

Alternative schools in the Czech Republic

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Introduction



There are many different possible understandings of the term **alternative schools**.



We can see the alternative from the view of the organizer, financing or the pedagogical perspective.



Generally, the alternative can be realized in all types of schools (private, public, state) - if the school is **different from the mainstream** standard schools in an educational system.



Schools with different methods and teaching organization that aim to bring the curriculum closer to children, mostly by the form of game, discussion, problem solving, individual work etc.



There are differences in the school curriculums, types of assessment and evaluation, relationship between the school and parents or local community (Průcha, 2004).



There are also standard schools that apply some alternative programmes (like in just one class).

Overview of the most known alternatives

Waldorf pedagogy

Montessori pedagogy

Dalton plan

Jenaplan

Step by Step

Health Promoting School

Open Learning

Alternatives in the Czech Republic

Waldorf (kindergarten, primary and secondary school [lower and higher])

Montessori (kindergarten, primary and lower secondary school)

Dalton (kindergarten, primary and secondary school [lower and higher])

Jenaplan (primary school)

Step by Step (kindergarten, primary school)

Health Promoting School (kindergarten, primary and secondary school [lower and higher])

Integrated Thematic Learning (kindergarten, primary school)

Forrest/nature school (kindergarten, higher secondary school)

Lesní / přírodní škola (MŠ, SŠ)

Teaching home (primary and lower secondary school)

On alternative schools principles generally

the idea to support the natural desire to get to know the new things

partnership between teacher and student, supporting students' qualities and originality (mistake is understood as gate to a higher level of learning, not a delict)

cooperation with family, school as a community of students, teachers and parents

child's active participation, support for cooperation and development of communication

Responsibility (involvement) transition to children

Integration of subjects (globalism, thematical integrated learning, experience-based learning, practical learning)

child-centered environment (available aids)

Lessons are not limited by the bells ringing, but the students' concern and weariness

verbal assessment

individual educational goals

Waldorf Pedagogy

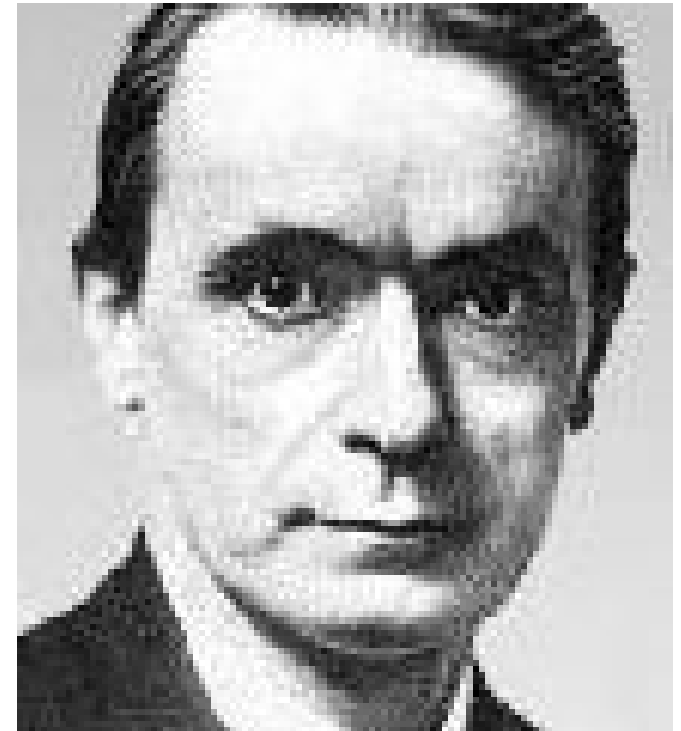
Founder: Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925)

Founded: 1919 (town Waldorf)

Based on the philosophical stream of **anthrophilosophy** (the study of the spiritual base of a man as an individual who is in the centre of attention and the world is reflected in)

School ensures the complex development of a child in practical and artistic fields, discovers child's abilities, however does not beset children with encyclopedical knowledge.

