

TITLE:

Psychological and Epistemological Aspects of Curriculum Design

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ABSTRACT:

The alarming trends in Czech pupils' achievement in reading, mathematics and science raised the question of quality of the Czech primary and lower secondary school curricula. A conceptual framework for analysis of the intended curriculum as a multi-level document has been devised. A review of available methods for curricular analysis is presented. The mixed method research design has been used to study the actual Czech curricular framework. Preliminary exploration of quantitative data on Czech pupils' success rates in individual items of TIMSS and PISA studies identified the "suspect" curriculum areas for the subsequent qualitative analysis. These areas (e.g. fractions in mathematics, reading literacy in language arts) were compared in past and present Czech curricula/syllabi. The international benchmarking method was used to compare Czech, English, Finnish, and U. S. curricula. The results revealed the idiosyncrasies that remain relatively stable feature of the Czech curricula. The neo-institutionalism may provide the theoretical explanation of the results of the analysis.

KEYWORDS:

curriculum, syllabus, mixed methodology, curricular analysis, Czech Republic