

Institutional support of teacher development in the Czech Republic

This essay is focussed on four prestigious institutions in the Czech Republic, providing many courses, conferences and methodological seminars for practicing, qualified teachers.

I am convinced that being a good teacher is not an easy task nowadays. However, good teachers must be aware of the necessity of their continual professional development. This would not only help them to explore different ways and methods of teaching but also contribute to their feeling of notable satisfaction and effectiveness in their career.

I chose this topic as I would like to inspire my colleagues with some possibilities and opportunities for their professional development in our country.

Firstly, I would like to introduce British Council, an international organization operating in 109 countries (British Council). The British Council runs many projects and programmes in education and teaching the English language as well as many methodology seminars for teachers. Moreover, it organizes various types of internationally accepted exams. The British Council runs its own literary club and libraries in Brno, Olomouc, Ostrava and other large cities where teachers can loan for use the whole range of methodological books, class books, dictionaries, DVDs, CDs and materials suitable for passing Cambridge exams. The British Council web pages are certainly a great inspiration for creative and keen teachers.

Secondly, the National Agency for European Educational Programmes (NAEP) should be mentioned. This institution provides many educational programmes and a lifelong learning programme consisting of four sectoral programmes – Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig (NAEP). The Comenius provides grants for teachers willing to work on their teacher development. If their application form for a grant is successful they get the chance to participate in one of the training courses, seminars, internships or conferences abroad. In my opinion, this is a great opportunity for us, teachers of English, to get some ideas on how to make our teaching more effective.

The third institution which I find very beneficial is The Association of Teacher Educators (AMATE). They try to contribute to the foreign language teaching improvement in all types of schools in the Czech Republic (AMATE). The directors of this association are our

university teachers Mrs. Nad'a Vojtková and Mrs. Světlana Hanušová. The members of AMATE offer useful tips for teachers' teaching practice, such as tips for choosing a suitable class book for young learners or supporting materials, documents and presentations for an effective school education programme production and others. Furthermore, these qualified teacher educators provide various conferences, seminars, projects and other activities in our country for teachers of foreign languages (AMATE).

The last institution I would like to inform my colleagues about is The Association of Teachers of English of the Czech Republic (ATECR) which tries to:

“Improve the cooperation of English teaching in Czech schools, offer professional cooperation with TV and radio in the design and production of teaching programmes for schools at both teacher and pupil level, promote exchange visits, working parties and study exchanges between Czech teachers of English and teachers of English from other countries, support members' participation in international conferences and professional meetings” and others (ATECR).

Moreover, the ATECR web page provides teachers of English with many useful links presenting various teaching materials and lesson plans or information about exams, bookshops, dictionaries and other useful links for teachers (ATECR).

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that Oxford, Cambridge, Fraus and other publishing houses give teachers of English a great opportunity to participate in their practical seminars and conferences too. These are held around the Czech Republic through the whole year.

Online Sources

AMATE Asociace metodiků [AMATE Association of Teacher Educators]. 11 Nov. 2008.

Jiří Šádek. 28 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.amate.cz/>>.

Asociace učitelů angličtiny České Republiky [Association of Teachers of English of the Czech Republic]. 2009. 28 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.atecr.cz/>>.

British Council Czech Republic. 2009. The United Kingdom's International Organisation for Cultural Relations and Educational Opportunities. 28 Mar. 2009

<<http://www.britishcouncil.org/czechrepublic.htm>>.

Cambridge - English Language Teaching. 2009. Cambridge University Press 2005. 28 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.cambridge.org/elt/cz/>>.

Fraus. 2009. Nakladatelství Fraus s.r.o. 28 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.fraus.cz/>>.

Národní agentura pro evropské vzdělávací programy [National Agency for European Educational Programmes]. 2009. NAEP 2007-2009. 28 Mar. 2009

<<http://www.naep.cz/>>.

Oxford University Press. 2009. 2006 Megabooks CZ spol. s.r.o. 28 Mar. 2009

<<http://www.oup.cz/>>.