

# The Pedagogy of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in Harry Potter novels

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**The Pedagogy of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in  
*Harry Potter* novels**

Završni rad

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## Abstract

Being a worldwide cultural phenomenon, the *Harry Potter* novels have been analyzed through various critical perspectives. As the main setting, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry offers a gateway to an analysis of the educational context represented in the novels. Considering education as being one of the important underlying themes, this paper focuses primarily on the depictions of learning and teaching since the *Harry Potter* series contains various pedagogical examples of both good and bad teaching, approaches, and learning methods and theories. After a brief insight into Hogwarts' structure and curriculum, the most prominent teachers and pedagogical examples of the novels are described and further analyzed through principles of Bloom's taxonomy, Fink's taxonomy, and Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. After analyzing the novels from a pedagogical stance, it can be concluded that the educational process portrayed in the *Harry Potter* series indeed contains numerous pedagogical examples that can denote attitudes towards nowadays education and its principles. The analysis of the examples on theoretical foundations can provide better understanding and more legitimate explanations as to why some approaches and methods are more eligible than others.

Keywords: *Harry Potter*, pedagogy, education, teaching and learning theories

## Introduction

Since the release of the first novel in the Harry Potter series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, in 1997, the series has gained immense popularity around the world. Soon after, with the adaptation of the novels into blockbuster movies, Harry Potter became a worldwide cultural phenomenon. Written by a British author J.K. Rowling, the series chronicles the life and the adventures of a young wizard, Harry Potter, and his friends, Ronald Weasley and Hermione Granger. With the publication of the *Philosopher's Stone*, Rowling managed to spark off and renew children's interest in literature and reading. Although the main plot concerns Harry, Ron and Hermione's quest to defeat the dark wizard Lord Voldemort, there is a lot more to the series than being a simple good vs. evil story. Since the plot is mostly set in Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, which Harry and his friends attend, some of the series' most important principal points are studying, teaching, and learning. It is, after all, a story about the adventures of *students*. In its basics, Hogwarts is a school similar to any other place where students are required to attend classes, take notes and exams, write homework assignments, and to responsibly take care of any other obligation they may be assigned to. Throughout their education, Harry and his colleagues are acquainted with different professors, approaches, practices, and strategies which play a significant role in their development not only as educated wizards but as persons in whole.

The focus of this paper will be primarily on the depictions of learning and teaching and their theoretical analysis. The first two parts of the paper will serve as an introduction to Hogwarts' structure, curriculum and teachers for which observations of Booth, Birch and Dickinson will be used. The third part of the paper will be concerned primarily with theoretical analysis of the pedagogical examples from the novels. Robinson provides the basic information and explanation of the theories themselves while Dickinson and Vaughn will provide a brief guidance through some of the examples. The theoretical analysis may provide suitable explanations to clarify which examples of teaching and learning are good and which are bad. Lastly, focusing on the series from a pedagogical point of view can also lead to better understanding of how the educational process portrayed at Hogwarts denotes real attitudes towards contemporary education.

## 1. Hogwarts: Structure and Curriculum

### 1.1. Structure

Hogwarts, being the main setting in most of the novels from the series, is a very significant element when it comes to discussing the novels from the pedagogical point of view since it is, as already mentioned in the introduction, an educational institution.

First and foremost, it is important to stress that Hogwarts is a boarding school which means that the students live and study at the school and on the school grounds, along with their teachers and principals. As any other relatively modern boarding school, Hogwarts has separate residential houses – the House of Gryffindor, the House of Ravenclaw, the House of Hufflepuff and the House of Slytherin. Each house has a housemaster or a housemistress and a prefect that take responsibility for student residents of their house or dormitory, especially outside the school hours. If Harry or his other colleagues want to go outside of the defined school bounds they need permission. For example, they may be allowed to take occasional trips to Hogsmeade, a pleasant little village near Hogwarts. Booth deduces that Hogwarts is most likely based on the British model of education since it mandates only one institutional change that is, transition from primary to secondary education when students turn eleven, which is exactly how old Harry was when he went to Hogwarts (311). The fewer transitions, the better, as multiple transitions during the early adolescent school years have been proven to have negative effects for students in terms of declining in academic achievement, less participation in extracurricular activities, and a drop in self-esteem (Booth 311).

