

# EDUCATION OF FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY AND PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY OLMOUC

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**DOMINIKA PROVÁZKOVÁ STOLINSKÁ**

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*Department of Primary and Pre-Primary Education,  
Palacký University Olomouc*

dominika.provazkova@upol.cz

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of the paper was to present the concept of undergraduate preparation of future primary school teachers at the Faculty of Education in Olomouc. This course has had a long tradition in Olomouc, and the current concept of the course is based on an overview of the system of primary education presented in this paper. In addition to this concept, the authors reflect on the needs of primary schools and try to implement these needs within the educational context. The concept of the course focuses not only on students' theoretical knowledge but primarily on the application sphere. The paper is a partial outcome of the project *Development of the concept of undergraduate training of primary school teachers with an emphasis on communication competences*.

## KEYWORDS:

*undergraduate training, teacher training for primary schools, teaching practice, primary education*

## INTRODUCTION

In the course of 30 years, the concept of undergraduate training of future primary school teachers in the Czech Republic has gone through considerable development. The teacher training course for primary school teachers is a relatively new and reflects strong democratization, liberalization, humanization as well as political and social effects. The educational strategies reflect parents' (individual) interests, social interests and interest of other groups engaged, including for example teachers. The basic idea reflects J. A. Comenius' concept of the school as a "workshop of humanity" (Provázková Stolinská, 2015). This has a significant effect on the transformation of the goals, content, structure and organization of the study. The basic concept is the humanist paradigm of grounded theory of reflective thinking, educational constructivism as well as professional teacher competences as a system of contextual knowledge (Lukášová-Kantorková, 2004; Kasáčová, 2005; Švec, 2005). The requirement is to develop a school of communication, partnership, cooperation and a personality-based approach (*Problémy vzdelávania učiteľov 1. stupňa ZŠ*, 1994).

## PRIMARY EDUCATION AS A BASIS FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF UNDERGRADUATE TRAINING OF FUTURE TEACHERS

The current concept of education in the Czech Republic is based on the national strategic and curricular documents inspired by European educational visions. The objectives of education are defined in the Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2020<sup>1</sup>, which in addition to career preparation declares the principles of personality development in order to improve the quality of human life, maintain and develop culture as a system of shared values as well as develop active citizenship as a precondition for a society of solidarity, sustainable development and democracy. The aspects of education that support these values are included in a comprehensive educational offer as defined in the Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Education (MŠMT, 2013), including all educational areas, cross-curricular subjects and key competences.

Until 1990s, the key elements of education policy, such as the educational

<sup>1</sup> Currently, this is followed by a new document entitled *Strategy for Education Policy until 2030*.

content, school system, teaching organization, etc. had reflected the educational needs of the previous century. The aim of the curricular reform after 1989 was to improve the quality of education and take into consideration the requirements of the European Union. As a result, the concept of the child and the child's educational needs has gradually transformed. Before the school reform, children had been assessed according to standards instead of their potentialities, the development of which has now become a separate educational objective. One of the main objectives of education is the socialization of the child, which also involves the cultivation of the child's attitudes, values and a holistic perspective of the world. The strategic curricular documents such as the White Paper (today replaced by the Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2020) or FEP define the potential educational procedures to achieve these objectives, including for example variable teaching methods and activity-based learning. The view of the learning content has also changed. Previously, school subjects were designed as "reductions" of scientific disciplines, which supported an encyclopaedic type of education. Today, the learning content is a means of developing students' key competences (learning, problem solving, communicative, social and personal, civil and work-related). The former predominant passivity of students has been replaced by active participation in learning. Today, the learning content should not be presented as the final product of the teacher's knowledge (Kasíková, 1994).

The curricular reform emphasised the necessity of the teacher's direct participation in the process of children's socialization by means of the so-called social learning. This takes place through group and social forms of education with an emphasis on cooperation and through social integration of all learners with an emphasis on the acceptance of one's individuality but also the individuality of others. The objectives of social learning also include the acquisition of the ability to solve problems in a group and to mediate and receive information.