No textbooks, no grade repeating, verbal assessment





Waldorf Pedagogy

Teaching are divided into main and minor (professional) subjects.

Main subjects (mother language, math, geography, history, science, psysics, chemistry) are taught in the two-hours blocks dedicated to just one subject for 3 or 4 weeks.

The main subject is changing three times a year: so called **epochal learning**.

Professional subjects (forreign languages, religion, eurythmy) are taught in the classical way of one-hour lessons.

Significant part of the learning are image, rhytm and movement = **eurythmy** (specific subject, aesthetical and rhytmical learning).

Monthly festival celebrations are typical for Waldorf.



Waldorf Pedagogy

Twelve classes (the same collective)

1st – 8th class: lower grade (one teacher teaches all the subjects)

9th – 12th class: upper grade (professional teachers)

13th class: – possible final upper-secondary leaving examination

The aids are mostly teacher-made materials, students' work and epochal exercise books; textbooks and books just are supplemental

Verbal assessment

Specific architecture (natural environment, pastel colors).



Waldorf Pedagogy

Positives

Development of creativity, independence, sense for responsibility and self-reflection

Varied curriculum

Interesting learning methods

Negatives

Little link up to the standard educational system

Students' freedom can be criticized as excessive.

Puts not enough emphasis on the standard, formal university education of teachers.

Forces students a specific educational style, does not respond to scientific criticism

Montessori Pedagogy

Founder Maria Montessori (1870 – 1952)

Founded 1907 (Řím – Cassa di Bambina)

Children differ in learning abilities and talents, to the pace of child's learning should be individual („*Help me to do it myself.*“)

From concrete to abstract, focus on human being, individual development.

Fields of learning: practical life, sensual education, language education, math, psychomotor, musical and artistic abilities, cosmic education.



Montessori Pedagogy

Cosmic education is a study about everything around us

To be free means to be independent and responsible

Silence and calm support concentration on work

Work has to be accomplished.

Mistake is a natural part of learning.

Student is in the centre, teacher in the background.

Mixed classes (three grades)

Montessori Pedagogy

Support for natural movement, walking on the ellipse.

Specially developed system of aids to each learning fields.

Sensitive phases (ages of more sensitivity of child) are used to obtain some skills.

Learning is based on weekly cycles.

Compulsory team lessons, market of teachers (programmes are offered to a child who also choose his teacher)

Tribas classrooms, cca 20 pupils in each class.





Montessori Pedagogy

Freedom of choice and child's responsibility.

Prepared background – libraries, aids...

Teacher supervises, konsultes – is a guide in learning.

Student's self-assessment and self-evaluation is promoted.

Teacher assesses student's work twice a year and student's profile (more teachers) once a year.

Parents participate in the school managing and the lessons too.

School transition – a year acclimatization.



Dalton plan

Founder Helen Parkhurst (1886 – 1973)

Founded 1920 (town Dalton, USA)

Dalton is not a method or a system but an influence.

Main idea of the Dalton plan is the development of student's individuality by the way of self-education.

Three fundamental principles: 1) freedom (and responsibility), 2) independence, 3) cooperation

Freedom does not mean anarchy – student choose time and place that are ideal for him to learn.





Dalton plan

Child behaves independently and is responsible for his/her own learning outcomes.

Teacher plays the role of assistant, guide.

Student can cooperate with the others in problem solving.

Cooperative groups (the problem is solved together) and helping groups (the work is independent although there is a possibility to consult with a classmate) are used.

Longterm tasks are an important part of Dalton. Long-lasting, prescribed objectives in the form of contract between a teacher and a student – and the next objective can be solved only after the fulfilment of the first one.

Dalton plan

Teacher plays an important role, however has to resign to the dominant position. He also prepares plans, tests and exams, communicates with students and their parents.