Another important feature of Hogwarts is the multi-age school structure where there are students of mixed age in every residential house. This links the learning process to peer interaction, including peer help and evaluation that are especially helpful when there are peers who are older and more knowledgeable, which allows a family-like structure where the wiser, more experienced family members guide the less experienced ones (Booth 312). That is why every residential house has a prefect, a more knowledgeable, more experienced older peer who helps younger students throughout the year. According to Booth, this represents a line of thinking similar to that of Lev Vygotsky who postulated the concept of “scaffolding” in which learning includes a strong social element and is best accomplished when peers are

working together to solve a problem (312). Furthermore, not only does it have a mixed-age structure, Hogwarts has students with varied backgrounds, abilities and skills. They are mixed in regard to gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity (“pure bloods”/”mudbloods”), and academic achievement. As Booth states, groups that are heterogeneous in nature tend to be more successful in developing various ideas and in solving problems from different perspectives (315). Students unite through what Booth calls “fun competition”— a system in which everyone works together toward a common goal (312). Every house gets awarded “house points” for individual and behavioural achievements, which motivates all students to do well as each house benefits from each individual’s successes and gets awarded. The division of Houses is very important since the students are being sorted out based on their dispositions and family legacy. As Birch claims, it affects a student’s experiences in an out of classrooms, social order between the members and learning at the school (114). There are also annual school dances and school meetings which increase the feeling of communion between the Houses.

## 1.2. Curriculum

As any other student, a student of Hogwarts has to study hard as there are year-end exams at every grade level, and all students must take the standardized *Ordinary Wizarding Level* (O.W.L.s) exam when they turn fifteen. Birch describes Hogwarts' curriculum as being highly ritualized since the O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T.s (*Nastily Exhausting Wizarding Tests*) “mark time and accomplishment”, and the testing itself “drives learning and signifies what it means to get an education” (115). Further, as Birch concludes, Hogwarts' curriculum, especially the way it is depicted in the *Order of Phoenix*, can stand out as a critique of institutional constraints that schools face today, such as “increased accountability, standardization, and high stake testing” (Birch 115).

On the other hand, if we define curriculum not only as a set of predetermined aims and instructional contents that are supposed to prepare students for taking standardized exams, but also as a *process* that covers strategies, methodologies, approaches and affective side of learning, it can be concluded that Hogwarts' curriculum is in fact quite flexible since teachers usually have “free reign” in their classrooms when it comes to choosing teaching methodologies, approaches and textbooks. Although their courses are about magic, which makes them very hard to identify with in reality, from pedagogical point of view, it is actually a blessing in disguise. This draws attention from the formal curricula and its content and allows focusing more on the learning and teaching strategies themselves, as well as on the importance of student-professor relationship and on the affective side of learning and teaching.



## 2. Teachers

### 2.1. *Polarities*

According to Birch, teachers of Hogwarts are represented in a way that their characteristics, their behaviour, the way they dress, their appearance, the courses they teach, and their way of teaching “fit neatly into shallow and conventional stereotypes” (104). Birch further suggests dividing the teachers in terms of “polarities”, “paragons”, and “complexities” according to Bolotin and Burnaford’s system of analyzing school teachers of the twentieth century (105).

*Polarities* can be categorized to morally good or evil, wise or incompetent in their area of expertise, lenient or strict in terms of school discipline, and capable or inept pedagogically. Professor Binns, History of Magic ghost professor, is very inept pedagogically, and to some extent even incompetent in his area of expertise. His lessons are morbidly boring, dull and fact-driven. For his class Binns simply “opened his notes and began to read in a flat drone like an old vacuum cleaner until nearly everyone in the class was in a deep stupor, occasionally coming to long enough to copy down a name or date, and then falling asleep again” (*Chamber of Secrets* 148).

Binns is not even remotely interested in students, their engagement, activity and feedback. During one of his endless lectures, Hermione interrupts him to ask a question and he seems completely surprised to find that there are actually students in his classroom, “completely thrown by such an unusual show of interest” (*Chamber of Secrets* 392). He is described as being able to “make even bloody and vicious goblin riots sound as boring as Percy’s cauldron-bottom report” (*Chamber of Secrets* 392). His depiction as a ghost teaching history class in a cold and stony classroom fits perfectly with his old-fashioned outdated approach as he is literally incapable of being in touch with the students and cannot even remember their names.

In contrast to Binns’, professor Trelawney’s classroom is “stiflingly warm, and the fire was burning under the crowded mantelpiece was giving off a sticky sort of perfume as it

heated a large copper kettle” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 102). Trelawney teaches Divination class, dresses unusually and is rarely seen around the school, which gives her an aura of reclusive and aloof personality making her seem distant from her students. Although both Trelawney and Binns seem rather ineffective teachers who are not in touch with their students, professor Trelawney has an acceptable explanation: “You may not have seen me before, I find that descending too often into the hustle and bustle of the main school clouds my Inner-Eye” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 102-103). Her distance, thus, can be explained as necessary to her abilities and field of expertise (Birch 106). Unlike Binns, she tries to keep her students engaged through activities of predicting the future with the help of tea dregs, crystal balls, visions, smoke patterns, dreams, and astrology and horoscope charts. Binns also relies on strict historical facts and evidence, whereas Trelawney believes in “auras, magic, premonitions, crystal-gazing and clairvoyance” (Birch 106). She is at the same time gentle, hypersensitive, and dramatic, which, along with the abstruse philosophy of her course, makes most of her students irritated. She is an example of what Birch describes as a “new-age, alternative, free-spirited teacher who is gentle and kind, though ineffective” (106).

