

Barbara Surma

Jesuit University in Cracow, The Faculty of Pedagogy

Introduction

“Elementary education and the current educational changes it faces” is the subject of this quarterly issue of “Elementary Education in Theory & Practice”. This matter appears to be equally pertinent from the point of view of a child starting their education, a parent, a teacher, and society as a whole as well. The proposals which have been made to introduce some changes in 2017 by the Ministry of National Education have not only provoked an evaluation of new educational documents, but also a holistic view on educational reform, which has been realized in educational institutions during the recent decades.

The Authors of the articles deal with different aspects of children’s preschool and elementary education, indicating the differences between the results of research conducted upon the childhood, postulates of theoreticians and practitioners, and proposals covered by the documents and their implementation. On one hand, teachers are expected to show a new approach to a child and his/her education based on humanistic pedagogical concepts; on the other hand, the instructions in core curriculum make it impossible for a teacher to realize own creative initiatives, which is displayed in the assumptions formalized curriculum. Another crucial factor of the change is the teachers’ sense of participation, the understanding of the sense of educational change adopted, what their role is, how to interpret it in order to bring positive effects. It is worth stating that each new reform forced the teachers to adapt to new requirements. In this aspect, questions of the following sort arise – How were they realized? What effects did they bring, particularly, in the case of the education of the youngest children?

What is more, elementary education faces questions about the contemporary fundamentals of an integrated upbringing understood as supporting the child’s development, and also aspects of moral upbringing as one of the elements of identity formation.

The articles presented in this quarterly have the character of presenting scientific reflection for a discussion with regard the changes in education and their realization. The Authors present the results of their own research portraying the educational reality in the contexts of tasks which are to be performed by teachers working with children in the area of language education; preparing them for reading and writing competences, and foreign language usage, regarding also children with special educational needs.

Translation: Maria Szymańska