

vocational disciplines output orientation has gained a new value due to the drift towards the market economy.

Central control comes back?

We have already seen that the liberalization of curricular matters has led to disfunctionalities. They were only partly solved by adjustment processes. It could be of course argued that these problems will disappear as time goes by. Still the reaction of the Ministry towards the curricular matters has changed with the last change of the government that followed the 1992 elections mostly due to these problems.

The motives of the Ministry have realized the creation of a more general first two years with common courses that related study programs followed by a specialization in the subsequent study years and a certain standardization of degree programs in different institutions. The first motive was meant to prepare the curriculum for the introduction of a two-tier system while the second motive was the reaction to the great differences between the programs offering the same degree.

What happened practically was that the Ministry tried to impose a standardized curriculum for each degree-program, the level of standardization stopping at the titles of the compulsory courses building in fact a national core curriculum. The reaction of the academics was strong, lots of debates were taking place in the Ministry. Finally in some disciplines, mainly the technical ones, the institutions agreed upon a common curriculum, which was different to the one proposed by the Ministry, that was accepted. In other disciplines some changes had been proposed by the academics that have been accepted, but the curriculum of the Ministry remained mostly the same. As a first result we can currently find many courses having the same title but a widely different content.

In the first step that was taken by the Ministry academics found a symptom for the return of central control, on the other hand the negotiation was possible and the black-box of the classroom was not opened by the central decision.

ROBERT D. REISZ



SCHOOL AND EDUCATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech society is experiencing certain changes in all spheres of life, in education as well as in other fields. In this process one's main feeling is that discontinuity with the previous socialist system, the strong will on behalf of a decisive part of society should stop this process, and also in identification with completely opposing values. This identification is being consciously searched from two sources. The first one is Western European continuity which society wants to take over. The second source of identity is based on an inter-war Czech democratic traditions. In times of a general detachedness from democracy in Central Europe, Czechoslovakia remained faithful to the democratic principles until the very end, its liquidation. However in neither of these two sources can a training program be found



for the next century that is adequate to the present day needs as there is a general discontent all over the world with the contemporary training and this emerges as a general crisis of training today.

In this situation "foresight" would be needed in planning a new training program for the present day and future citizens of the Czech Republic in which the starting point should be a deep understanding of the needs of contemporary people as well as the Czech in the European context, but the Czech Republic does not have such a "seer" today. The other possibility could be a patient research that would require the analysis of the processes in the past decades and the discovery of the accumulated values because these results were not understood by the omnipotent directing body of the previous system or if they considered to be dangerous as the system and therefore no possibility was given to realize them. Today however there is neither enough political willpower, not enough patience for researches and for the judgment of earlier products according to the new point of views of the present needs. A third possibility that we are trying out in the Czech Republic today is to let different forms of free training and to wait and see the empirical experiences' results. These experiences are built on the rich intellect of the teachers that previously was hidden or prevented in its development. There is nothing more to do than to provide space adequate to the activity of the participants so that they can be effective. It is to be hoped that from these flowers of the generalization of positive experience a strong trunk of curriculum will sprout.

In the given situation it is natural that the legislation lags should need behind. Parliament is accepting amendments to the educational act and to the higher educational act and at the same time the government is being criticized for not having a "conception". The problem also has a financial aspect. Since the government donation is not enough, the government according to the liberal doctrine is trying to put down from its shoulders a lot of functions and to hand them over to lower directing organs or to other private sources. It aims that the education is being directed by lower bodies. The new directing organs however have not yet been defined and schools are against the non-competent lower bodies with less thorough grounding to intervene directing of the schools. In the Czech Republic many new schools were established lately beside the religious schools and private schools as well, a significant number of these was also from the government donations. The schools work according to their own curriculum which are often not submitted for the approval of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry laid down a certain curriculum and the basis of each subject also, they however are rather loose, they often change and have been accepted only in some of the state schools. Private education is existent in all school types but high tuition-fees mostly draw students coming from wealthy families and sometimes those who did not meet the requirements at the entrance examinations in state schools. Of course there are acknowledged private schools as well, for example the schools having vocational, industrial, commercial and language branches or the bilingual schools, some eight-term secondary schools where college (university) instructors are employed, sometimes even from western countries. They give special educational programs and use special communication methods, which are based on Anglo-Saxon working method that relies on a particular way of thinking, a search for free associations and putting questions, and which often consider the knowledge of superfluous ballast. The central governmental bodies' responsibility for the level of education is being solved by the Ministry of Education through the accreditation of curricula that have been approved according to the accepted standards in