Rubeus Hagrid is yet another teacher whose appearance and approach links very well with the course he is teaching in a way that makes him a part of the conventional teacher stereotype. He teaches Care of Magical Creatures and has an “unfortunate liking for large and monstrous beasts” (*Chamber of Secrets* 249). Hagrid himself is quite large in his appearance:

He was almost twice as tall as a normal man and at least five times as big. He simply looked too big to be allowed, and so wild – long tangles of bushy black and his beard hid most of his face, he had hands the size of trash can lids, and his feet in their leather boots were like baby dolphins. (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 14)

Because of his appearance, Hagrid is often misjudged and perceived as dangerous and stern when he is in fact very benevolent, warm-hearted, and amicable. Hagrid also has very low self-esteem due to his infamous past and Harry, Ron and Hermione “knew how much being a teacher would mean to. He wasn’t a fully qualified wizard; he had been expelled from

Hogwarts in his third year for a crime that he had not committed” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 94). Being very fond of magical creatures and excited because of his role as a teacher, Hagrid often forgets about safety measures. Birch exemplifies this by giving a description of Hagrid’s first lesson where students had to pet and ride real Hippogriffs which ended disastrously for Draco Malfoy who got thrown on the ground and injured (106). Despite having rough looks and causing awe in his students, Hagrid is very emotional and cares deeply for his role as a teacher just as he cares for his role as a friend. Finally, Birch concludes that, like Binns and Trelawney, emotional and caring Hagrid also “embodies his subject, Care, even if it is at the expense of his effective instruction” (Birch 107).

## 2.2. Complexities

By focusing on more prominent teachers at Hogwarts, such as Minerva McGonagall and Severus Snape, it is possible to provide deeper analysis and describe them in terms of *complexities*.

Minerva McGonagall, Head of Gryffindor, is a Transfiguration teacher and can easily transform into a cat. Being very strict, intelligent, and rational, she supports discipline, hard work, and diligent studying. With her personality and ability to transform, she also seems to be stereotypically depicted: “she is literally both a cat and a witch, which further serves to qualify her persona as 'on the prowl' and 'witchy'” (Birch 108). She introduces students to her class with a warning: “Transfiguration is some of the most complex and dangerous magic you will learn at Hogwarts. Anyone messing around in my class will leave and not come back. You have been warned” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 134). However, there is a lot more to professor McGonagall than it seems on the outside. The reason she insists on her strictness and discipline is to keep her students safe because Transfiguration is, indeed, very dangerous since you can end up lying on the floor in bloody pieces. She believes that every student has the ability to learn and treats them equally and fairly:

“You cannot pass an OWL” said Professor McGonagall grimly, “without serious application, practice and study. I see no reasons why everybody in this class should not achieve an OWL in Transfiguration as long as they put in the work.” Neville made a sad little disbelieving noise. “Yes, you too, Longbottom” said Professor McGonagall. “There’s nothing wrong with your work except lack of confidence.” (*Order of Phoenix* 237)

Moreover, she is the one who noticed and discovered Harry’s talent for Quidditch. From a situation which would usually end up having very severe consequences and punishment for Harry, she decided to do what is best for her student and gave Harry a chance to further develop his natural talent even though he did something against the rules: “I want to hear that you’re training hard, Potter, or I might change my mind about punishing you. Then she

suddenly smiled” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 152). McGonagall also worked hard to provide Hermione with the Time-Turner, a device very dangerous if not handled properly, so Hermione can attend multiple courses at the same time. Although being a strict disciplinarian who punishes students for not following the rule book, and although being highly devoted to Hogwarts and its values and rules, McGonagall’s willingness to go around the protocol and break the rules shows the deeper, more complex side of her personality. She is not narrow-minded nor blinded with discipline and rules but intelligent, careful, capable, and courageous enough to think with her own head which is why she receives much respect from her students, especially during the dark times in Hogwarts when maleficent Dolores Umbridge occupies the principal’s chair. McGonagall teaches her students that justice and following norms and rules for their own well-being is important, but she also teaches them that the world and justice are not black and white. As such, McGonagall allows and encourages her students to think critically and develop morally.

Professor Severus Snape, Head of Slytherin and Potions teacher is, from the pedagogical point of view, an example of “who, what and how not to be a teacher” (Birch 112). Snape carries out pedagogy of intimidation as he is very unpleasant when addressing students, aimlessly frightens them on purpose, does not believe in their abilities and has a variety of prejudgments. He deflects his incompetence for effective instruction and lack of patience onto the difficulty of the course content and the inherent lack of capacity of students:

He spoke in barely more than a whisper, but they caught every word – like professor McGonagall, Snape had the gift of keeping a class silent without effort. “, , , I don’t expect you will really understand the beauty of the softly simmering cauldron with its shimmering fumes, the delicate power of liquids that creep through human veins, bewitching the mind, ensnaring the senses... I can teach you how to bottle fame, brew glory, even stopper death – if you aren’t as big a bunch of dunderheads as I usually have to teach.” (*Chamber of Secrets* 138)

