

Teaching materials used in the teaching of law at grammar schools in the Czech Republic

Zdenka Nováková, Jitka Tržilová

Abstract

This article presents the selected results of a research survey on the use of teaching materials for teaching law in grammar schools. Quantitative design was used for the research survey; data obtained through an anonymous online questionnaire on the survio.com server was analysed in relation to the use of teaching materials for teaching law, educators' satisfaction with the textbooks available and their subsequent use in practice.

Key words: law teaching, teaching materials, framework curriculum, school curriculum.

Učební materiály využívané při výuce práva na gymnáziích

Abstrakt

Předložený článek prezentuje vybrané výsledky výzkumného šetření směřujícího k využití učebních materiálů při výuce práva na gymnáziích. Pro výzkumné šetření bylo využito kvantitativního designu, data získaná prostřednictvím anonymního on-line dotazníku na serveru survio.com byla analyzována ve vztahu k využití učebních ma-

teriálů pro výuku práva, spokojenosti s dostupnými učebnicemi ze strany pedagogů a jejich následným využitím pro praxi.

Klíčová slova: výuka práva, učební materiály, rámcový vzdělávací program, školní vzdělávací program.

DOI: 10.5507/epd.2021.020

Introduction

The Framework Curriculum for Grammar Schools (FCG) defines the curriculum for grammar schools and sets out pupil outcomes, the basic learning level and the key competences that pupils should achieve. The Framework Curriculum serves as the basis for the development of school curricula that are developed by the schools themselves and may therefore differ from each other, but must never contradict the wording of the Framework Curriculum.

The legal minimum is taught at grammar school as part of the citizenship and social studies foundation (most commonly as part of the subject fundamentals of social sciences). FCG incorporates the basics of legal theory and knowledge of public and private law. The curriculum is divided into 3 basic areas – law and justice, law in everyday life and legal protection authorities (FCG, 2007).

In addition to the above-mentioned requirements for teaching law, it is necessary to incorporate key competences and cross-cutting themes into the curriculum and classroom work. "The purpose of education at a grammar school is not to give pupils as much partial knowledge, facts and data as possible, but to equip them with a systematic and balanced framework of knowledge, teach them to put information into the meaningful context of life experience and to motivate them to want to develop their knowledge and skills throughout their lives. This implies the application of procedures and methods in education that support pupils' creative thinking, readiness and independence, the use of differentiated teaching methods, new organisational forms, the inclusion of integrated subjects, etc." (FCG 2007, p. 8).

1 Current thinking on the issue

Various teaching materials are used to teach law. These are intended to help convey information, consolidate newly acquired information, help organise and rationalise information, and integrate it into the framework of previously acquired knowledge. They also allow for better visualisation of the curriculum and bring abstract concepts closer

to the students (Kalhous, Obst et al., 2009). Nowadays, modern technologies (computers, video broadcasts, the internet) are penetrating the field of education, which allow for interactivity in teaching and hypermedia presentation of the curriculum. Students use these technologies routinely as an integral part of their daily activities. The disadvantage of these modern technologies is that the teacher is not able to influence the content of the medium as much and has no control over how much of the curriculum is conveyed to the student (Skalková, 2007). With such a large variety of didactic resources and aids, it is necessary for the teacher to think carefully about their use so that each aid fulfils its specific function (Skalková, 2007).

One of the most commonly used didactic aids is the textbook. Průcha points out that the textbook is an irreplaceable didactic tool, even in the age of digital technologies (Průcha, 1998).

However, the law is a dynamic system that takes into account the current state of society and responds to newly emerging issues, so there are continuous amendments to legislation reflecting current needs. Here we encounter a big problem, because the law textbooks available on the market are often outdated, the authors of these teaching materials do not have time to respond to the changes brought by the legislation.

There are currently several textbooks designed for teaching law. In the majority of cases, the textbooks are constructed in such a way that they mainly present students with theoretical foundations that are not so changeable over time and thus only need to respond to major systemic changes in sub-branches of law. Educators who teach law have no choice but to keep up to date with the legislative changes and be able to communicate them to their pupils as part of the teaching process.

