



EDUCATION

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RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN THE CONTEXT OF TRAINING OF THE FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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The article characterizes education in the Czech Republic, in particular, the development of education in the context of the preparation of primary school teachers in the period 1939-2010. The author analyzes the normative framework and scientific works of the modern researchers on the mentioned problem. The aspects of education development in the Czech Republic are considered according to the following directions: development of general education; development of higher pedagogical education; reforming of education; professional-pedagogical training of the future teachers of primary classes; conducting teaching practice in universities; formation of various types of professional competence of the future primary school teachers. General reforms of higher pedagogical education in different historical periods have been reflected, in particular, the changes in the curricula of Czech universities have been mentioned. The peculiarities of organization and conduct of practice in universities at pedagogical faculties have been cleared out. The examples of the reforms after the introduction of the Bologna system in the Czech Republic have been offered. Four possible variants (models) of preparation of future teachers' training at universities have been studied. The main competencies, which are fixed in the professional standard of training of the future teachers in the Czech Republic, have been mentioned.

The basic competences of a teacher, fixed in the professional standard of the teacher of the Czech Republic, have been determined. It is noted that in the Czech Republic highly qualified teacher is considered as the main factor of system of education development.

It is generalized that the Czech Republic rapid development in the system of higher education, change of the conditions of economic growth, demands of the society, coursed the development of new standards in the sphere of harmonization of educational space.

Key words: education, pedagogical education, professional pedagogical training of primary school teachers, Czech Republic, reforms.



Introduction

The study of trends in education development is the main component of further progress in all spheres of public life. The development of society and the well-being of each member immediately depend on the quality of education. Under the current conditions of global knowledge content of economy the branch of higher education and science is of strategic importance for our state. For implementing reforms in higher education it is important, in our opinion, to study the experience of the countries of Eastern Europe, where there was the transition to the market economy and the simultaneous reforming of the system of education. The Czech Republic is of particular interest among these countries, which is considered the state of former Marxist socialism and which evolved to the membership in the European Union. The study of the education system in the Czech Republic, in our opinion, is of great importance for reforms in our country and also because of the fact that Ukraine and the Czech Republic have similar geopolitical position. Thus, it is indicated in the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 14 December 2016 No. 988-R that the experience of countries of Eastern Europe (particularly Poland and the Czech Republic) demonstrates the significant impact of education reforms on the development of economy of these countries and the competitiveness of education at the international level [2].

The education system of the Czech Republic is based on the principles of innovativeness and man-centeredness. Pedagogical education is aimed at preparing highly qualified teachers who should cover a broad spectrum of requirements that contains the knowledge, skills and competencies, professional values and practical experience [1, p. 91].

Domestic and foreign scientists, revealing the processes of education reforming in the world and individual countries, have devoted their scientific works to the various issues of development of education in the leading countries of the world (B. Vulfson, A. Dzhurynskyi, O. Halus, L. Pukhovska, L. Suprunova, etc.); scientific ways of reforming the content of general education (V. Kraievskyi, O. Lokshyna, I. Lerner, Vl. Parzhizek, A. Vasyliuk, Ya. Prukha, Ya. Skalkova, M. Skatkin, O. Khlup and other). However, today a lot of factual and theoretical material, concerning the development of Czech education in the second half of the XX – beginning of the XXI century, was accumulated, and this fact makes topical the tasks of its analysis and generalization [3].

The aim of this article is the analysis of development of education in the Czech Republic in the context of preparation of primary school teachers.

For the Czech Republic the year 1939 marked the end of political and economic independence, including in education. Although the structure of state administration had the Ministry of education, actual management was carried out by the protectorate of Germany – the Third Reich. As a result of such management, the processes of gradual elimination of Czech schools took place, as well as germanization of the content of education and, as a consequence, the increase in the number of German schools. This process ended with closing of Czech higher educational institutions. In this period the law of bilingualism of all normative documents was passed, namely, articles, course papers, charts, educational classroom magazines,



educational and scientific manuals, etc., which ultimately led to the fact that the German language in the sphere of education was used in the first place. Learning of German language became compulsory from the third grade of primary school. At the same time the increase of the number of educational hours allotted to the teaching of German language in all classrooms could be observed. All teachers, regardless of the results of certification, had to pass the exam in basic knowledge of German language. The Ministry of education of the protectorate during 1941–1945, was mainly engaged in the implementation of sport events and the development of military prowess of the pupils and young people, and the education of the young generation as a whole took place in the Nazi spirit and loyal attitude to the administration of occupation [11].