His appearance also parallels his personality: “His eyes were black like Hagrid, but with none of Hagrid’s warmth. They were cold and empty, and made you think of dark tunnels”

(*Sorcerer's Stone* 196). He has “sallow skin, a hooked nose and greasy, shoulder-length black hair” (*Chamber of Secrets* 78). In contrast to McGonagall, who encourages Neville to struggle for his success and believes in his abilities, Snape publicly belittles him: “Perhaps no one’s warned you, Lupin, but this class contains Neville Longbottom. I would advise you not to entrust him with anything difficult. Not unless Miss Granger is hissing instructions in his ear” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 132). Although problematic and potentially harmful to students, it is not Snape’s inefficient instructing that is morally wrong, but the fact that he abuses and enjoys power, hurts children, and plays favourites at high cost by giving preferences to students of his own house. However, Snape’s complexity stems from the question of whether he supports Dumbledore or Voldemort and the Death Eaters. Trying to clarify the answer throughout the book, Rowling gives quite a detailed depiction of Snape’s childhood and past in overall. He may be the only professor in the series whose personal life is accessible to Harry and the readers as well. Being a student at Hogwarts, Snape was always fascinated and known for his talent in Potions class, he was in love with his classmate – Harry’s mother, and hated his father. Schoolmates have often picked on him, and he was a reformed Death Eater. Most importantly, Rowling alludes that Dumbledore has defended Snape on numerous occasions, forgiving him for leaking Trelawney’s first prophecy and thus announcing Harry’s birth to Voldemort. Having a very difficult childhood and challenging adolescent years, Snape grew up into a mean, frustrated and reserved personality. Despite his unpleasant and undesirable presence, there are crucial moments in which Snape acts in unexpected ways and helps Harry, which leads to questioning whether he is really as “bad” as he appears and presents himself to be. The reader is offered images of individual heartaches, relationships, good and bad decisions which led to tragedies, and individual suffering. Thus, through Snape “we learn to be suspicious, even accusatory of 'bad' teachers, and at the same time we learn to search for doubt and suspend our judgments of bad behaviours” (Birch 112).

### 2.3. *Paragon*

Finally, the famous Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore is suggested as the ultimate model, a *paragon* of both teaching and virtue. Professor Dumbledore, the headmaster of Hogwarts, is primarily depicted as being amiable, trustworthy great wizard:

Professor Dumbledore, though very old, always gave the impression of great energy. He had several feet of long silver hair and beard, half-moon spectacles, and an extremely crooked nose. He was often described as the greatest wizard of the age, but that wasn't why Harry respected him. You couldn't help trusting Albus Dumbledore. (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 91)

Being kind, gentle, wise, energetic, trustworthy, patient, and experienced, Dumbledore represents, as Birch suggests, a “quintessential great teacher” (113). According to Dickinson, Dumbledore does his best in creating a safe, constructivist-like atmosphere in which the students are given basic tools and are encouraged to construct their knowledge on their own and apply and practice their learning (244). His ability to admit when he has made mistakes and the ability to explain how and why he made them is what provides him the trust and respect of his students. Most importantly, he believes in students' abilities to learn and grow and treats them equally with the highest respect: “It matters not what someone is born, but what they grow up to be” (*Goblet of Fire* 383). Dickinson further suggests that these three pedagogical positions – constructivism, admitting one's own mistakes, trust and respect – along with leadership attributes, provide an excellent petri-dish culture for student development and learning (244). Not only does Dumbledore encourage attaining factual and practical knowledge but through his numerous wise thoughts and advice he also inspires his students to think and act morally and teaches them about life, love and friendship. To those who are undecided he advises that “it does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live” (*Sorcerer's Stone* 174). Further, he suggests that in true friendship “it takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends” (*Sorcerer's Stone* 251). Finally, he claims that “it is our choices that show us what we truly are, far more than our abilities” (*Chamber of Secrets* 259). As a true pedagogue, he wisely states: “Youth

cannot know how age thinks and feels. But old men are guilty if they forget what it was to be young. . . ." (*Order of the Phoenix* 726) and concludes: "Age is foolish and forgetful when it underestimates youth" (*The Half Blood Prince* 434).

To conclude, even though her depiction of Hogwarts' teachers and students' attitudes towards them is quite stereotypical, Rowling managed to provide an image of "real" education and genuine attitudes towards it. It can be derived that students' motivation, quality of learning, and personal and academic growth depend very much on noticing those same qualities and striving in their professors. Professors that either do not have the basic knowledge about their own course or are inept of adequately conveying it, such as professor Binns and Trelawney, cannot keep students motivated and alert. In order to truly respect a professor, students demand the same treatment in return. Furthermore, they appreciate authoritative figures that do not oppress them and strike fear in them, like professor Snape does, but encourage them to develop their academic skills and self-esteem with a firm hand of fundamental knowledge while at the same time respecting some necessary rules created primarily for their safety. This is where professors McGonagall and Dumbledore serve as great examples. Lastly, the most important message Rowling managed to convey is that it is of high importance to be aware of teachers as complex personalities who have their personal history, their ups and downs, and that their personal biographies shape the kind of teacher they can become. All of these observations can be further explained on a more professional and scientific scale which is the aim of the next, third part of the paper.