In alphabetical order, the most frequently used titles designed for teaching law are: *Člověk jako občan a světoobčan [Man as Citizen and World Citizen]* by Přemysl Šil and Jana Karolová (Nakladatelství Olomouc, 2012), *Občanský a společenskovední základ – právo [Foundation Citizenship and Social Science – Law]*, created by a collective of authors (Computer Media, 2012), *Odmaturuj! ze společenských věd [Graduate! in Social Sciences]*, compiled by a collective of authors (Didaktis, 2015), *Právo pro střední školy [Law for Secondary Schools]* by Radovan Ryska, Monika Puškinová and Renáta Humeniuková (EDUKO, 2020), *Právo pro střední a vyšší odborné školy [Law for Secondary and Higher Vocational Schools]*, prepared by Alexandr Šíma and Milan Suk (C. H. Beck, 2019), *Průvodce světem práva [Guide to the World of Law]* by a collective of authors (EDUKO, 2018) and *Společenské vědy pro střední školy 3. díl [Social Sciences for Secondary Schools Volume 3]* – textbook by a collective of authors (Didaktis, 2014).

2 Research survey

The research survey was carried out using quantitative design, using an anonymous online questionnaire via survio.com. In this type of research, an accurate picture was created using variables, their values were ascertained by measurement, and the primary aim was to find out how the variables were distributed and, in particular, what the relationships between them were and why this was the case (Punch, 2008, p. 12). The questionnaire was distributed by email to teachers of the subject of social science fundamentals at grammar schools, or to grammar school headteachers where it was not possible to find a specific list of teachers, their qualifications and email contact on the website.

2.1 Selecting the research sample

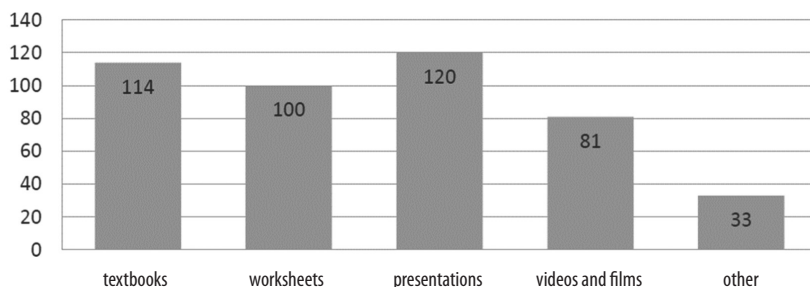
The research sample was selected in a targeted way to include the largest possible number of teachers of the social studies foundations course and not just take into account the regional situation. Respondents could answer the questions between 16 October 2020 and 30 October 2020. The return rate of the questionnaire was 20%, 153 out of 755 questionnaires sent out were returned. Even though the questionnaire may obviously show partial shortcomings in ascertaining the facts (e.g. low variability, harder posterior predictive checks, low return rate, small survey sample), we believe that specific conclusions can be drawn from the data obtained for the practical level in an area that is not reflected in depth in pedagogical practice.

2.2 Objectives and results of the research survey

The objective of the research was to find out what teaching materials are used by current educators, how satisfied they are with them, what textbooks they use and what they would like to see in teaching materials.

Graph 1

Teaching materials used in law teaching



Source: Preparation of own research survey

The graph above shows that educators make extensive use of presentations (120 respondents). Textbooks ranked second (114 respondents). Some 33 respondents use other teaching materials than those listed. These were mainly own materials (7), laws and regulations (7), street law (3), discussions with practitioners and visits to courts (3), materials from various institutions (3). Respondents also mentioned various websites, texts and newspaper articles, court decisions or simulated court hearings.

Thus, 73% of the respondents use textbooks when teaching law.

