

SUMMARY

Thirteen papers from Session E (Historical culture and historical education in contemporary Czech society) have been chosen for this publication, divided by topic into four groups. The introduction also includes the full transcript of a plenary lecture given by a representative of this didactic session, Zdeněk Beneš, entitled *The current state of history education in the Czech Republic (taking stock, problems, hopes II)*. The text offers an overview and takes stock of the situation and conditions of Czech history education in the past six years, examining the overall status of history education and discussing issues related to its theory and methodology – i.e. the didactics of history as an independent scholarly discipline.

The section entitled *Possibilities of qualitative and quantitative research in the didactics of history* includes three studies. Two of them present results from an extensive empirical study carried out in 2011. Denisa Labischová examines empirical research in the didactics of history, demonstrating the need to develop not only quantitative approaches but also qualitative and mixed research, enabling a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the various aspects of historical awareness and other phenomena related to the theory and practice of history teaching. After a theoretical explanation of the focus group method and an outline of its potential applications in researching historical awareness, the author offers a concrete example. Blažena Gracová's paper presents an interpretation of several items from a questionnaire-based survey combined with findings from focus groups and in-depth interviews. The study focuses on determining how much space within history teaching is devoted to several historical topics that are still neglected, and how the oral history method is applied. Basing its findings on selected historical events, the study attempts to determine to what degree multi-perspective interpretations are used in history teaching. The author also traces the potential influence of several types of information resources (especially history magazines and portals) on the quality of history teaching and the active involvement of pupils.

The study by Vlasta Kubičová brings interesting insights into secondary school history teaching based on empirical research carried out among recent school-leavers launching their university studies in other disciplines than history teaching. **Using** anonymous questionnaires with open questions, the author determined what the students appreciate about history teaching and what they consider to be lacking.

The next section, entitled *Neglected topics are worthy of attention in school history teaching*, focuses on ways of making history teaching more attractive to pupils and students. The four papers point out the didactic value and attractiveness of certain topics which have seldom formed a part of school history teaching up to now. The authors offer a range of specific instructions for teachers, providing valuable inspiration. Karel Rýdl gives an example of one topic which is neglected yet is very attractive for students – the topic of childhood and children in the past; key sources and motivational pointers are also given. Marek Waic's study focuses on the role of Czech sportsmen and women in the struggle for national emancipation, primarily within the international Olympic movement. The second part of the text examines the role of physical education associations in the political life of inter-war Czechoslovakia. Milan Svoboda examines the possibilities of using collective research projects focusing on regional and supra-regional history. Michal Schuster highlights the need to incorporate the history of the Roma ethnic minority into the education process at Czech schools. The author discusses examples of the use of selected books, textbooks and other aids related to this topic, and examines tried and tested methodological approaches.

Experiences from outside the Czech Republic are presented in two texts. Violetta Julkowska's article *The new school leaving examination in Poland – experiences and reflections* provides a valuable theoretical insight into the category of historical thought, which was an essential starting-point at the outset of the design process for the new examination. Specific examples are given by the faculty lyceum teacher Bogdan Araszkiwicz. Slovak didacticians of history place more emphasis than their Czech counterparts on the possibilities of historical education for younger pupils. This is demonstrated in Viliam Kratochvíl's paper on the delineation of individual dimensions of historical awareness, which offers a theoretical framework and suggests specific tasks for pupils.

The next section focuses on practical issues of training future history teachers and the new possibilities for history education at primary and secondary schools, bringing an integration of theory and practice. Of the many papers presented, we have chosen four for publication. A bridge between this section and the previous section is provided by a paper on the piloting of the proposed alternative curriculum for teaching at 'gymnázium'-type secondary schools, which breaks with the traditional Czech cyclical curriculum model. Martin Vonášek points out the problems encountered when choosing teaching materials and emphasizes the necessity of a different methodological approach when applying the new model. He characterizes the teaching materials used in the alternative curriculum; prepared by teachers themselves using electronic media, these replace traditional textbooks. He also gives information on knowledge-testing of pupils at seven Czech 'gymnázium'-type secondary schools when the project was launched in 2011. Two of

the tests' authors, Blažena Gracová and Denisa Labischová, explain the purpose of the testing and the rationale behind the choice of certain task types. Josef Märc, drawing primarily on his personal experience as a secondary school and university teacher, maps the current situation in history teaching and outlines possible avenues for optimizing the training system for future history teachers at universities. The main aim of Anna Šerberová's paper is to acquaint readers with new teaching programmes for training future history teachers, applying various methods and approaches in conjunction with the 'One World In Schools' organization. The last paper in this section is an essay by Pavel Martinovský, the Chairman of the Association of History Teachers, entitled *Teaching history at the beginning of the 21st century*. The author describes the difficult situation currently faced by history teachers, whose attempts to improve the quality of their teaching encounter obstacles in the real-life school environment.

Translated by Christopher Hopkinson