### 3. Teaching and Learning in Terms of Pedagogical Theories: Bloom's Taxonomy, Fink's Taxonomy, and Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligence

#### 3.1. Bloom's Taxonomy

While the first part of the paper is generally more concerned with observations of the affective side of teaching and learning as well as with the student-professor relationship in the Harry Potter series, this chapter focuses on cognitive and affective processes related to learning with a more precise theoretical foundation. There are various models that attempt to explain how students learn. For the present and future teachers, the most prominent ones are Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain and Fink's taxonomy of significant learning.

As cognitive domain taxonomy, Bloom's taxonomy is concerned with how students learn the material on the given subject. It divides learning into six stages: *knowledge*, *comprehension*, *application*, *analysis*, *synthesis*, and *evaluation*. It is a sequential taxonomy meaning that students have to master each step in order to be able to achieve progress on the following one. As Robinson explains, *knowledge* implies being familiar enough with the subject matter to recognize and recall terms, definitions and basic principles whereas *comprehension* is a level beyond and focuses on understanding the meaning of the material. Step three, *application*, focuses on the ability to use learned material, methods, concepts and theories, in new and concrete situations. By reaching the step of *analysis*, students can break down the material into its component parts to understand its structure and develop the ability to see patterns and recognize how things are organized. *Synthesis*, on the other hand, enables them to put parts together mainly by using old ideas to create new ones and encourages creative behaviour. Finally, *evaluation* focuses on the student's ability to judge the value of the material and thus practice making comparisons and choices, and as such, evaluation is considered to be the highest level of learning (20).

This is, for example, why professor Binns and his monotonous lecturing are considered to be pedagogically inept. According to Dickinson, his class, the History of Magic, requires students to primarily use only the first level of learning, knowledge (241). His exams and course requirements are focused only on recording and recalling information. Second, professor Trelawney and her extremely emotional and dramatic approach to an already

abstract and mystical Divination prevent her from providing students with the most basic information in terms of facts and concepts, which leaves students uninterested, even agitated due to the inability to master at least the first step of the Bloom's taxonomy. Third, professor Snape, being an ineffective instructor as he is, never demonstrates potion making. He just puts the instructions on the blackboard and then watches the students struggling until the end of the class. Dickinson therefore concludes that according to Bloom, Snape demands from his students to move directly to application without proper factual knowledge, examples and confidence necessary for doing so (241).

Further, even professor McGonagall has difficulty following the six steps of the Bloom's taxonomy in a sequential order. As Dickinson explains: "The lessons leap from knowledge to application to synthesis, with few examples and demonstrations in between" (241). She compares it to "handing writing students an example of a model paper and saying, 'Now, go write one,' without first explaining the intermediating steps to do so" (241). Majority of the most prominent teachers of the series seem to be pedagogically inept when it comes to teaching and learning through steps of Bloom's taxonomy but there are, however, some bright examples such as professor Lupin, the third year Defense against the Dark Arts professor, and Harry himself.

According to Dickinson, when professor Lupin tries to teach Harry how to use Patronus charm, he first explains the basics, how the charm works, what needs to be done in order to make it work, what Patronus is and how does it work as an *ant iDementor* (241). He explains that it is necessary to think happy thoughts in order for the charm to work and produce an avatar that will shield Harry from *Dementors* and thus Lupin guides Harry through the basic steps of knowledge and comprehension. After mastering the first two steps, Lupin moves on to application by giving Harry the incantation and encouraging him to practice first by himself before trying it out on a shape-shifting *Bogart* disguised as a *Dementor*. Next, Harry uses everything he had learned and practiced so far to produce a Patronus that will fight off the dementor Bogart and after each attempt, Lupin and Harry together discuss, analyze and evaluate what Harry did and why. Dickinson further notices that after several practices Harry starts to synthesize the information professor Lupin has given him and the attempts he has made, and subsequently substitutes more positive and powerful memories eventually finding

the one that is strong enough to create a strong Patronus avatar that can dispel the *Dementor* (242). Each time Harry leaves the teaching session, he continues to analyze and evaluate the lesson.

Another example of adherence to the stages of Bloom's Taxonomy is seen when Harry and his colleagues establish *Dumbledore's Army*, a secret group of students determined to learn how to defend themselves from the Dark Arts. The students insist on knowing and practicing Defense of the Dark Arts because Lord Voldemort's power is rising and their current Defense of the Dark Arts professor, the self-proclaimed *High Inquisitor of Hogwarts* professor Umbridge, is not particularly keen of students nor professors knowing or practicing anything. The group's leader is Harry, the most experienced member, and therefore he plays the role of the teacher and imitates the concept Lupin used when teaching with him i.e. Bloom's Taxonomy.

