

Professionalization of Kindergarten Teachers from the Perspective of Curriculum Reform

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Wiegerová, A. et al. PROFESIONALIZACE UČITELE MATEŘSKÉ ŠKOLY Z POHLEDU REFORMY KURIKULA (Professionalization of Kindergarten Teachers from the Perspective of Curriculum Reform). Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, Fakulta humanitních studií, 2015. 115 pp. ISBN 978-80-7454-555-9.

The publication by an international team of authors led by doc. PhDr. Adriana Wiegerová, Ph.D., vice dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Tomas Bata University in Zlín, comes when the view of preschool education and early childhood education is changing fundamentally, not only in the Czech Republic but also in other European countries. Systematic Early Childhood Education is today regarded fundamental for upbringing of children and their preparation for entering school education which is understood as one of the most important transition periods in children's lives. Thus, the growth of endeavour to establish preschool pedagogy in the system of pedagogical sciences is in concordance with current trends.

The team of authors introduces new topics in preschool pedagogy into the specialised discussion and presents outcomes of their researches.

In the first chapter, Adriana Wiegerová and Zuzana Danišková present a new discourse of preschool pedagogy and kindergartens and changes of education of preschool children both in the Czech and Slovak Republics where the main responsibility for education of preschool children is on family. In view of the fact that kindergartens

start to be attended by two-years-old children, it is necessary to significantly change the kindergarten functioning. The authors present two main streams of opinions. One of these is the psychological-medical concept emphasizing mothers and families' duty within caring for little children who can be stressed out by early entering a kindergarten. The opposite opinion is held by supporters of the sociological stream who accent the necessity to offer parents a possibility of meaningful educational influence even in relation to children of 2+ years of age. "The protagonists of this stream (Hašková, 2012) state that abroad (Sweden, U.S.A.) the children who started to attend a quality preschool facility before reaching three years of age show the ability to actively participate in the educational process and are more successful than children staying at home" (Wiegerová et al., 2015). The author adds in relation to the Czech Republic that there are kindergartens working with children of 2+ years of age in so-called heterogeneous groups of children, and this work is appreciated by their parents.

The second chapter by Zuzana Danišková is titled Professionalization of Kindergarten Teachers and gives reasons for implementation of university education for kindergarten teachers. In her short survey the author quotes research outcomes by some authors, e. g. Kořátková (2014), Syslová and Hornáčková (2014), who speak of the kindergarten teachers' need to achieve deeper education, mainly in pedagogical and psychological disciplines. Criteria set for the profession of kindergarten teacher are discussed here too. The entire chapter is topped off with a philosophical reflection on the core and ideas of university as an institution where not only practice should be interconnected with theory but where students should receive also basic philosophical education.

The Chapters 3 and 4, by Hana Navrátilová (Chapter 3) and Zora Syslová (Chapter 4), focus on professional training of kindergarten teachers in relation to important milestones of their professional development and the subsequent transition into practice and the status of young kindergarten teachers. Hana Navrátilová presents examples of the use of analysis of video recordings in practice as well as in training of future kindergarten teachers and also some outputs of the carried out surveys in pre-service and in-service teachers and their everyday interactions in the environment of kindergartens, including nonverbal and verbal pedagogical communication. The text by Zora Syslová reflects the way kindergarten teachers perceive educational reality and makes it her goal "... to introduce the readers in the phenomenon of professional vision, or its partial aspect which is attention concentration" (Syslová in Wiegerová et al., 2015). The author presents outcomes of a survey focused on professional vision and also deals with the influence of teachers' perception of educational reality on their decision making and conduct. She related this perception to reflective skills that become an important part of the discourse of teachers' professionalism.

The issue of the development of literacy in preschool children that is not only a priority for schools but has also become an important academic as well as social-political

topic in the learning society is dealt with by Zuzana Petrová in the fifth chapter. Besides an analysis of the literacy development within school education, the chapter's aim is to clarify priorities in the development of literary in pre-primary education, namely with the example of the Slovak Republic.

The authors of the sixth chapter, Hana Horká and Veronika Rodová, focused on personality of teachers as initiators of the development of creativity from the perspective of pedagogical constructivism, learning by play and experience. The issue is completed with two case studies and a subsequent analysis.

The important role played by pedagogical practice in professional training of kindergarten teachers is analysed by Adriana Wiegerová in the seventh chapter of the monograph. The author regards practical training to be the outcome of interconnection of theoretical preparation and practical application of acquired knowledge and presents a model of practice trainings applied at the Faculty of Humanities, Tomas Bata University in Zlín, study major Kindergarten Teaching.

The final chapters are focused on the issue of preschool curriculum. In Chapter 8, Jana Vašíková describes the concepts of education of children of up to 3 years of age in the Czech Republic and selected European countries. She describes the system of early children education in the United Kingdom as an example of good practice.

The monograph is concluded by the ninth chapter by Beáta Kosová, dedicated to the process of implementation of the curriculum reform in Slovakia. The author deals in detail with the course and consequences of the curriculum reform of the pre-primary level of education in the Slovak Republic with specialist erudition, gives external evaluation of this reform and the fundamental points of the new State Educational Programme ISCED 0 from 2015. She also adds what attitudes to this reform are taken by kindergarten teachers and states that it is the teachers who are the central agents of implementation of the reform.

The entire book is complemented with a large list of references and indexes of names and topics. The monograph contains valuable information and observations not only about the issue of professionalization and professional course of preschool teachers but also their professional training and the curriculum issue and a further discussion of the pre-primary pedagogy discourse. Despite the fact that it gives an inhomogeneous impression in some parts, it can be recommended to academics, practising teachers as well as specialists.

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