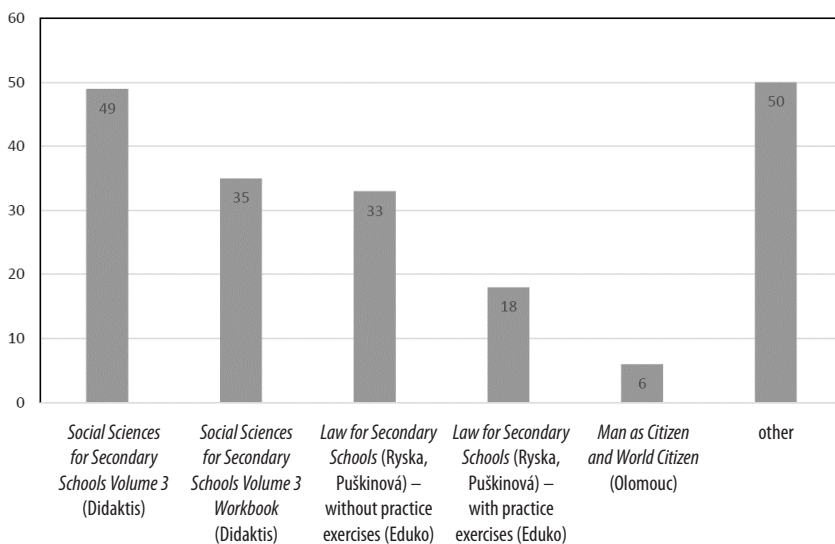
If we analyse the use of particular textbooks, the results show that the most common textbook used by teachers (51) in Czech schools is *Law for Secondary Schools* (Ryska & Puškinová, Eduko), which is also available in a version with practice tasks. This updated textbook was published in 2020. Another frequently used textbook (49) is *Social Sciences for Secondary Schools Volume 3* (Horecký et al., Didaktis). *Social Sciences for Secondary Schools Volume 3* is supplemented by a workbook that is used in conjunction with the textbook (27); others use the workbook alone (4) or with another textbook (4). Teachers also use (27) *Graduate! in Social Sciences*; it is not a textbook directly, but a summary of the secondary school curriculum.

It should be noted, however, that respondents could select more than one answer. It is clear from the responses that teachers combine textbooks in different ways and do not use only one textbook.

Amongst other textbooks outside the options offered, teachers use *Základy práva pro střední školy* [*Fundamentals of Law for Secondary Schools*] (by Petr Hradil), *Foundation Citizenship and Social Science – Law*, and *Guide to the World of Law* (Malast, Svoboda et al.). In addition, there were materials other than textbooks that could be used for teaching, namely legal dictionaries, preparation for final exams, and university entrance exams (law).

Graph 2

Textbooks used in law teaching

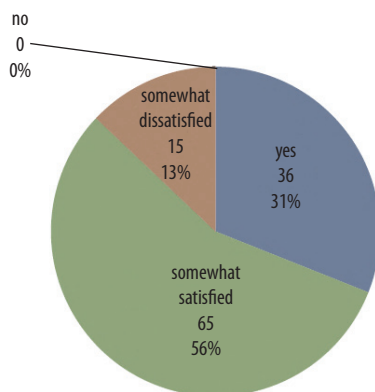


Source: Preparation of own research survey

The research survey found that teachers are generally satisfied with the textbooks. Specifically, 31% of the respondents are completely satisfied with the textbooks, i.e. they have no reservations. Most respondents, i.e. 56%, are satisfied with the textbooks but have some reservations about them. Some 13% were somewhat dissatisfied with the textbooks and none of the respondents were completely dissatisfied.

Graph 3

Satisfaction with the textbook used

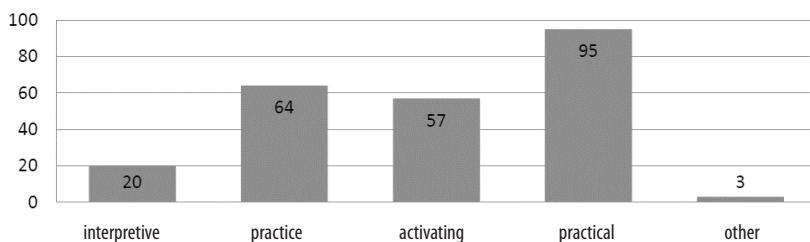


Source: Preparation of own research survey

Another aim of the research survey was to find out what teachers felt their textbooks lacked and to analyse their requirements in order to develop worksheets for pedagogical practice in the next stage. Educators had the opportunity to choose from interpretive, practice, activating, practical and other tasks. Respondents mostly requested practical and practice tasks. Other types of tasks were requested by three respondents, specifically problem-based tasks and examples from practice.