The post-war years were for the Czech education system also not encouraging enough. The war destroyed the economy and prevented the efforts of the teachers and politicians in the creation of the First Independent Republic, the development of which was terminated by force. The important decision for the development of the education system should become the conduct of radical school reforming, which included the creation of a single unified Czech national school.

The law №.95/1948 Sb. taken in the spring of 1948, contained major changes in the education system, which came into legal force since September 1948. In accordance with the Law, the pre-school educational institutions were for the first time referred to the school system of education. Basic education was provided in the so-called public schools, where the pupils from 6 to 11 years studied, the training period in these schools accounted for half of the period of compulsory schooling. Subsequently, the pupils continued learning in middle school that lasted four years and was the second part of compulsory education. Further training took place in gymnasia, secondary professional-technical establishments schools and secondary vocational schools; the first two of these institutions offered training to continuation of study at universities [22].

In the system of teachers training significant changes occurred in 1946, two years before the reform of the system of school education. The law № 100/1946 Sb. on the basis of four universities 30 created pedagogical faculties (pedagogicke fiulty), which had the task to train teachers for all types of schools, duration of training of the future teachers was determined only by the degree of the school [23]. Elementary school teachers of secondary school had to study for three years, teachers of primary schools studied for two years, educators of pre-school educational institutions were prepared for their profession for one year.

Education and training of teachers in the 1948–1989 in Czechoslovakia – is the period, during which the development of the education system has seen many changes and transformations. Pedagogical faculties tried to integrate into the traditional university faculties preparation of teachers at all levels. Training was conducted both in full-time and in correspondence forms, so in the following years the number of students has increased significantly, which exceeded the regulatory ability of the faculties. This has led to the gradual decline of the number of full-time students at these new faculties [14, p. 29–33].



In 1950 pedagogical gymnasia were created, which had to train teachers for national schools, who had already received pedagogical education at the pedagogical faculties remotely, but it was not mandatory. Pedagogical gymnasia had only a consultative voice in the selection of teachers. In 1953, under considerable political and social pressure; pedagogical faculties were abolished in the country [6]. Five years after the first post-war educational reform the second reform was carried out, which was of Pro-Soviet character.

The Law № 31/1953 Sb. «About the Education System and Teacher Training» introduced compulsory eight-year school [20]. From the previous system of education they preserved pre-school educational establishments. Eleven years secondary school was introduced. The first eight years of schooling were compulsory for children, then the pupils could continue their education in gymnasia, secondary professional-technical schools and secondary vocational educational establishments. The reform led to the reduction of the period of study in school.

Functions of training of teachers after the closing of pedagogical faculties were given to secondary and higher pedagogical schools and pedagogical universities [20].

Secondary pedagogical schools conducted a three-year training period and offered their graduates the qualification of educators of pre-school educational institutions, primary school teachers in newly established general educational secondary schools. The higher pedagogical schools conducted a two-year teacher training of the II degree in the newly established secondary schools. In pedagogical universities the training lasted four years where they taught teachers who had already earned degrees in traditional universities. Through these activities, the training of teachers went beyond the universities [20].

However, the changes, introduced to the training teachers in 1953, did not last long. As early as in 1959, pedagogical universities and higher pedagogical schools were abolished. To train teachers of the I and the II degree so called pedagogical institutes, which had the status of universities, were created [13].

In the 60-s years of the twentieth century other changes in the system of school education took place: thus, in 1960 the Law №. 186/1960 Sb. was passed «About the System of Upbringing and Education» [18]. We should note that it was already the third post-war law, which again, contained changes in the education system and education management. In accordance with the law basic nine years schools of the I and the II degree were established. They introduced compulsory schooling. Within the frames of the II degree gymnasia, secondary vocational schools, vocational-technical institutions functioned. Within the frames of the system of school distance learning so-called schools for «workers» were created where it was possible during one year of training to obtain full secondary education and a certificate [12, p. 5-6].

Significant changes in the system of training teachers of primary school took place in 1964, when pedagogical institutes were closed, and their functions were given to the pedagogical faculties of the universities. In this way, for example, pedagogical institutes in Gottwaldov, Jihlava, Karlovy Vary, Kosice, Liberec, Maprtin were eliminated. Instead they created twelve faculties, seven of them were independent (Banska-Bystrica, České Budějovice, Hradec-Králové, Nitra, Ostrava, Plzeň, Ústí-nad-Labem), and five became departments of universities (Prague, Brno,



Bratislava/Trnava, Košice Prešov, Olomouc) [24]. In 1970 there was a liquidation of the 2 models of training primary school teachers and the model of training in universities was left. Training of teachers for secondary schools remained unchanged.

