof of numerous foundings of toys - even the simplest - in archeological museums, sources in literary and pedagogical works from history of education in Slovakia. They have always been connected with childhood.

The researches of Slovak ethnographs prove that there exist more ancient foundings of children toys and expositions in museums in Slovakia. As we mentioned above, quantity and variety of toys has been great from the oldest ages. It is mainly connected with the pre-school age of child when it just a little adjusts its activity to subjects but it tries to adjust these subjects in the fantasy to its needs and wishes. Clay rattles are found in museums from the ancient times for instance but these were later substituted by metal rattles. Ancient toys were modelled in a very primitive way. Slovak archeologists claim that in the region of present Slovakia first children toys were made in neolit which means 5000-3000 BC. The first children toys were probably different small subjects which nature offered to children. Pieces of wood, twigs, plants, fruits, little stones, bones, feathers. However, only some products of smarted clay, mainly the little pieces of crockery, have been kept. In Archeological Institute of Slovak Science Academy (SAV) in Nitra in the collections from ancient excavations different figureheads of animals and small canisters from the region of Nitriansky Hrádok and other regions could be found. The researchers suppose that all these subjects were used for games or stood for toys. For example, from the 9th century bone whistles and brown-yellow rattles in the colour of egg have been kept, from the 11th century bronze bell with metal heart and from the 14-15th century ceramic toys, cups, dolls, little horses, knights on horses, figureheads of dogs, have also been kept. Little tournament horse has been the most popular toy since the 16th century in our territory.

In 17th century Europe, in Germany mainly, there existed more than 200 years tradition in toy production which has developed into toy industry in Norimberk and in the region of Durinsko and Schwarzwald. J.A. Komensky also studied in Germany and he scientifically developed the project of game and toys in child`s life. The most popular among the teachers is his project from Informatorium of Nursery School, from Schola Ludus and from *Vševýchova*. His project found its admirers in Slovakia as well. He described physical games, running games, competitive games, physical health games but also riddles in *Orbis Pictus*. The first one reaching line, wall or rampart was the winner.

The development of opinions to toy in the 18th century in the area of current Slovakia is connected with the new understanding of child in Europe (J. J. Rousseau, H. Pestalozzi and others). However, the most popular in European area as well as in Slovakia is the pedagogical system of games and toys which was developed by F. W. Frobel, the developer of child`s gardens. He invented the special file of toys for children in pre-school age – ball, globe, cube, cylinder and building game. In the second half of the 19th century not only Frobel but also the movement of his oppositors movement arised in many countries as well as in our territory. Today we are aware of the fact that pedagogy of F. W. Frobel as the whole tried to promote formalism in educational work with children. However, children game and building game makes children still happy.

The remarkable development of toys and games is also connected with the development of institutional pre-school education in Europe. The work and practical experience of the following pedagogists make the bases for pre-school educational practice in Hungary (*Uhorsko*): English – Dury, R. Owen, S. Wilderspin; German, Czech and Hungarian – V. Svoboda, M. T. Brunswicková, Š. Rokos, A. Rehlingen and others. The development of toys and collective educational work with children is in Slovakia also connected with the ideas of philanthropic movement in Europe and with the building of institutional pre-school education in Banská Bystrica (1829), Bratislava (1830), Trnava (1832), in Staré hory, Dolná Krupá, Levoča (1867), Bystrany, in the villages of Spiš region and the others. The researches from the end of thirties of the 20th century in musseums of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia prove that the toys from *novovek* in our territory were exhibited by materials from fruits (small crockeries, furniture, babies, dolls, horses, carriages, animals, riders, birds and building games, sport and moving games, rotating games), by textile (babies, dolls, horses, animals, birds, riders, sport and suit parts), by skin, bones, wood, plastic materials, paper and many other different combinations. Less often were the toys made of ceramic and metal (small crockeries, furniture, craddles, babies, dolls, horses, animals, birds, riders, various building games, sport games and arms). In that time children loved the toys made of dried painted clay as well as from painted cement and dough. Small dough toys were sold on markets (for example little evil on elastic band, monkey on elastic band, evil or some other figure with moving parts of the body). Paper heads. Dolls made of corn peels. Knot dolls were the simpliest theatre puppets. Rag dolls were sometimes dressed in traditional suits. Dressing dolls were another version. Some attempts for the imitation of folk toys also appeared. Toys were admired on various exhibitions where Slovak producers participated, too.

In 1889 on the exhibition of educational tools for children in pre-school age, cuttering workshop in Piarg (present Štiavnické Bane) got the gold diploma „for form, beauty and durability“. In 1896 this workshop came to the state hands and got title: State School for the Production of Children Toys (*Štátna škola na výrobu detských hračiek*).. In 1896-1913 the producers of toys in Piarg annualy participated in many exhibitions and competitions. E.g. They were very successful in Budapest and on world exhibition in Paris (1900) where they

got the highest award Grand Prix. They produced various types of figureheads, trolleys, carriages etc which gained great popularity. Frobl's educational methods were influencing educational processes. In the seventies of the 19th century new trainee cutting workshops and state schools for toy production were established (e. g. in Bardejov, Stará Turá etc.) Many art schools, educational institutes, family schools, industrial schools and schools for children were established and developed in those times, too.

Working on the topic of the collective toy production in the history of Slovakia requires very specific and detailed research. The toys varied according to the regions. We could specify some traditional toys of our predecessors and games, e.g. games of children on school playgrounds during breaks in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century. We also consider important the analysis of Slovak pedagogical and children literature, school chronicles, archives lists of toy producers in the regions of Slovakia as well as in other production centres of wood toys in Kunešov near Kremnica, Kyjatice near Rimavská Sobota, Piarg near Banská Štiavnica, in Fiľakovo and in Šahy.