the last year. This is supposed to provide a certain comparable level of quality which is guaranteed by the state. Above these standards the specifics of different schools could be developed according to their possibilities and abilities. The greater freedom of private schools also comes from the means that the schools did not only gain from the government donations but also from tuition-fees and from the money from sponsors, which is very often not a small amount. Greater financial background makes it possible to give a higher quality grounding to the students or to give higher wages to the qualified teachers, etc. The specific characteristics of a school which comes out as the winner from the competition which develops gradually. These schools gain the trust of the parents who are willing to pay higher tuition-fees, which constantly grow according to the wages of the parents, the enterprising layer of the society or with the growth of governmental civil servants' income. In state schools education is still free of charge, but in most secondary schools the students have to buy the textbooks for themselves together with other utensils, in higher education from the following year on differentiated tuition fees are going to be introduced.

After the unfortunate experience of the past decades, education is being cleaned from ideologies. This first of all means to get rid of Marxism as a philosophy, science or way of thinking. The only united ideology is again a cultivated Christianity especially what is taught by the catholic church, based on the revealed truth, love of the fellow-man, the biblical commandments, and the belief in the happy life after death for the righteous. (For example, the history-books are being judged by the Ecomenic Council.) Till the Marxist materialist theory's Stalinist offer meant that personal and national captivity and society greeted it with reserve or did not accept it at all. The western oriented new liberal-democratic thinking is sprouting from the enlightenment and the French revolution is met with a general liking. That's why it is built on the western European traditions which the Czech regions have always been organically part of. It enforces the rational and spiritual culture, the efforts for the human freedom and citizens' rights. It rather supports the political struggle for the humanization of the science and the education. It gives a priority to broader historic ages and it's peculiar to the civilized ages. These liberal traditions are accompanied by social sensitiveness and by sympathy towards the subjugated, exploited or in any other ways unjustly treated population in Bohemia, due to initiative and development coming from below.

Nowadays the new educational system is taking shape gradually, starting from the kindergarten. Maybe for the last age-group (the five years old children) this is going to be compulsory with the parents paying part of the tuition. A five-year elementary school will follow this, then four compulsory-years in the higher elementary school and it will end with optional schools: a four-year secondary school, a four-year training college or with an eight-year secondary school (at the end of the primary school-years). The secondary-specialized institutions cause a distressing problem with their almost completely destroyed network. (These effect about 60% of the population.) It is not quite clear whether these schools should be directed by the Educational Ministry, the Ministry of Economy, the public health service or the companies, etc. Neither is the length of the training or its relationship to the generally taught subjects clarified. It seems that the previous efforts towards the full value's secondary training (where students can obtain the general Certificate of Education) can not yet be a goal for most of the secondary specialized institutions.



Research program for the development of school training

In the previous regime, scientific activity concerning education and research belonged to the government's level to the Scientific Academy, the professional character was defined by the Educational Ministry. This system has changed completely. The Pedagogical Academy was dissolved, the pedagogical research institutions were liquidated or were significantly limited so that they became mere service-stations of the ministry. Most of the pedagogical scientific journals were done away with, among those which dealt with particular subjects. The accreditation panel did not include most of the subjects (with the exception of those like mathematics, foreign languages) in the scientific nomenclature was needed for the acquirement of scientific degrees, for example, the Ph.D. By this they stopped the influx of the young scientist collages to these fields which are most likely to have unfortunate consequences regarding the future. At the teacher-training colleges pedagogical, psychological and didactic majors have lost their good position and have devaluated in the curricula. The actual will should do research work for characteristic of the preparation of the comprehensive schools' conception. (Here we are referring to the curricula of the so-called elementary and higher elementary schools.) While they are still working on the conception of the higher elementary schools, the curriculum of the elementary schools is ready and is in the state of supervision. 1/3 of the elementary schools have volunteered to try out the curriculum which is a significant amount and it depends on the research-team and what method it is to choose the evaluation of the experiment. This world naturally needs experienced research colleagues who are not much left after the dissolution of research institutes.