In 1976, the following important changes in the training of primary school teachers, which were associated with the preparation of the teacher of level II of primary and secondary schools, occurred. So, in the curricula they introduced specialty called «Teacher of general educational subjects in primary and secondary schools». The students continued to be trained at pedagogical faculties, as well as at the professional faculties of the universities. In the content of education the strengthening of psychological and pedagogical components of teacher training took place. In general, thanks to the mentioned changes, the increase of training time for teachers of level II of primary school from four to five years happened [8, p. 23].

Political influence on the education system was evident in the new Law «On Education», published in 1978, which largely brought closer the Czech system of education to the Soviet one. So, there was a reduction for one-year in the period of primary education, at that time, as the period of compulsory education was extended to 10 years [15]. In 1984, the following legislative change in the system of school education took place that abolished the basic nine year schools and established compulsory ten-year schools with obligatory two-year study after finishing primary school [19]. However, despite a series of important changes in pedagogical preparation of the future teachers, to the mid 80-ies there weren't any legislative documents in the sphere of pedagogical education to certify centralized approaches to the development of the new concept of training teachers in practice.

Socio-political and economic changes that occurred in the Czech Republic as a result of the «Velvet Revolution» logically had an impact on education and training of teachers. The content of education underwent great changes, as already in 1990 the amendment to the 1984 Law «On Education» № 171/1990 Sb. was published, in which, first of all, they declared changes in the education management system, the way of financing of the educational institutions, educational programs, etc. Since the 1990-s, the autonomy of state schools has been supported, they have become legal entities, providing them with greater independence in the sphere of organizational, financial, personnel decisions, etc. It was also given the opportunity to create private schools. Great attention was paid to special education and increasingly more measures were carried out for the integration of the educational process. The period of compulsory education was again reduced to nine years [17].

Legislative changes in education occurred in 2004. They allowed to adopt the new Law «On Education» № 561/2004 Sb., which settled the pre-school, primary, secondary, higher professional and other kinds of education and developed requirements as for the provision of higher education and professional training of the future teachers. A number of significant changes in the curricula of educational institutions were made. Schools got the opportunity of profiling teaching of their pupils using school education programs [21].



In 1990 higher educational institutions in accordance with the Law «On Higher Education» № 111/1998 Sb. were granted autonomy, which gave the opportunity for the creation of the new universities, reorganization of some departments [16]. For example: from the Pedagogical faculty of Ostrava city (established in 1953) the University of Ostrava (Ostrava city) was established in 1991 [9].

Social changes and reforms in higher education have affected the training of primary school teachers. The teacher training of the level II, that is, the speciality «Teacher of General Educational Subjects at Primary and Secondary Schools» was abolished. This became the reason for the emergence of the new, separate, parallel curricula for the training of primary school teachers and teachers for secondary schools. In the process of training of primary school teachers not only pedagogical faculties but other university faculties took part [10].

In the late 90-ies of the XX century and early XXI century they began implementation of training of the future teachers according to the master's programs, which often lasted for four years for primary school teachers. Since 2004, under the influence of the Bologna Declaration Czech universities have made changes in the curricula for the training of the future teachers. So, there are various variants of educational programmes, in particular the integrative model or consecutive one [10].

In the spring of 2004, the Deputy Minister of Education in the affairs of higher education, Petr Kolář suggested conceptual document, developed and supported by the Ministry of Education, Commission on Accreditation, as well as the representatives of the Council of universities. The document suggested four possible options of pedagogical training of the future teachers.

The first variant implemented the integration model, according to which psychological-pedagogical and professional training of the future teachers was held in the framework of the bachelor's degree and continued at the Master's level. At the level of «bachelor» students studied the course of general psycho-pedagogical subjects and teaching practice in the form of observation, to develop and form the idea of pedagogical activity. However, they do not receive the pedagogical (teaching) qualifications. At the level of «bachelor» students have a thorough pedagogical knowledge of one or two educational subjects.

The second variant of the preparation of teachers is built with the possibility of sequential integrative model: professional pedagogical part of teacher preparation (without the branch didactics) occurs only on the theoretical level. Training at the bachelor level provides future teachers solid scientific basis with one or two subjects that they teach. But for those students who are interested in additional preparation for the teaching of compulsory subjects, there is the opportunity to further mastering of the psycho-pedagogical module, similar to the first variant of pedagogues' preparation.

