

Czech Educational System

Study materials about Czech mainstream and alternative education

Mainstream schools in the Czech Republic

International Standard Classification of Education - ISCED 1997

- 0 – Pre-primary school (nursery schools)
- 1 – Primary school (1st – 5th grade)
- 2 – Lower secondary school (6th – 9th grade)
- 3 – Higher secondary school (10th – 13th grade)
- 4 – Postsecondary/Nontercial school (e.g. accredited language school after final upper-secondary final examination)
- 5 – First stage of tertiary education (state post-secondary technical school, bachelor's and master's degree)
- 6 – Second stage of tertiary education (doctoral study programme)

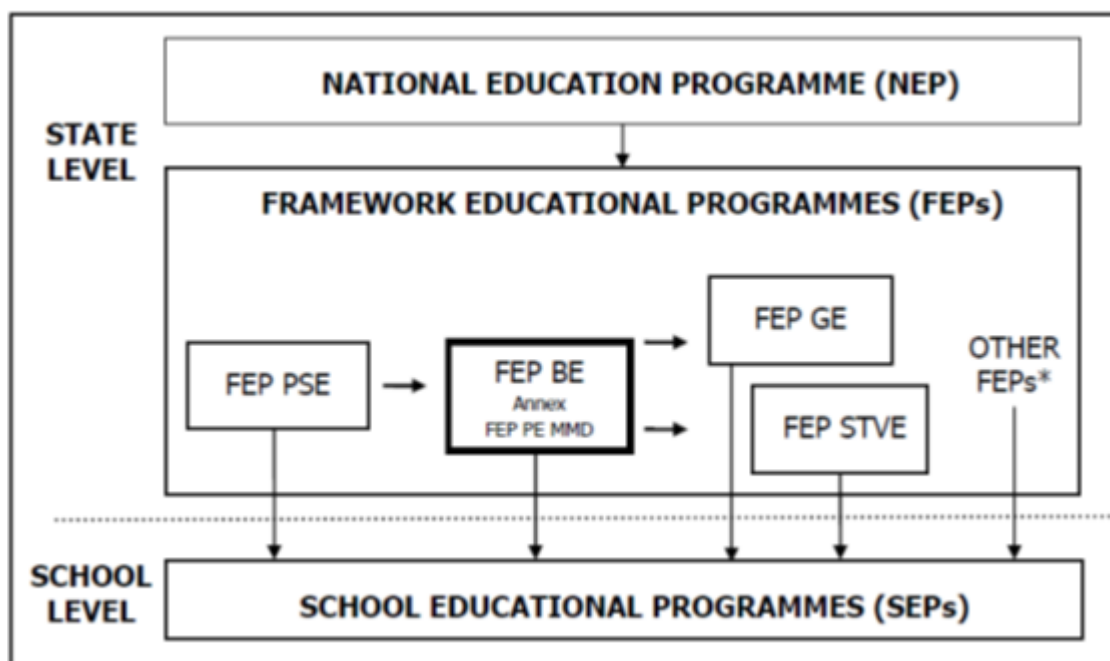
Basic informations

- Compulsory school attendance
- Classification system: marks, 1 -5 (best to worst)
- Compulsory preprimary education is guaranteed for children in their last year before entering elementary school
- Elementary education takes 9 years, usually from ages 6-15
- Elementary education is divided into two stages: primary (grade 1 – 5) and lower secondary (grade 6-9)

NOTES:

Framework Education Programme (Rámcový vzdělávací program - RVP)

- FEP defines the expected outcomes and main objectives of each level of education and study branch.
- FEP also characterizes the priorities, objectives, key competencies and content of the educational areas (for example Language and Language Communication).
- Schools have to create its' own School Educational Programme based on the FEP, however adapted to the regional and local context and needs.
- Two-tier: national and school (interconnected documents)
- The Czech educational reform has established the two-level curricula system:



NOTES:

Objectives of basic education

- To create preconditions for pupils to acquire basic learning strategies and motivate them to life-long learning.
- To stimulate and encourage pupils to creative thinking, logical reasoning and problem solving.
- To guide pupils to engage in efficient, effective, open communication on all aspects of their life.
- To develop pupils' abilities to cooperate and to value their own work and achievements as well as the work and achievements of others.
- To guide pupils so that they should become free and responsible individuals who exercise their rights and meet their obligations.
- To induce the urge to express positive feelings and emotions in children' behaviour, ways of acting and when experiencing important situations in their lives; develop in them sensitivity and responsiveness towards other people, the environment and nature.
- To teach pupils to actively develop and protect their physical, mental and social health and to be responsible for it.
- To guide pupils to tolerance and consideration for other people, to a respect for their culture and spiritual values; teach pupils to live together with others.
- To help pupils to discover and develop their own abilities and skills in the context of actual opportunities and to use their abilities and skills in combination with their acquired knowledge when making decisions regarding the aims of their own life and profession.

NOTES:

Educational fields

- **Language and Language Communication** (Czech Language and Literature, Foreign Language)
- **Mathematics and Its Applications** (Mathematics and Its Applications)
- **Information and Communication Technologies** (Information and Communication Technologies)
- **Humans and Their World** (Humans and their World)
- **Humans and Society** (History, Civic education)
- **Humans and Nature** (Physics, Chemistry, Natural Sciences, Geography)
- **Arts and Culture** (Music, Fine Art)
- **Humans and Health** (Health Education, Physical Education)
- **Humans and the World of Work** (Humans and The World of Work)

Key competencies

- learning competencies;
- problem-solving competencies;
- communication competencies;
- social and personal competencies;
- civil competencies;
- working competencies

NOTES:

Cross-Curricular Subjects

- **Cross-curricular subjects** in the FEP BE are subjects related to discussed present-day issues and represent an important and inseparable part of basic education.
- **Cross-curricular subjects:**
 - Personal and Social Education
 - Democratic Citizenship
 - Education towards Thinking in European and Global Contexts
 - Multicultural Education
 - Environmental Education
 - Media Education

NOTES:

Alternative schools in the Czech Republic

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 (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)

NOTES:

- Forrest/nature school (kindergarten, higher secondary school)
- 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 **anthroposophy** (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.

NOTES:

- no textbooks, no grade repeating, verbal assessment
- Subjects are categorized as the main or minor (professional).
- 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 rhythmical learning).
- Monthly festival celebrations are typical for Waldorf.
- 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 excercise books; textbooks and books just are supplemental.
- verbal assessment
- specific architecture (natural enviroment, pastel colors)

NOTES:

Positives

- development of creativity, independence, sense for responsibility and self-reflection
- varied curriculum
- interesting learning method

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

- Founded 1907 (Rome – Cassa di Bambina)
- Founder Maria Montessori (1870 – 1952)
- 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.
- 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)

NOTES:

- 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.
- Sompulsory team lections, market of teachers (programmes are offered to a child who aslo choose his teacher)
- Tribas classrooms, cca 20 pupils in each class.
- 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

NOTES:

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

Positives:

- Learning variability
- Education to freedom
- Education to responsibility
- Education to cooperation

Nedatives:

- Curriculum repeating is insufficient.
- Knowledge obtaining is not systematic.
- Lack of discussion about curriculum.
- The relying on student's independence seems to be too optimist

NOTES:

Health Promoting School

- Health promoting school has been a part of the WHO's programme Health for All since the half of the 1980'.
- 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 work individually or in groups in the activity centres along with their preferences.

Integrated Thematic 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.

NOTES:

- 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.

NOTES:

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

NOTES:

