
CONFERENCE REPORT

CONFERENCE: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION IN CHANGING SCHOOL

Brno, 24th – 26th June, 2009

The topics of curriculum and instruction are in the focus of attention of experts in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, especially in the context of the current educational reforms. Research into these topics still brings new questions and challenges. The international conference "Curriculum and Instruction in Changing School" was organised on 24th – 26th June 2009 by the Educational Research Centre, Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic.

The aim of the conference was: (a) to provide an opportunity for presenting theoretical studies and research results on the topic of curriculum and instruction; (b) to provide an opportunity for exchanging experience and support discussion on current issues of the theory and research of curriculum and instructions; (c) to mediate cooperation within the educational research community.

The conference was connected with prof. Josef Maňák's jubilee, therefore the first conference day was held both as a celebration, and as an academical gathering. The opening plenary session was devoted to congratulations on prof. Josef Maňák's jubilee. The second part was represented by three contributions, in which prominent Czech and Slovak experts in pedagogy and psychology looked into issues which are considered significant and which should deserve our attention.

J. Maňák (Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic) explored an issue in his paper concerning the direction of education and how education should proceed with regard to the ongoing societal changes. On the one side, there is an effort to continue in the present extensive processes, on the other side, there are more attempts to search for new solutions because of the growing discrepancies seriously affecting education. It is essential to form a harmonious, healthy, creative, integrated personality and his or her moral profile, to integrate all pieces of knowledge, to connect theory and practice, and to conceive school as a centre of civil activities. The suggested views relate to the new conception of educational content emphasizing both critical thinking, and the new organisation of education. The open school should continuously transform into the school with whole day programme and should be of special interest and support from the side of family, community, and all citizens.

In search of further directions for school, prof. Zdeněk Helus (Faculty of Education, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic) stresses that education cannot be derived only from logic and aims of the knowledge society. Obviously,

such efforts have their limits. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the education of "turnaround". The question is what the turnaround should direct to.

Prof. Peter Gavora (Faculty of Education, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia) deals in his paper with self-efficacy – an important self-regulatory capacity of the teacher. The concept, originally elaborated by Albert Bandura, has important consequences in the field of education. It shows (1) how the teacher perceives his/her abilities to influence the pupil, and (2) how he/she judges the potentials of instruction to overcome unfavourable external factors, such as family environment. The paper presents data on Slovak adaptation of Teacher Efficacy Scale. Indication of weak construction validity of TES was proved due to the fact that the questionnaire rests on two constructs, Bandura's self-efficacy and Rotter's locus of control.

The second conference day consisted of three parts – the first section, presentation of posters and the second section. The first section involved contributions on the theoretical problems of the creation and implementation of curriculum, the realized curriculum research findings, and the particular subject curriculum analysis, i.e. textbooks also from the international point of view. The first section was followed by a presentation of posters in which both the Ph.D. students, and the experienced scholars presented their partial or general research findings. The second section was represented by contributions dealing with curriculum from the point of view of subject didactics. The papers presented involved presentations from Science subjects, Maths, Media Education, English, Arts and Philosophy of Education.

Contributions from the conference will be published in a collection of abstracts and on a CD-ROM with full texts, edited by the conference organising team.

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