Currently in the Czech Republic, the content of the curricular document Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Education (MŠMT, 2013) is under review.

The development of undergraduate training of future primary school teachers in the Czech Republic is in detail described in a paper by Provázková Stolinská (2020a).

## CONCEPT OF UNDERGRADUATE TRAINING OF FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN RESPONSE TO PRACTICAL NEEDS

According to the graduate profile, all graduates should be provided with the following competences: developmental-reflective, diagnostic, communicative, cooperative, self-reflective, subject-specific diagnostic, educational-research, educational-organizations, managerial and projective-creative. All graduates should have multidisciplinary knowledge and skills in the areas related to linguistics, mathematics and science, national history, music, somatic issues, visual arts and occupational issues. They should have a broad cultural awareness (including literature, music, visual arts and drama). They should have the skills and knowledge that contribute to health promotion and optimal prevention of undesirable effects of technology, understand and be able to teach their pupils in the area of social changes, resolve educational problems and assess their educational activity. They should have the capabilities necessary for creative, self-reflective and self-regulatory development (*Akreditační spis*, 2018).

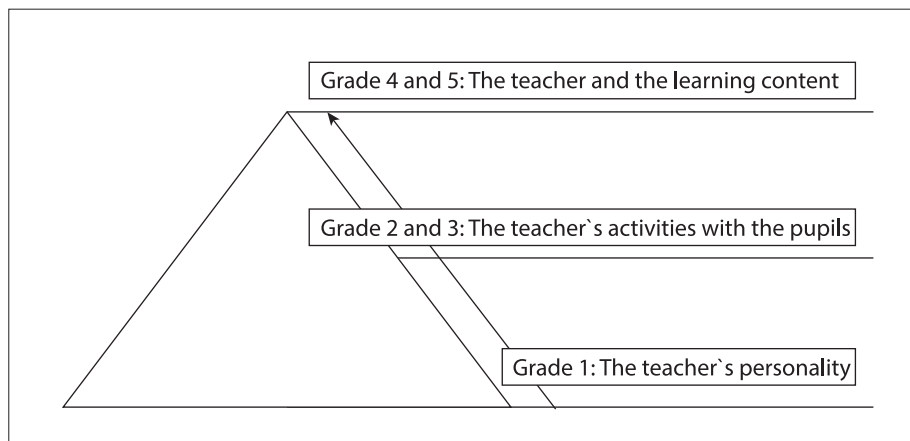
To achieve the highest possible level of graduate competences, the course of study must be of an intensifying nature and theoretical and didactic courses need to be consistently linked to practice.

The structure of the study is set in line with the modern principles reflecting the transformation of higher education (Spilková, Hejlová, 2010). These include the following:

- Integration of education: within educational disciplines, between education and psychology, between a course and its didactics, general didactics and course-specific didactics, theoretical study and practice;
- Personality development, cultural awareness and general level of education;
- Intensifying system of teaching practice throughout the whole period of study with an emphasis on teaching activity and its reflection;
- Activity methods;
- Individualization of study and personal specialization.

In order to achieve the graduate profile, the study must include a logical content line. The underlying philosophy is the current concept of primary school, while the core of the study is in educational and psychological disciplines, course-specific didactics and practice. The whole study is designed as a flexible system that

allows students' professional development and provides space for their specialization.



**DIAGRAM 1** Content of the course for future primary school teachers

Source: Akreditační spis, 2018

In the first year, students are encouraged to develop their own ideas about teacher identity. In the second and third years, emphasis is on the deepening of self-awareness in the role of the teacher. In the fourth and fifth years, the core of undergraduate preparation is the reflection of the partial and final level of the adopted professional competences in a dynamic context. The final product of the system of undergraduate preparation is the individual teacher identity.