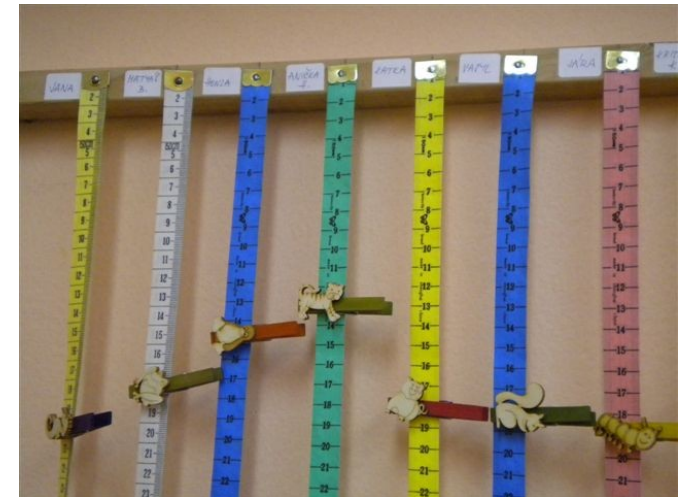
No lessons in a tradition sense (no bell ringing), class is divided into the different subject districts with the aids for each grades.

Curriculum is divided into 10 contracts to learn each month.

Student signs a monthly contract of learning outcomes with the teacher.

Student is allowed to begin the work on the next task only after succesful managing of the previous one.

The system of colors that symbolize days in a week, each subjects or dalton meters.



Dalton plan

Positives

Learning variability

Education to freedom

Education to responsibility

Education to cooperation

Negatives

Curriculum repeating is insufficient.

Knowledge obtaining is not systematic.

Lack of discussion about curriculum.

The relying on student's independence is too optimistic.

Health Promoting School



Health promoting school has been a part of the WHO's programme 'Health for All' since the half of the 1980's.



The project is based on friendly atmosphere, healthy learning, and open partnership.



Health promoting school develops independence, creativity, responsibility, cooperation, positive self-concept and self-evaluation, tends to increase stimulation of school environment, to improve methods of verbal assessment and to increase respect to ethnic and social minorities.



Methodology of the School Health Promotion Program



There are approximately 92 Health promoting schools in the Czech Republic (for example in Prague, Blansko, Jihlava, Karviná, Ostrava, Zlín).

Step by Step



The Step by Step programme has been running in the Czech Republic since the year of 1994 in nursery schools and since 1994 in „basic“ schools (primary + lower secondary).



Origins in USA



Individual approach to a child, inclusion of children with special educational needs, cooperation in teams, partnership of family, school and broader society.



Child's day work is managed according to the daily plans.



Pupils also works individually or in groups in the activity centres along with their preferences.

Integrated Thematical Learning

The model is created by an American S. Kovalik.

Integration means interconnecting the curriculum, knowledge and information.

The curriculum of all subjects is integrated into a specific framework. A year-long theme is composed of month-long and week-long thematic frameworks.

An acquired knowledge is applied in practice, so children realize the purpose of the curriculum.

There are three schools based on this programme in the Czech Republic. In most cases, in the standard schools are applied just some elements of the ITL

Project-based Learning

Origins can be found in the begin of the 20th century in the US pragmatic pedagogy and philosophy, mostly by J. Dewey and W. H. Kilpatrick

In the Czech Republic since the 1990' (J. Kašová).

The purpose is to solve the problem that is concrete, meaningful, real, based on life and child's experience.

The projects can be realized in many different forms and can last for different time (a day, week or year-long projects, a project realized in just one subject or a project integrating more subjects).

Open Learning

The movement of Open Learning is based on the ideas of pedagogical reformism.

Since the 1960' in the world, since the 1990 ' in the Czech Republic.

Aims for the humanization the learning, respect the individual needs, move from transmissive to constructivistic teaching style.

The openness is meant both inside (change of learning and teaching methods, forms and organization of school) and outside (school's relation to its enviroment, families...)

Associates principles and stimulli from different traditional and alternative learning conceptions.

Alternative schools in Brno

Waldorf

Plovdivská

Montessori

Gajdošova, Pastviny, Five Star v Brně Bohunicích

Dalton

Husova, Chalabalova, Křídlovická, Mutěnická, Staňkova ad.

Step by Step

Heyrovského, Stará, Vejrostova

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