The leader of the elementary school-research project *P. Pitha*, the current minister of education. The first drafts of the conception had already taken shape in 1991 at the Pedagogical Faculty of the *Karol University* in Prague yet without the elaboration of the subject programs. The curriculum significantly changes the forms of the basic four-year-long lower classes and forms the relatively independent five-year-long elementary school-type. In its name and the duration it had reached back to the period before the second world war. It links the elementary training for the idea of the primary school which above all includes the threefold basic training: reading, writing, arithmetic as well as an attachment to the life of the nation, and the fact that the school is open to every child and it gives a general and natural picture of reality. The primary schools for 6, 10 and 11 years old pupils create the first phase leading to more systematic training which relies on the pupils' spontaneous activity. The truly systematic training based on working and learning customs which will have to be formed by higher elementary schools. The goal of the elementary schools should lead the pupils from flitting childish games to regulated systematic work. Elementary schools also have to form the sociability of the individuals and the abilities of the children who might make it possible for them to find their place and role in the civilian society that is being built by the new policy of the Czech Republic. Elementary school's curriculum is for the shaping of the simple world concept built on that pupils already know and not on a new material (transmitted by sciences) on the ground of the natural human perception's reality in the mind, and not on the scientific information. It can be judged that the growing in sensitiveness of the society towards reality is caused by the premature establishment of a scientific or exact overview. We should rather talk about the development, the children's ability, to observe reality and trying to arouse their interest then about

a “systematic cognition”. Relatively large scientific attention is turned towards the ethic goals of the elementary schools. Among others there is a research field of the leading author, as a member of the Catholic Church. Elementary school means that the transition from the childhood’s egocentrism to social sensitivity, from the feeling that things are self-evident of valuing them, from the consumption to creation, and from flittering pastimes to taking responsibility. The curriculum at this age sees that the teacher’s professional skill in reaching to the child’s subconscious and gradually separating the conscious from the subconscious. This prepubertal period serves the shaping of the values, which later helps for pubertant children in orientation, so that they will have a sense of belonging in a higher elementary school. The researchers see the basis of these belongings in a boundary line between good and bad, beautiful and ugly, true and false, etc. This borderline fades only later and only partly with the restriction of seeing life and reality: black and white.

Among the three known acts: skills, behavior and knowledge, curriculum puts skills to the first place. The three parts of skill (reading, writing, arithmetic) should totally be acquired in elementary schools. The curriculum is strange as it may seem backs up the cultivation of the continuity (although the present society is typically discontinued) and it makes us aware of the value, for example, ideal, the positive heroism of promoting civil values. The elementary school’s experiment is carried out in practice, elementary school research is in a preparatory state, no one is working on a higher educational research-work however. (In this case continuity with past research programs is completely broken off.)

The present situation of training

According to an elementary school curriculum, the first two years are the phase of adaptation which levels difference between pupils’ previous development. Subject matter is not distributed to specific subjects nor is the training arranged into clearly defined lessons. Third grade is the diagnostic phase which shows the bases of the world concept with a more stable program for students. The class is either taught by one teacher or more than one teacher taking part in the education already. In the fourth- and fifth-year subjects become more distinct (natural history, civics). Mature students may already go on to a higher elementary school (or to the eight-class secondary school) after finishing the fourth-year if they have acquired basic reading and writing skills and are preparing for the “working” independently from the textbooks. The curricular grounding accentuates that the primary task of the school and the teacher is to protect and to provide for the children. In elementary schools it is a generally defined obligatory goal to start the tuition for the lifelong education. The curriculum makes the defined minimum of knowledge and obligatory skill which the elementary school-leaver pupils have to achieve. The teacher is helped by a thematic sketchy list of the recommended subject-matter along with the suggested methods. It depends on the teacher what he/she chooses from these. The three phases of the school however are obligatory (adaptation, diagnostic and that concerning the subjects) for their direction and character. An elementary school is the basic level of training which has to present a unified fundamental picture of the world, its teaching method relies on the perception and the human experience. The drafts put emphasis on the unity of the subject’s content and the importance of the training of teachers for this special task. The teacher has to understand

