

BOOK REVIEW

Hunyady, G., Csapó, B., Pusztai, G. & Szivák, J. (2017). Az oktatás korproblémái. [Current problems of education]. Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó

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When teaching and educating, teachers often encounter problems and challenges. However, not only do students and teachers face difficulties, but the educational system also needs to tackle problems, and several questions have to be answered. The conference volume, edited by György Hunyady, Beno Csapo, Gabriella Pusztai and Judit Szivak, explores these current questions and problems.

The volume offers concise resumes to the readers thus establishing the thematic framework of the book. Moreover, this structure is also convenient to describe the independent vocational days organised by the three universities (DE, ELTE, SZTE) in details. Based on these experiences, we describe the content of the chapters.

The researchers of the Pedagogical Institute of the University of Szeged analyse the questions of educational development in an intriguing study. The modernization of education is determined by the development of pedagogy, the economic factors, the development of researches, and the components of training. According to Beno Csapo, Csaba Csikos, Erzsébet Korom, Gyöngyver Molnar and Tibor Vidakovich, “money invested in the education is worth many times for both the individual and the society.” (p. 68.) Besides, learning also has a positive effect on the quality of the individual life and the human and cultural dimensions of social development. One of the study’s subchapters analyses the relationship between early childhood and equal opportunity. Its authors claim that it is crucial to support studying early childhood and examining development, to develop advanced reading- and mathematical skills before school age, and to examine the transition from kindergarten to school. It is proved that “one of the main opportunities of the correction of educational results is a more effective teaching and development of the children of disadvantaged families.” (p. 76.)

János Gordon Györi examines the factors of the differences between students and their equal opportunities not only in national but also in international relations. Then, he interprets international knowledge- and chance giving models. According to the author, the causes of inequality opportunities in education are the differences in socioeconomic status. Their effects can be different based on the origin and psychical background from what is expected. Concerning his theory, three strategies can help to set the inequality opportunities right: the special support of the concerned people- or groups, positive discrimination and strengthening.

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However, it is difficult to recognise the people who need the support of equal opportunities, and none of the models can provide a solution to all of the problems.

Magdolna Chrappan raises important questions about the study of scientific subjects. It is conspicuous from the national and international results that the popularity of scientific subjects has been falling. Unfortunately, the inspiring effect of the social context is little-known in the case of high school students who took part in an opinion poll. Its consequence can be that the student must learn through “lonely wrestling.” (p. 163.) Moreover, they cannot find an effective way of involvement in everyday learning. The deficiency of this kind of motivation is probably due to the lack of conventional, traditional scientific education. To find the solution, the delivery and acquisition of the scientific knowledge has to be reached in an interesting and entertaining way, which is an “enormous attractive strength, especially for the non-interested or else for the individuals and groups who fight with problems with their self-assessment.” (p. 164.)

Attila Pasztor analyses the opportunities of applying technology-based measuring, the fulfilment of student-level feedback and the development in pedagogical practice. According to the system approach, the existence of self-developed abilities of the system and the elaboration of information are primary factors in favour of reaching the positive effects. The necessary criterion for getting information is measuring. It could play an essential role in the feedback to students what “is extremely important regarding development at the level of the classroom and the student point of view. For this reason, it is necessary to provide adequate feedback to manage the process of teaching and learning as effective as possible and to support to develop the skills and personality of the students as productive as we can.” (p. 204.)

After recognizing the competences and the personality of the student, following a diagnosis, it is possible to plan the individual pedagogical interventions, which can lead to the change with the most effective results. After further measuring, we can keep an eye later on the change and the contingent success or failure of pedagogical inventions. The author of the study visualises the positive yield of adaptive testing, while the measurement provides an opportunity for the students to make the exercises according to their own abilities. The technology-based tests bring about a fundamental change compared to conventional measuring. The teachers can use this feedback immediately, and they can implement differentiated education. In consequence, the result of the feedback becomes available and known also for the students. The use of the results of the technological instrument determines steps forward also for research in form of the procured results, and they can be systematised, and they can serve as the basis of further analysis.

Judit Podraczky focuses on the questions of infancy and the questions of the correction of the social chances. The infancy and the conditions surrounding the child, have a lifelong effect. It is important to involve prevention in the process of infantile intervention. The institutional network endeavours to attend to all children, however, it concentrates principally on groups that require special support, namely children “born with developmental risks, injured, characterised with different- or overdue development, disabled, chronically ill, endangered in their psychical development; socially disadvantaged; and outstandingly talented.” (p. 218.)

The effective operation of the system is impeded by several factors. Besides the lack of experts and professionals, the author also mentions that attention should be paid to the development of administration, its realisation in the disadvantaged areas and the situation- and the environment of the parents of the children. The support of parents, the strengthening of parental competences, the increase of their self-efficacy, the support of the encouraging environment of the child and the protection provided by parents also play a crucial role. The expert



gives a well-structured and clear summary of the necessary factors which can promote the changes of social chances.

Katalin Felvinczi presents a comprehensive report in her study about school supported provisions and the tasks of the participants. The teachers need to cope with several problems in their work, for example problems and disorders related to behaviour and health. Their solution can be supported by supportive professionals, school psychologists, pedagogical assistants and the social workers of the schools. The education politics still owe several solutions, for instance, to unburden the teachers with the supportive professionals and to strengthen the cooperation between professionals.

The volume includes current lectures and research results. The authors are concerned with the problems, the appearance and effect of which can be observed widely in everyday education. Also, the mentioned projects spread from the kindergarten age to the student age. With the help of the book, we can gain insight not only in the national, but also in the international relations including several areas.

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