Editorial: Various (in)stances of educational research

Pedagogická orientace/Journal of the Czech Pedagogical Society is proud to present its second English issue. Throughout the year 2014, five Czech issues were published, introducing both original research from the Czech Republic, and theoretical studies and review papers. This issue is no exception. It comprises one theoretical paper (Hábl), one review paper (Tůma), three empirical papers (Hanušová et al.; Dvořák, Starý and Urbánek; Brady and Bates), and one discussion paper (Menck). Let us now look at the stance they adopt and the area they focus on.

The first article adopts a rather exploratory and descriptive approach. Hanušová and her colleagues focus on expert teachers and set out to better understand what it is that helped them on their journey towards expertise. The paper presents its findings with no intention to challenge the current teacher education, conditions at schools, or the government policy regarding teachers' careers, even though they have the potential to inform all of these areas.

It is this "neutral" stance that distinguishes the first study from the rest of the papers, all of which (in different manifestations) criticize, contest, or more or less explicitly challenge the state of the art in various fields of human existence. Tůma, for example, turns his attention towards his fellow researchers and analyses their efforts to investigate classroom interaction. However, he does not aim to synthesize or integrate the results. After a careful study, he puts not only their findings, but also the theoretical background of their research and their methods under scrutiny. His paper dissects what the studies can tell us about classroom interaction, and discusses the usefulness and comprehensiveness of the findings from the point of view of a different paradigm, namely dialogism. A similar stance is taken by Menck, who confronts the authors of the TIMSS studies. Again, both the methods used and the theoretical assumptions behind the TIMSS research design and interpretation of findings are contested and reframed, using a proposed theory of classroom.

Unlike Tůma's and Menck's papers that target and contest the research itself, the next three papers deal with phenomena in the area of education. Both Brady and Bates, and Dvořák and colleagues use their empirical findings to comment on current issues in education and educational policy. Brady and

Bates study the impact of marketization on the realisation of undergraduate (business) studies in England. They make use of Bernstein's concept of recontextualisation and draw attention to the unintended consequences of the current (neoliberal) discourse. Dvořák, Starý and Urbánek use the data from school case studies to describe the effects of the combination of high autonomy and low accountability of schools that is the current practice in the Czech Republic. They discuss their results also in the light of the pros and cons of high stake testing, which is not implemented in our context, but seems to be often discussed, planned, abandoned, and revisited. Last but not least, Hábl tackles the issue of moral education. In his paper he does not criticize; from a philosophical point of view he analyses the nature of human beings as moral beings, the nature of moral reality, and the specific nature of the postmodern situation. He then goes on to synthesize these analyses into an argument for traditional moral realism and for the need of moral education.

It can be argued that academic journals are not a platform only for original empirical research, but also for papers analysing, synthesizing, dissecting, criticizing, reframing, and rejecting previous studies and their findings. Without these, there would be a danger that research as such would remain fragmentised and that researchers would not be challenged to defend (or abandon) their set ways. However, it remains to be seen whether all these (in)stances of educational research can stand the test of time and scrutiny of the fellow researchers.

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