his/her irreplaceable role on this level of training i.e. to impart his/her wisdom, picture and attitude of the world and of the people for the children in an adequate form. The teacher has to know the course of the arrangement of the subject-matter i.e. the teacher has to have a purposeful idea about the content of the curriculum. The four-year upper-classes of the elementary school consists of the following fields: language training (32 lessons/month), mathematics (20 I./m.), natural sciences (27 I./m.), humanities (16 I./m.). The school principals themselves may however prescribe additional lessons of geography, history, natural history, musical training, arts, physics, chemistry, professional work according to the possibilities and aims of the school. The practice shows that the amount of human subjects are reduced to the advantage of the language training or science. Technical character is dominant, greater attention is paid to foreign languages than to the mother tongue. According to the possibilities of schools and the interest of pupils, the compulsory optional and non-obligatory subjects are being taught too. The schools offer a good opportunity for language teaching (two foreign languages from the third and fifth grade). Some schools are bilingual, German, English or French serving as the language of tuition beside the Czech. Because of the slackening of curricula, its not a too high professional level and the schools' assertion for independence acknowledgment of curricula is not great among teachers. In history for example curricula did not get further than to give a simple list of historical ages, the content and the direction are not defined in details. Such curricula do not help the teachers because they do not specify school-types and the direction of subject matters. The situation is better in the case of civics. This subject, with respect to the national interest, it had to be presented again and again in a revised form. This program concerning the education of citizens was devised by the team led by Mr. Pitha. The topic has its theoretical background sprouting from citizens' education consisting of six parts: knowledge of country, law, economy, anthropology, ecology, politology. The newly composed subject's aim is defined by a threefold form: to bring new information, to educate new type of citizenship, to integrate the knowledge from the other subjects in the educational unit.

The themes of the sixth grade are the following: the changes and the celebrations within the year, home and family, motherland, property and economy, nature and its protection, culture and its development, the state and the law. The eighth grade: the man and his adolescent age, the man searching for a company, the man searching for his own world, the man searching for his self-identity, the man and the conditions coexistence, the man and the conditions of joining the social production, the man and the conditions of a harmonious coexistence. The ninth grade: the sense of society, civil society, the unity of civil, the community, the state, the citizen in the economical and relationships and in law, the man's life on earth, the world and Europe, social relations, and the education of democracy.

The main task of secondary schools again is to prepare the students for the higher education. These curricula bring the greatest changes to the previously united school and the individual profile of each school may prevail where central directing is resisted. The curriculum makes the survey of the school's regional needs and the students' possible curiosity. By this the curriculum becomes rather variable. Let us suppose that the school is preparing the students for higher educational study abroad and in order to do so, it pays attention to the students' adaptional ability to the needs of everyday life. To the former human, scientific and general subjects variation types are connected, for example, a specialization for mathematics, the five-year-long bilingual schools, the eight-year-long classical language schools, sport schools, etc. The curriculum contains the minimum amount of

the obligatory lessons but the principal may modify the proportion of the number of lessons, and the subjects significantly either by increasing or by shifting among the grades, furthermore based on his/her own consideration he/she may include the other subjects. To do this, the principal has 1/4 of the number of the lessons at his/her disposal. For example, in the last fourth grade of the secondary school this is nine lessons from thirty-one, which the principal can place into the local curriculum according to the students' choice or if needed as an absolutely new subjects. The optional subjects are richly donated according to the possibilities of the school as well as freely announced non-compulsory subjects in accordance with the interest of the students. The natural sciences are dominant in the secondary schools which also opposed to human subjects. They are like history (twice a week in all grades), civics (two lessons in third and fourth form), and aesthetic education (two lessons in the first and second form). In more details about the civics. While on the higher classes of the elementary school civics is aimed at the young civil's education and the scope knowledge is deduced from life experiences, in the secondary schools civics is the sum total of the social sciences. It is built on the system of the sciences but does not seem to have an integrated system yet like the one it had in the elementary school. According to the plan the task of this subject is to give students orientation in contemporary life and the shaping of homogeneous views of the world of nature and of society. The concept of each branch of science is defined separately however. The differences of the branches come into prominence, without connecting the themes. The only topic that links them is the "Contemporary Global Problems". The branches associated with civics are: basic psychology, basis sociology, basics of political science and of legal theory, economy, the basics of informal logic, introduction to philosophy, the development of philosophical thought, chosen philosophical problems and the basics of ethics. This is a maximum program in the plans but the teacher has an opportunity to make certain changes. Introducing the basics of sciences means that we get students to know the scientific system, the conceptual structure of the branch, the subject matters of the science, the fields of research and the methods of scientific work. This is one of the most difficult tasks of science (metascience). It is very troublesome to walk to this path in the education and it is easy to miss the mark. Philosophy that could be the culmination and the basis of subdivision in the curriculum is oriented mainly on history of philosophy and the basics of ethics and not on its interdisciplinary integrating function. To derive inter-trade problems from the contemporary grounds would be a welcome solution in our opinion. All social sciences or most of them have an idea of enlightening these with their own methods. Through this, the student would also be involved in judging things. For it is difficult to express an opinion about the basics of sciences. The teacher – who has to explain this problem – was not prepared to do so and not even with a good intention would the number of the lessons/week be sufficient for the task.