Since 1890 the successful period in Slovak history of education for the development of game and toy in school theory and practice came with the development of reforming acting teaching in experiment schools in the world of pedocentric, pragmatic pedagogy, Waldorf schools and others. These attempts appeared not only in Germany, Bohemia, France and Italy but also in some parts of Slovakia (Trnava, Prešov, Malacky, Bratislava, Majcichov, Bánovce nad Bebravou etc.). In the thirties years of this century the acting school presupposes remarkable interest of pupil in education and his activity in learning. These were mainly project method and the methods of individual approach to the pupil. The experience showed that each human activity professionally and pedagogically led and organized enables the development of pupil's cognitive and non-cognitive functions.

In the field of folk-lore the following authors contributed to the research of folk games and toys in Slovakia: B. Garaj, A. Hejná E. Herclík, A. Malicherčík, N. Melníková, P. Michalides, E. Pančuhová, N. Papoušková, P. Stano, and others. Pedagogical researches of pre-school children from the second half of the 20th century are in Slovakia analysed by e. g. D. Čapková, E. Holeczyová, M. Klindová, V. Mišurcová, J. Uhlířová and others.

Creative teachers at primary schools, universities and the people from State pedagogical Institute and Iuventa also make experiments with their pupils and students. We can mention for example: A. Masariková, V. Žbirková, I. Ivanovičová, E. Fandelová, M. Žilková, I. Lomnický, A. Vargová, V. Štofová, J. Koprďová and others at University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, V. Korim, J. Hroncová, D. Kováčiková, B. Šimonová, B. Kosová, Š. Ligas, J. Brincková, J. Cejpekova, E. Balážová, M. Toman and others at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, A. Wiegerová, S. Kikušová, M. Kožuchová, M. Zelinová, J. Svetlíková, V. Uherčíková and others at Comenius University in Bratislava.

Many pedagogists search for didactic use of traditional toys (cubes, building games etc.). They invent such games that support the gaining of certain didactic aims. They use natural playfulness and competitiveness of children (but also of students and adults) according to the motto of Komenský „škola hrou“. Play is used as the device of new knowledge acquisition in natural way – by doing certain activities and accepting certain rules in play. The playfulness and curiosity of children is the base of project called Schola Ludus (K. Teplanová and other authors) which uses natural laws, interesting physical, chemical, biological and other phenomena. On these roots they construct various physical models and toys to gain the

interest of children and to support their natural curiosity and seek for the understanding of main principles of functioning. LEGO building game made by LEGO DACTA gives many didactic possibilities. By the means of special pack of this building game pupils design and produce different technical devices and aids: driveable elevators, cranes, manipulators, robots etc for which they also write simple manipulating programmes to their driving. In this way they develop their technical talent and logical algorithmic thinking. Popularity of computers and computer games among young people is also used by many pedagogists. Their aim is to give pupils interesting didactic computer games which encourage the development of wanted features wanted: memory, creativity, logical thinking, mathematical thinking, strategy thinking, fairness etc.

In nowadays' pedagogical theory and practice, in the work of teachers and educators at schools but also in the activities of social workers there are many approaches to the theory of play, to the use of didactic game in educational process as well as to the methodology of games. Many authors concentrate on game as the mean of rational spending of leisure time. In the past free games, organized games, diagnostic games, didactic games and drama school games used to be very common. Today, however, experiments with material and various toys as well as activating methods which can gain the interest of pupils, students and adults are preferred.

Traditional understanding of pupil as the object of education or perceiving the aims of schools as preparing institution for life as well as understanding of school as the base for general basic education – all these aspects face today very serious but just criticism. This situation can be changed in order we change each other and our approach to child. Many professionals in Slovakia deal with this problem, especially with alternative methods of education and the use of toy and game at schools, not only at universities but also in research institutes and in school practice. They work on new alternative models of tuition based on the developing of six dimensions of personal development.

The main aim of each pedagogist is to create good conditions for activity, provide tools for games and respect basic starting point of humanistic conceptions and elaborated models of pupil's personality development. M. Zelina advises that we should accept the new philosophy of life. He proposes the question if the school does everything it should do because man has not only to be clever and educated but also well-behaved. The education system must be changed to be able to prepare more people outside the intellectual sphere for solving human and global problems of mankind on the level of thinking and children creativity. In this way the space for creative fulfilment of man's leisure time by the means of play after work or at work using playful activities. E. Fandelová points to the psychological barriers in this field which can avert the effective introduction of innovations in educational process. Experiment in play creates positive atmosphere for children, students of teaching and ethical education. They are gradually losing the fear from unknown and are able to overcome barriers.

As the result of big socio-cultural changes, huge amount of games and toys has disappeared from schools, educational institutions as well as from families. Let's try to keep and save them. Our aim was to ask you for help. Help to save them for our school collections and museums because games and toys can give us perfect image of family life and the forms of communication of our predecessors.

(Paper presented by overhead projector at conference)

1. Basic terms. The opinion development of games and children toys in Slovak education history in European context and in abroad.
2. The classification of games. The importance of games. Games and toys as an educational help in pedagogical communication. Games as the possibilities how to cope with conflicts and cooperation. The personality of ethical workers.
3. The training of ethical workers and the using of games in the values development at nursery schools, kindergardens, social, charity organizations.
4. The analyses of situation in groups, in groups, the interaction games, experiment, the evaluation process. Planning. Pros and cons of interaction games (video). The work with children and adults in an old school environment, at school clubs, and old school museum.
5. Colloquium about games and toys organized by students. The preparation of attic toys presentation. The evaluation of the organisers roles. The discussion with the authors of monography „Game and its ethical dimensions“.

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