

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the topic of development of legal literacy of secondary school students, specifically students of so-called “gymnasiums” (academically oriented secondary schools in the Czech Republic) in particular. The thesis is based on the presumption that the students perceive law as a system which is incomprehensible, reminiscent of a foreign city that is simple to get lost in. In this context, the thesis addresses the issue of a skill of orientation in law as an element of the spectrum of knowledge, skills and attitudes forming the legal literacy of every student. It aims to find a method suitable for teaching law at gymnasiums that would be able to develop this skill of orientation in law for the purpose of overcoming the difficulties in understanding, caused for the most part by the ever changing legal landscape and specificity of the language of law. Moreover, this thesis regards the skill of orientation in law as the means to facilitate the acquisition of further knowledge of law, an element of the legal literacy.

The solution of the lack of the skill of orientation in law among secondary school students, may be found, in the opinion of the author of this thesis, in the field of principles of law. These principles may be used as an instrument creating the system of law that may be regarded not only traditionally, as displaying in form of the different branches of law, but also through the lenses of the content of law. The focus of attention of this thesis, therefore, is on the principles of law as means through which the contents of a particular law are easily recognized and vice versa from which sets of laws may be derived. This thesis argues that principles of law function well as tools to describe and explain the characteristics of any law, branch of law or the system of law as a whole. Furthermore, using the principles of law, contents of law may be expressed in a clearer, simpler and more comprehensible manner. The goal is to create a method which makes the system of law intelligible for non-lawyers, while refraining from overly compromising the content of law.

Such system represents the core of a teaching concept based on principles of law described in this thesis. This teaching concept, takes form of the so-called “Map of principles of law“, created by the author of this thesis, which should help the students find a way through the foreign city that represents the law. In other words, the purpose of the Map is to help students to acquire the skill of orientation in law, critical for proper use of law. In order to achieve this goal, the Map shall become an integral part of the process of teaching law at gymnasiums.