Graph 4

Required task types



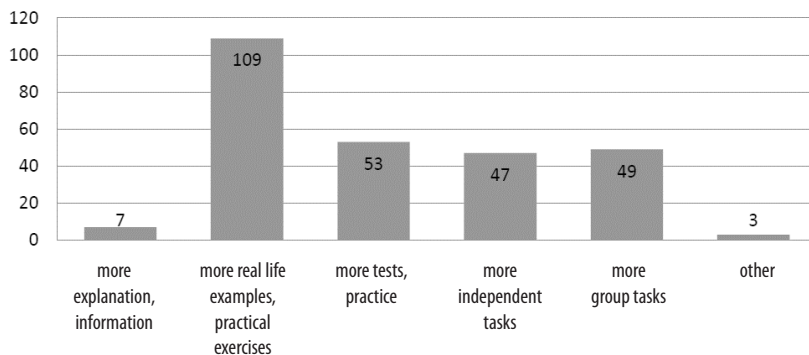
Source: Preparation of own research survey

We were also interested in the specific requirements educators have. They options included more explanation and information, more real life examples and practical ex-

ercises, more tests and practice, more independent tasks, more group tasks and other options at their discretion. The most frequent was the demand for practical understanding, for students' independent work and for materials to test their acquired knowledge.

Graph 5

Other requirements for teaching materials



Source: Preparation of own research survey

3 Possibilities of using the research results

We have observed that the research survey highlighted particular problems related to the usability of teaching materials for law teaching in grammar schools. Educators feel the need to create their own teaching materials because many teaching texts contain outdated or misleading examples (Staněk, 2009).

Educators make extensive use of materials they create themselves or that have been shared on the internet. It also uses legislation, street law, lectures, information from practitioners, daily press, reports, examples from court hearings and case law.

Worksheets are also a very attractive didactic tool, currently, as teachers can tailor them for a specific class or a specific topic, allowing them to better and more flexibly respond to their current needs. From a didactic point of view, worksheets fulfil a number of roles – they allow pupils to activate and strengthen their independence, they serve to consolidate new knowledge and skills, to practise the material learnt, and they provide feedback and evaluation to the teacher, parents and pupils (Frýzová, 2014 & Mrázová, 2013).

For this reason, the co-author of the article, Jitka Tržilová, decided to create worksheets and methodological sheets that teachers lack for teaching law, both as an exten-

sive and relevant outcome when writing her thesis. These worksheets and methodological sheets have been pilot tested on pupils and are now available for pedagogical practice.

Conclusion

This article, entitled Teaching materials used in law teaching at grammar schools in the Czech Republic, presents didactic tools used by educators at grammar schools for teaching law, defines the concept of teaching material, presents the most common teaching tools used to teach law at grammar schools, analyses the current view of grammar school teachers on didactic tools and aims to design didactic tools that would meet current teaching needs.

Most everyday activities are regulated by law, and therefore it is essential that everyone has a basic knowledge of the law and can navigate the tangle of legal standards at least minimally, and does not need the advice of experts to deal with everyday life situations. For this reason, the teaching of law is included in the curriculum requirements for secondary education.

Anything that serves to convey and consolidate newly acquired information can be considered learning material. The spectrum of didactic aids is wide. Nowadays, modern technologies are also infiltrating teaching. Nevertheless, the most used teaching aid is still the textbook, the main aim of which is to give the pupil complete information on legal issues. On the basis of a comparison of the textbooks available, it can be concluded that all of them correspond to the requirements of the Framework Curriculum for Grammar Schools in terms of theoretical knowledge. There are also workbooks on the market that contain practice exercises.

In relation to the theoretical anchoring of the issue under study, the results of the research survey allow us to draw a clear conclusion that educators are happy to use textbooks for teaching law, and they are generally satisfied with them; however, they lack a practical impact to a greater extent in the form of teaching sheets, methodological sheets and timely updating of the teaching material available on the market. On the basis of this information, relatively extensive work was subsequently carried out to create worksheets and methodological sheets useful for practice. The worksheets are designed to include a wider range of learning tasks and to activate pupils when learning law. Each worksheet reflects one topic listed in the Framework Curriculum for Grammar Schools. The worksheets are supplemented with methodological sheets to guide teachers on how to use the activities in the classroom and a set of correct solutions. The worksheets should mainly be used to practise and consolidate the material, so they do not contain explanatory passages. A total of three worksheets were submitted to the students at Gymnázium Třebíč and, after completing them, the students were given

space to evaluate the worksheet activities. Based on the feedback received, it can be concluded that the worksheets meet the requirements for practical and practice tasks and are therefore now available for a wide range of pedagogical practice as part of the output from the thesis by Jitka Tržilová, co-author of this paper.