The third variant maintains the consistent model of training future teachers. The theoretical part of training (without the branch didactics) has pedagogical direction. The bachelor's degree gives the opportunity for the future teachers to teach not only two educational disciplines, but the disciplines of natural, social or linguistic areas, etc. In this model, students are focused on getting pedagogical competences, that is they are engaged in scientific-psychological and pedagogical researches,



pedagogical practice and study of the branch didactics and, furthermore, there is a profiling of the two subjects that they are going to teach in the future.

The fourth variant is a model of long-term training of «bachelor+master». Preparation at the bachelor stage gives the opportunity for the future teachers to gain deep scientific knowledge of the future profession and qualification for teaching one or two subjects [10].

The choice of the particular form (model) of educational programs for preparation of the future teachers depends on the independence of the universities, so that each University got the ability to create their own curricula for the training of teachers. Unity, unfortunately, not always can be found even among the faculties of one University, and therefore there are different models of training even within a single University. This leads to absurd situations when the students study simultaneously for the two models, and it affects the quality of training.

An example of the consistent and understandable plan of the reform of pedagogical education today is the project, which is realized in the Czech Republic. In the national program of education development in this country (2001) highly qualified teachers are considered as the key factor in the development of school, which involves necessary changes in the concept of the teaching profession, professional roles and a number of competencies. The adoption of this document was the starting point of the reform of pedagogical education in the Czech Republic. Its main position became the development and adoption of professional standards for all categories of teachers as the basis for programs of their training. Thus, the professional standard of teacher's work has become, on the one hand, unified basis for the formation of educational programs of teachers training in the Czech Republic, and on the other hand, the system of national criteria for accreditation of educational programs for teachers training, awarding the qualification to the graduates of such program.

Thus, in 2004, the Act «Of Pedagogical Workers» was published. It established new requirements for teachers' qualifications. It was determined that a master's degree is a necessary condition for awarding the qualification of teachers of primary and secondary schools. In 2004 also at the national level the state requirements for the content of all levels of pre-school and general secondary education were established [7].

The development of new competencies of teachers was made on the basis of determination of the key functions of school, the learning goals of pupils and, as a consequence, the required competencies of the teacher. In particular, 4 key learning objectives of pupils were identified there: learning knowledge, learning life together with others, learning to act, learning vital activity. Respectively to each of these goals they developed the teacher's competences necessary for the achievement of the above mentioned educational goals [7].

To the main competences of the teacher, consolidated in the professional standard, belong the following: competence in school subject, competence in didactics and psycho-didactics, competence in pedagogy, competence in diagnosis and activity, based on it; social, psychosocial and communicative competences, managerial competences, professional and personal competences. Each of these groups of competences is described for different categories of teachers. For example, primary



school teacher, having formed competence in didactics and psycho-didactics should know the strategies of teaching and learning in relation to knowledge of the psychological and social aspects of these processes, to be able to use the basic set of teaching methods and to adapt it to the peculiarities of particular pupil or particular school, to create effective educational environment, to build on their basis his or her own teaching methods; to know the basic programs and approaches to teaching of school subjects, the main approaches to evaluation of pupils, including the psychological aspects of evaluation; to be able to use the evaluation tools in relation to the development and individual achievements of pupils [7].

Important is the fact that at the state level the concept of quality of teacher preparation and professional standards are defined in general forms. At the institutional level, i.e. in the particular university, professional standard has undergone concretization at a more detailed level for separate categories of teachers in the form of the list of competences and knowledge, as well as all components of the program of training. This detailed form of standard is called «Profile of the Graduate». Developed on this basis, the general scheme for the preparation of teachers (in fact, the analogue of educational standard) defines the main components of pedagogical education and their weight in the total program of training. So, it is allotted on the average 55% of the entire programme for the study the didactics of the school subject (for the psycho-pedagogical unit – 35%, for university-wide disciplines – 10%, for the practice of teaching psychological and pedagogical component – 10–15%). [4].

Conclusions

Unfortunately, unlike many European countries, which because of the Bologna system of education has shifted from teacher training to the higher educational level, in the Czech Republic these reforms were not fully implemented. In universities the forced separation of the master programs on training of teachers in educational (pedagogical) and psychological field was sometimes observed. As the perspectives for further researches we consider the study of possibilities of the implementation of the Czech reform experience in the educational sphere into the domestic system of training of primary school teachers.

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