In the context of the reflective attitude to education (according to Lukášová-Kantorková, 2003), which focuses on the link between theory and practice, teaching practice copies the content structure of the study. In the course of the five years, from the first week of study, teaching practice is offered in three categories:

- Classroom observation practice;
- Micro-teaching sessions;
- Own teaching practice.

The practices are part of the following system.

**TABLE 1:** Arrangement of teaching practice from the academic year 2019/2020 at the Faculty of Education, Palacký University Olomouc (CR)

Year	Semester	Subjects	Teaching practice
1	W	-	Observation practice in primary school in a fully organized urban school, rural school, or school with few classes
1	W	Communicative competence of the teacher	Student micro-teaching session in primary school (approximately 5 minutes)
1	S	Seminar on the didactics of primary education	Observation practice to identify didactic categories
2	W	-	Observation practice in schools with few classes
2	S	Development of the primary education curriculum	Observation practice and micro-teaching sessions in primary school
3	W	Didactics of elementary reading and writing	Observation practice micro-teaching sessions in the first grade of primary school
3	S	Didactic seminar – work with primary school pupils with special needs	Observation practice in primary school with a focus on the elements of integration and inclusion
4	W	-	Continuous teaching practice including teaching sessions and reflection (1 <sup>st</sup> to 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade of elementary school)
4	S	-	Continuous teaching practice including teaching sessions and reflection (4 <sup>th</sup> to 5 <sup>th</sup> grade of elementary school)
5	W	-	Continuous teaching practice including teaching sessions and reflection
5	S	-	Continuous teaching practice – 5 weeks fully organized school + 3 school with few classes
5	S	-	Teaching practice including a research theme for the purposes of the master's diploma thesis

As shown in the table above, teaching practice is involved in every semester from the first week of study. It is because the system of teaching practice is not considered a marginal part but a conceptual basis of undergraduate training of future primary school teachers.

The development of undergraduate training of future primary school teachers at the Faculty of Education, Palacký University Olomouc (Czech Republic) is in detail described in a paper by Provázková Stolinská (2020b).

## **CONCLUSION**

The objective of the paper was to present the concept of undergraduate training of future primary school teachers at the Faculty of Education in Olomouc. The system of undergraduate training is based on the concept of primary education and on real needs of primary schools.

The paper presents the link between theoretical courses, practical courses and teaching practice. Undergraduate training of primary school teachers has had a long tradition in Olomouc. Over the years the concept of undergraduate training has gone through substantial development. Presently, attention is especially on the modernization of the content of educational methods based on the need to innovate university education and the system of teaching practice.

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**OBRAZOVANJE BUDUĆIH OSNOVNOŠKOLSKIH NASTAVNIKA NA ODJELU ZA PRIMARNO I PREDŠKOLSKO OBRAZOVANJE, PEDAGOŠKI FAKULTET, SVEUČILIŠTE PALCKY U OLMOUCU**

## SAŽETAK

Cilj rada je predstaviti koncept preddiplomskog obrazovanja budućih osnovnoškolskih učitelja na Pedagoškom fakultetu u Olomoucu. Ovaj Odjel ima dugu tradiciju u Olomoucu, a trenutni koncept Odjela temelji se na pregledu sustava primarnog obrazovanja prikazanom u ovom radu. Osim toga, autori razmišljaju o potrebama osnovnih škola te ih pokušavaju primijeniti u obrazovnom kontekstu. Koncept odjela usmjeren je ne samo na teorijsko znanje studenata, već na područje primjene. Rad je djelomični ishod projekta *Razvoj koncepta preddiplomskog obrazovanja učitelja razredne nastave s naglaskom na komunikacijske kompetencije* (eng. *Development of the concept of undergraduate training of primary school teachers with an emphasis on communication competences*).

## KLJUČNE RIJEČI:

*preddiplomsko obrazovanje, obrazovanje osnovnoškolskih nastavnika, nastavna praksa, primarno obrazovanje*