List of bibliographic sources

- Frýzový, I. (2014). *Pracovní list nejen v přírodovědném vzdělávání* [Worksheet Not Only in Science Education], *Komenský, Odborný časopis pro základní školy, ročník 139(1)* [Professional journal for primary schools, vol. 139, no. 1].
- Horecký, J. et al. (2014). *Společenské vědy pro střední školy – 3. díl: Pracovní sešit* [Social Sciences for Secondary Schools – Volume 3: Workbook], Brno: Didaktis.
- Kalhous, Z. & Obst, O. (2009). *Školní didaktika* [School Didactics], Praha: Portál.
- Collective of authors, (2007). *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro gymnázia* [Framework Curriculum for Grammar Schools], Praha: Prague Research Institute of Education.
- Collective of authors, (2001) *Právo pro každého: učebnice programu Street Law – Právo pro každého* [Law for Everyone: A Textbook for the Street Law Programme], Praha: Partners Czech.
- Mrázová, L. (2013). *Tvorba pracovních listů. Metodický materiál* [Creating Worksheets. Methodological Material] Brno: Moravian Museum.
- Průcha, J. (1998). *Učebnice: Teorie a analýza edukačního média. Příručka pro studenty, učitele, autory učebnic a výzkumné pracovníky* [Textbook: Theory and Analysis of Educational Media. A handbook for students, teachers, textbook writers and researchers], Brno: Paido.
- Punch, K. (2008). *Základy kvantitativního šetření* [Basics of quantitative research], Praha: Portál.
- Rámcový vzdělávací program pro gymnázia* [Framework Curriculum for Grammar Schools] – Edu.cz [online], ©2021 [retrieved 23th of June 2021]. Retrieved from: <https://www.edu.cz/rvp/ramcove-vzdelavaci-programy-pro-gymnazia-rvp-g/>
- Ryska, R. & Puškinová, M. (2020) *Právo pro střední školy* [Law for Secondary Schools], Praha: EDUKO.
- Skalková, J. (2007). *Obecná didaktika* [General Didactics]. Praha: Grada.
- Staněk, A. (2009). *Výchova k občanství v současné škole: profesní identita učitele výchovy k občanství* [Citizenship education in the contemporary school: the professional identity of the citizenship education teacher], Praha: Epocha.
- Šil, P. & Karolová, J. (2012). *Člověk jako občan a světoobčan. Politologie, právo a mezinárodní vztahy pro střední školy*. [Man as Citizen and World Citizen. Political Science, Law and International Relations for Secondary Schools], Olomouc: Nakladatelství Olomouc.
- Urban, M. (2013). *STREET LAW aneb jak učit právo na středních školách*. [STREET LAW or how to teach law in secondary schools], Praha: PF UK.

Contacts:

JUDr. Zdenka Nováková, Ph.D.
Department of Pedagogy and Social Studies
Faculty of Education, Palacký University in Olomouc
771 40 Žižkovo nám. 5
e-mail: zdenka.novakova@upol.cz

Zdenka Nováková – after graduating from the Faculty of Law of the University of Olomouc, she has been working since 2000 at the Faculty of Education of the University of Olomouc, first as an assistant, later as a research assistant at the Department of Social Sciences, and since 2008 at the Institute of Pedagogy and Social Studies. She is responsible for teaching legal disciplines, mainly in the field of private law, with the main focus on legal awareness and school legislation.

Jitka Tržilová graduated from Masaryk University Faculty of Law and Masaryk University Faculty of Education in Brno. During her studies, she gained experience in various legal professions and after graduation she worked for a year at the district court as a senior court clerk in the enforcement department. She is currently on parental leave and is completing a Master's degree in Teaching Czech Language and Literature for the second level of primary schools (minor) – Teaching the Fundamentals of Social Sciences and Citizenship Education for secondary schools and the second level of primary schools (major) at the University of Olomouc Faculty of Education.