These examples show not only the usage of each step of the Bloom's Taxonomy, but also indicate that students themselves recognize the high quality of learning through Bloom. Throughout the series, as Dickinson concludes, "students measure each teacher, compare their lessons, discriminate between their teaching and their personalities, and explain their evaluations. The students' abilities to think about their teaching at this level is placed in sharp contrast to the limited, lower-level evaluation strategies of Professor Umbridge" (243).

### 3.2. Fink's Taxonomy

Unlike Bloom's taxonomy, that is concerned with the cognitive (mind-based) domain of learning and teaching, Fink's taxonomy incorporates the affective domain— emotions, values and beliefs —as well, and thus, as Robinson concludes, defines learning in terms of lasting change important to a learner's life (26). While Bloom is organized in hierarchical steps, Fink is more “relational and interactive” as Robinson states, explaining that learning achievements in one category may enhance learning in other categories (26).

According to Robinson, there are six kinds of significant learning: *foundational knowledge*, *application*, *integration*, *human dimension*, *caring*, and *learning how to learn*. The first kind, *foundational knowledge*, focuses on understanding and remembering information and ideas which is necessary for other kinds of learning. *Application* then puts emphasis on learning how to perform an action or a skill which enables the learner to “engage in various kinds of thinking (critical, creative, practical) or manage complex projects” (26). *Integration* centers on creating connections between ideas, people, and life. Further, *human dimension* learning occurs as students learn about themselves and others and discover the personal and social implications of what is learned. *Caring* focuses on the development of new feelings, interests, and values, and most importantly, caring gives the energy and motivates to learn more and to make that learning part of the learner's life. Finally, *learning how to learn* occurs when students learn about the process of learning itself so it helps them to improve their learner effectiveness and to become better students (26).

As Vaughn notices, Fink's taxonomy may explain why Professors Binns, Trelawney and Umbridge, who are actually competent in their courses as far as factual knowledge goes, cannot keep students engaged and learning in their classrooms (19). Their attitudes towards their own course and towards students are very demotivating for both them and the students. They do not encourage almost any of the six kinds of significant learning except attaining foundational knowledge. They avoid application which keeps students engaged through demonstrating their skills and they do not recognize the importance of integration and human dimension that help students connect the learned material and ideas with real life situations and problems. Further, Binns, Trelawney and Umbridge share an infamous reputation

primarily because of their lack of caring both for their course and the students they teach. They avoid encouraging feelings, discussing interests and values, and consequently, learning how to learn becomes impossible.

Unlike Binns, Trelawney and Umbridge, Snape encourages application but in such a way that students experience it as oppression. With the help of knowledge and practice attained in Snape's class, students may be able to manage complex projects such as the case of Hermione making Polyjuice potion, but they are unable to have critical, creative, and practical thoughts as long as they are under Snape's "watchful" eye. Furthermore, the consequences of Snape's idea of human dimension of significant learning have a catastrophic effect on students' thoughts about themselves and about others. Snape uses his knowledge, power and authority to make human dimension a tool for lowering students' self-esteem and thus not only demotivates them but also affects their self-image permanently. By discovering personal and social implications of what is learned in Snape's class, it can easily be inferred that it has nothing to do with the importance of knowing how potion making should prove to be helpful later in life.

Hagrid, for example, does not seem successful in conveying factual knowledge to his students, but students can see how much he appreciates the opportunity to teach them and how excited and motivated he is in his attempts to convey his knowledge and passion about magic creatures. It is true that, in his ebullience, Hagrid sometimes forgets about some safety measures, but despite those inconveniences he passionately gives his best to motivate students to learn. He wants them to feel and understand the beauty and importance of caring for magical creatures. Conveniently, his course is called Care of Magical Creatures while caring and human dimension are Hagrid's strongest points in encouraging significant learning. Hagrid being the teacher of this course has a lot to do with Harry's and the rest of his colleagues' interest and performance in this class. The students compare Hagrid with Professor Grubbly-Plank, who at some point replaces Hagrid as the Care of Magical professor, and Harry comments: "she'll never be as good as Hagrid . . . fully aware that he had just experienced an exemplary Care of Magical Creatures lesson and was thoroughly annoyed about it" (*Order of the Phoenix* 236).

Overall, Fink's taxonomy proved to be very useful when explaining situations in which students often learn more and are more motivated for quality learning when being taught by an enthusiastic professor with an average knowledge than by a professor that is exceptionally knowledgeable in a certain domain but uninterested in students' interests and personality in general. As Robinson states: "From a teacher's standpoint, Fink's taxonomy points out that teaching is about more than just the subject matter; it is helping the student integrate what is learned into his or her life in a way that brings lasting change. For students, significant learning contributes to motivation and enhances the experience of learning" (26). Once more, knowledge itself proved to be only a part of what makes, both wizards and muggles, quality professors.

