

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MATHEMATICS TEACHERS – ANALYSIS

THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The questionnaire was answered by 14 in-service teachers, two primary school teachers (teaching 6-11 year old pupils) and twelve lower secondary school teachers of mathematics (teaching 11-15 year old pupils). They came from different part of the Czech Republic, from villages, towns and cities. Among the respondents there were teachers with very short teaching practice as well as very experienced practitioners (3 with 1-5 years of teaching practice; 3 with 6-10 years: 2 with 11-12 years: 2 with 20-25 years and 2 with 26-30 years of teaching practice).

The percentage of immigrant and minority pupils in classes was influenced by the size of the population in the town or village. While village and small town teachers claim to have no immigrants in their classes, in towns with population higher than 5000 the average percentage of immigrant and minority pupils was 1.5% and in towns and cities with population higher than 10 000, this proportion was 6.7% on average. Thus multicultural classes seem to be the phenomenon of larger towns and cities.

As the Czech Republic is not a significantly multicultural country yet in comparison to some other European countries(though the proportion of foreigners has been constantly growing since the political changes in 1989, the number of foreigners in the Czech Republic about 70 000 in 1993 and 436 000 in 2011, i.e. about 4.3% of population of the Czech Republic (https://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci.nsf/kapitola/ciz_pocet_cizincu), it does not have a long tradition and much experience of integration of pupils with different cultural and national backgrounds into schools. Teachers who graduated before 1989 had no opportunity to attend any courses of multicultural issues in education or intercultural psychology during their undergraduate studies. However, the questionnaire showed that “fresh” university graduates (teachers with teaching practice shorter than 1 year) also had no undergraduate training in multicultural issues, which is very unsatisfactory. Out of the 14 respondents only one states to have attended a course focusing on teaching in multicultural classrooms. Considering that 12 out of the 14 respondents have some experience with presence of a child of different culture in their class, it is more than necessary to introduce courses in multicultural and cross cultural issue into pre-service but also in-service training.

The analysis of the questionnaire suggests that teachers with shorter teaching practice, i.e. probably younger teachers, seem to have more experience with teaching in multicultural classes, have been forced to deal with the situation, to think of materials they could use and also of benefits of the situation. Only two respondents speak of support of their school management – 1 respondent refers to a very complicated problem of a pupil who she could not manage, the headmaster decided to move the pupil to another class (the respondent does not mention how the situation changed after the pupil had been moved) and 1 respondent speaks of being offered by school management the chance to attend voluntary training for work with minority pupils. The benefit of having a child with different cultural background in the class is that all pupils get to know other cultures and learn about differences between people (3 teachers). With respect to teaching strategies that had to be adapted to the new situation in the class there was more use of individual work (1 teacher), more control of the

class (one teacher) and very clear instructions (1 teacher). Among the materials they would find really useful and supportive they most often mentioned a dictionary of mathematics terminology in the pupil's language, one teacher also mentioned the benefits of having pictures and one believed support o an assistant in the class would be very helpful.