Higher education is also experiencing these changes. Faculties and especially leading staff have somewhat changed. At some schools there are still calls for tenders and according to these they sign a short-term contract with most of the instructors. University chairs have become independently directed workplaces which means that it is necessary to pay more attention to scientific research. This is incredibly important not only because that the teacher can improve his/her scientific educational methods but also because that the dissolution or weakening of the institutions of Science Academy universities and high schools have become important for the bases of the scientific research. The higher educa-



tional bill has been presented to parliament before the separation of Czechoslovakia but it did not solve the basic problems. A new bill is being prepared now. The titles are no longer given according to the Soviet scheme at the colleges and the scientific dissertations have again been introduced as a condition of acquiring a higher standard Ph.D. (equal to the previous CSc candidate's degree). The number of universities have increased, faculties have been turned into universities (e.g.: Opava, Plzen, České Budejovice). The number of students have increased, due to the introduction of lower standard university and because of the leaving certificates (the so called bachelor degrees), which has a more practical form than the theoretical level of the university education. Private colleges are also starting to recommend Bachelor degrees (especially the professional, technical, commercial and industrial ones). These schools must prove their abilities for this activity under the supervision of the competent higher educational institutions.

Universities and colleges provide a large scale of specialization for the students. They have more freedom in choosing their majors than previously. Especially "older universities" have switched to a freely chosen majors' system and a wider field of specialization. The students take part in directing the institution and by a free choice of lecturer or seminar teacher they influence the evaluation of instructors as well. Due to the lack of finance means that the higher educational institutions have problems in the basic researches, in the development of pedagogical activity or in the innovation of aging technique and the renewal of buildings together with a pay rise for the teachers. For the time being, though not without difficulties, it is possible to maintain the standard.

The main questions of training with regard to the future

- The characteristics of the coming world are taking shape now. We can already see the efforts of education for the future. But to see what foreshadowing progress is and what is leading to a dead end of the cooperation of the most divisive branches of the science's, scientists and international cooperation is needed. In the Czech republic such conditions for future planning have not yet developed therefore any partial experiences only have additional material to safer decisions later on.
- Research work done in the field of the training and the education has always had and is always going to have an aspect of continuity, an understanding of what already had been established, what must not have forgotten. This continuity has to be learned by the sciences that are concerned with the education.
- Science therefore educational science as well like any other intellectual activity has its conditions and needs freedom. The latter has been gained by the Czech Republic, the conditions should be created as quickly as possible if we do not want to digress it to the third world.
- If science wants to develop, it needs a scientific second line: only those sciences should redeveloped which offer an adequate perspective to draw intellectually able individuals. Up till now it seems that able people are leaving the fields of science for the sake of financial advantages and a better spiritual condition. If this is true generally, it is even more so in the field of education.
- This way the development of pedagogical disciplines and their boundary disciplines has broken off together with the teacher-training didactic and the teacher-training research.

This is also caused by the influx of the experts of scientific branches who have previously dealt with these questions scientifically though sometimes only touching upon them.