### 3.3. Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences is yet another model of learning that can be useful both for teachers and students. Robinson notes that the theory of multiple intelligences recognizes at least seven ways people understand and perceive the world (26), that is, according to Vaughn, our intelligence in whole is then divided into seven different types (30): *linguistic*, *logical-mathematical*, *visual-spatial*, *body-kinesthetic*, *musical-rhythmic*, *interpersonal* and *intrapersonal* intelligence.

As Robinson explains, *linguistic* intelligence involves the ability to use spoken or written words and language in general so as to express and appreciate complex meanings. *Logical-mathematical* intelligence enables inductive and deductive thinking, reasoning abilities, recognition of abstract patterns and the obvious ability – use of numbers. *Visual-spatial* intelligence implies the ability to observe and process visual stimuli, think in three dimensions and enables mental visualization of objects and spatial dimensions. *Body-kinesthetic* intelligence, focused on the psychomotor domain, includes the ability to control physical motions, manipulate and fine-tune objects and enables interacting with the external world. *Musical-rhythmic* intelligence implies the ability to master music, beats and rhythms, tones, tonal patterns, pitch and melody. Further, people with *interpersonal* intelligence have the ability to understand, communicate, work, and develop and maintain relationships with other people. On the other hand, *intrapersonal* intelligence allows people to understand themselves, their feelings, emotions, motivations, inner states of being, values and purpose, and enables self-reflection. People with intrapersonal intelligence have the ability to develop accurate perception of self in order to help themselves and others (26). Finally, the majority of people utilize all seven types of intelligences, but show a preference for only one or two.

Vaughn remarks that linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence are the two types that are most commonly valued in academic settings (30). This may explain why Hermione is depicted as the most successful and diligent student in the series. She exhibits linguistic and mathematical-logical intelligence more than any other student. Her excessively developed linguistic intelligence enables her successful learning in courses held by professors such as

Binns whose teaching approach consists of plain frontal lecturing. She has the patience and skills to listen and write notes during lectures and to read immense amounts of both required and additional course references without any difficulty. Harry and Ron, however, fall short in linguistic intelligence as they very often beg Hermione to lend them her notes and papers. As Vaughn notices, the strength of Hermione's logical intelligence is seen already in the *Sorcerer's Stone* when Harry, Ron and Hermione try to get to the sorcerer's stone before Professor Quirrell in order to stop Voldemort from attaining immortality (31). During their race, they face different challenges one of them being seven potions – two of which are actually wine, two that will allow them to walk through flames and continue their race, and three that are deadly poisons. To Harry, this challenge seems impossible, but Hermione insists: "This isn't magic – it's logic – a puzzle. A lot of the greatest wizards haven't got an ounce of logic" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 185). Eventually, with her inductive and deductive thinking and reasoning abilities, she succeeds in choosing correct potions. There are numerous other examples of Hermione's extraordinary linguistic and logical skills, but not all parts of her intelligence are equally developed. According to Vaughn, the area in which Hermione falls short is body-kinesthetic intelligence (32). Though she even tried to learn it by reading *Quidditch through the Ages*, Hermione just could not manage flying a broom.

Harry, on the other hand, has a superb body-kinesthetic intelligence first seen in his exceptional performance during his first flying lesson at Hogwarts which is also the first time in his life to fly a real broom. This is when professor McGonagall, impressed with Harry's talent, tries to bend the rules instead of punishing him. Also, Harry, and those closest to him, exhibit a high degree of interpersonal intelligence. Ron, Ron's family, Hermione, Neville, Dobby, members of the *Order of the Phoenix* in charge for Harry's safety and fighting against Voldemort, all of them take care of each other, trust and respect each other. During the hardest times, as Vaughn notices, they find effective ways to communicate with each other, even while being carefully watched (32).

The Weasley twins, who are depicted as not very successful in academic surroundings, exhibit a range of intelligence types. Vaughn states that they demonstrate logical-mathematical and visual-spatial skills, but interpersonal intelligence is the dominant one (20). However, it is likely that their linguistic intelligence is not developed in such a way that it



can be assessed in traditional education, which may explain their poor results in the OWL exams that consist mostly of written and standardized tests. Though their academic performance is not particularly successful, the twins manage to start their own business while still in school. The “Weasleys’ Wizard Wheezes” offers an entire line of magical joke items devised solely by the twins, which proves a highly developed visual-spatial skill. They sell their products to students, answer questions about the products, provide samples and eventually manage to become very popular and make significant profit, all of which demonstrates their interpersonal, as well as mathematical intelligence. After a while, they even drop out of school in order to focus better on developing their business.

Intrapersonal skills are the most difficult to assess; however, access to self-reflection of the characters can provide an accurate depiction of their values and how they interpret their purpose, motivations, and feelings. The two characters that exhibit a high level of intrapersonal skills are Dumbledore and Harry.