- Central governing of the schools has been stopped. The question still awaits an answer: what is the level of training that the state must guarantee and defy the standards above which only the able school collectivity may step. This is a problem which can not be solved by the negation but in fact only by patient scientific research. There is already a basis from which it is possible to start off. Reasonable decisions must be made about what should be directed from the center and what from lower state management institutions what should be in the full competence of school workplaces. We find out the professionally basic principle.
- The present changing of the contents and the institutions of the educational policy i.e. the relatively independent three-closed cycles: elementary school, higher elementary and secondary school and the higher education are at the starting phase of their development. The previous integrated school ceases to exist together with the opposition of the ten-years-long compulsory education and the eight-term school system. The experiences are nearing professional grammar schools, secondary schools and vocational training which did not bring results. School is again compulsory for nine years. The necessary number of years of the education before college or university has again been increased to thirteen. Social differentiation whose new social reality is leading to the educational differentiation as well as between prestige schools and average schools. In fact it has been and is still debated in parliament that the compulsory education substituted by the compulsory training that would be surveyed by the training committees according to the standards. This way private training could be legalized.
- It has been mentioned in the article that presently the elementary schools have the most elaborate theoretical starting point, which is not always realized in the individual subjects. The wording of history in the educational system is a warning example. This subject's textbooks however are showing signs of the threefold interpretation. In elementary school's history should have a propedeutic function (historical time, space, people, nature), getting to know Czech myths, famous people, the events of Czech history. In higher elementary school's history must have had a more systematic function based on the events chosen from history of the world as well as from Czech history according to a narrative interpretation. The grammar school would finally accentuate the historic problems and would explain them in a wider cultural context.
- Universities in the future are certain to bring scientific work into harmony with pedagogical work. These clear-cut laws are necessary (just as for the whole of educational policy). The clearly defined frames are needed among which institutes can move independently, together with the financial means for their tasks and for the support of those students who need help to continue their studies.
- We find the fact that the primary factor of the education is the teacher who can be felt more and more. The teachers can decide freely in case they have a great responsibility for the results of his/her work. After the wavering in 1989 when the teacher did not know what to do with the freedom and often cried out for the new directives. But now there might be a conscious creator of his/her profession. This work needs a greater respect financially and social consciousness, a defined prestige of the profession which constants self-improvement is a must. Then it will surely be understood that a science exists which deals with teachers and a field of higher educational pedagogy which can not be



disregarded for long. Today in the age of hunger for information it seems that we do not longer have time for thinking. When someone asked *Isaac Newton* how he managed to invent so many things he answered: by thinking. Schools should lead pupils to think rather than to process data and be graded. This is the task of the schools today.

VRATISLAV ČAPEK
(translated by Adrien Domján)



EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN POLAND

Historical outline

At the end of the First World War, Polish Land belonged to the three invaders: Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary. In the Austrian part schools with Polish Language of instruction was existed. In the German sector there were only German schools. In the West section of the Russian annexed territories (so-called the Congress Kingdom of Poland or “Priwislinskij Kraj”) both Russian state education and Polish private schools (from 1905) occurred.

When Poland, after the First World War, came into existence, inherited a system, which in essence, had 4+8 structure. It meant; 4 years of elementary school plus eight-years of secondary school, which ended with the final examination (examination for the secondary-school certificate “matura”).

On the ground of the act from 1932 minister *Janusz Jednejewicz* introduced a new educational system, which indicated the direction of schooling, its program and the organization. The basis of the education became seven-class public school [szkola powszechna] divided into three grades: the first comprising the classes from I to IV, the second containing forms (classes) from I to VI and the third one containing from I to VII. The majority of the children, especially in the countryside, graduated their education from four-class school of the first grade.

On the basis of the six-class school of the second grade the secondary school was grained. It consisted of four-year equal grammar-school [gimnazjum] and next differentiated two-year liceum. This system: 6+4+2 ended with the final exam [matura], which gave the right to go to the University. In this reform the system of technical (trade) schools were regulated and developed too. These technical schools were based on three types of schools: 4-class public school, 6 or 7 year public school and 4-year grammar school. The last type had the full rights of the secondary schools.

The fundamental educational idea was the so-called state education. Then Poland consisted of about one third of national minorities and tried to unite citizens basing on a positive attitude to our country, instead of national criterion.

During the period of the Polish People’s Republic (PRL 1944–1989) two schooling reforms were led and the third one was canceled in the introductory phase of the realization.