Dumbledore is depicted as an exceptionally talented, powerful, and influential wizard. Surprisingly, he is very modest choosing not to, as Vaughn notices: “dwell on the fact that he defeated the infamous Grindelwald or that he has been offered the position of Ministry of Magic many times” (35). It is also interesting that such a great wizard chooses to be only a school administrator, but “Dumbledore did not trust himself with power” (Vaughn 35). When he was a young man, Dumbledore realized his excellence and that it could lead to great power. Blinded with the rise of his greatness, he started plotting with the infamous Grindelwald to oppress muggles (non-magical people). He neglected the care of his sick sister which eventually led to her untimely death. After her death, as Harry discovers in the *Deathly Hallows*, Dumbledore came to realize that “power was [his] weakness and [his] temptation” (*Deathly Hallows* 718). Because he knows his strengths and his weaknesses, Dumbledore does not take any more risks by accepting the power he knows he could not properly handle.

Harry, on the other hand, exhibits great intrapersonal skills by being able to accept his purpose as a person who has to destroy Voldemort. He was only a child when he started realizing what his role was, and even though at times it seemed that Voldemort is undefeatable, Harry never backed down, never tried to stop and hide himself. Being aware of

his purpose, he was ready to sacrifice his life in order to save the whole wizarding world from Voldemort's tyranny.

To sum up, each learner, which includes students as well as teachers, needs to discover and be aware of the best way he or she can learn, be it by hearing or reading, seeing pictures and charts, thinking logically, manipulating or simply touching. Further, both teachers and students have to be aware that there are some activities and knowledge that are connected only to a single intelligence and not all individuals may exhibit strength in it. For those without strength in a particular type of intelligence it will be very difficult to understand and master the assigned task or activity. Other ways of learning may require several types of intelligences so the learner can compensate for the weak ones with the help of the stronger ones in order to leverage the learning process. The narrowness of the traditional educational system both in Hogwarts and in real life represents a serious hindrance for those students who are very talented in several intelligences but not in linguistic and logical-mathematical ones. It is very important to try and think of a variety of different types of tasks, so that each student may demonstrate his full potential and intellectual strength. Teachers should appreciate all qualities a student may exhibit, even though they might not fit into the domain they teach. On the other hand, students should recognize the value of learning outside their comfort zone (their dominant intelligence mode), even though it will require more time and effort. Lastly, like Dumbledore, teachers should be aware of their strength and weaknesses not only in their professional domains, which are mainly linguistic and logical-mathematical, but also in interpersonal and intrapersonal domains in order to successfully guide and encourage their students to succeed.

## Conclusion

Petra Rehling writes: “without question, Harry Potter has become the figurehead of our time” (249), and as such, the *Harry Potter* series has provoked different interpretations and discussions from various perspectives. From the pedagogical standpoint, the analysis of the educational context represented in the *Harry Potter* series indeed proved to be very useful and suitable for discussing the status of contemporary education. Since it very much reflects real and current approaches and attitudes towards education, analyzing it from a pedagogical point of view can result in better understanding of the educational process and changes it requires.

Firstly, Bloom's taxonomy focuses on better understanding of cognitive processes that occur while learning, which allows teachers to plan and construct their lessons in a way that enables students to acquire permanent knowledge and more advanced skills such as, in Harry's case, using the Patronus charm. However, even though the steps seem quite clear and logical, some of the most experienced and patient professors, such as professor McGonagall, struggle when following them. Learning through Bloom requires not only teacher's knowledge of the theory and practice of the steps, but also students' motivation for that type of learning, which is where Fink's taxonomy steps in.

Fink's taxonomy focuses on understanding the affective side of learning. It serves as a good answer to a question why students can, and often do, learn more and are more motivated when being taught by an enthusiastic teacher with an average factual knowledge than by an exceptionally knowledgeable professor who is indifferent towards his or her course and uninterested in a student's interests and personality. By analyzing some of the examples from the series through Fink's taxonomy, it seems that teaching is not just about subject matter but also about motivating students for quality learning by showing them how to integrate knowledge and skills into their life to make them significant. Further, the main point of analysis through Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is the importance of acknowledging differences and individuality of students' interests and abilities in order to provide the most optimal environment for reaching the maximum potential and quality development of every individual based on their interests and abilities.

Finally, the conclusions drawn from the theoretical analysis of the *Harry Potter* series strongly encourage perceiving education as a process that not only makes a lasting change in terms of attained knowledge but also leaves a lasting impact on a student's personal growth. Moreover, a student's personal growth and affective side of the educational process is most affected by the quality of the student-professor relationship. While some may have extensive theoretical knowledge in their domain, without dedication to one's profession, personal development, motivation for connecting with students, and experimenting with approaches, teachers cannot put any of the aforementioned theories into practice. The practice, however, does not have to be anything extremely out of the ordinary; perhaps a simple class discussion can be the appropriate method, as long as students feel that their contributions are valued.

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