

## RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT "HUMANIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL CONTENT AND PROCESS IN LIFELONG CONTEXT"

*Štefan Švec*

Arts Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava

The research project No.1/991108/A on "Humanization of educational content and process in lifelong context" was conducted by The Department of Pedagogical Science of the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University in Bratislava in 1991-1993. This was the first research project on humanization of education in Slovakia. It drew on the Slovak pedagogical tradition of humanism as well as on contemporary world innovative movements that contained humanizing components and aspects. It was based on the conceptual framework of the so-called systems conception of knowledge structure which was applied within formal and nonformal education systems. This systems conception is expressed especially in a conceptual model consisting of: a target programme of the education system, its inputs and outputs, transformation process and contexts (with information of feedbacks, parameters, variables and other characteristics; cf. Švec 1988-1993).

### The main results of the research project

1. An original theoretical conception and methodological paradigm of humanistic pedagogy and andragogy was worked out in a comparative context with behaviouristic, psychodynamic, cognitivist and other theoretical orientations.

1.1 **In the curriculum research area**, new approaches to humanization of general education have been outlined, especially in a form of specification for seven hierarchized levels of its curricular innovations or reforms (Švec). The following areas of general education curriculum with humanistic focus were covered: *general education* (Kratochvílová, Matulčíková, Pšenák, Švec and others), *personality development* (Bartalošová, Kosová, Matulčíková, Švec and others), *prosocial and moral education* (Žilínek, Bartalošová, Kosová, Potočárová, Matulčíková, Kusin, Kratochvílová, Fischerová, Švec and others), *esthetic education* (Fischerová), *environmental education* (Kusin), *career development and vocational education* (Baďuriková, Konôpka and others), and *teacher training* (Bazáliková, Kratochvílová, Matulčíková, Švec, and others). The main *institutional context* of educational contents and processes was

specified in studies of *social functions and goals of school* (Timková, Bartalošová, Kompolt, Švec and others), of *family education* (Potočárová) and of *outdoor education for leisure activities* (Kratochvílová). Axiological prescriptions and postulates in applying *humanistic ideals in education*, namely in moral education, are given in the studies by Žilínek, Kratochvílová, Potočárová and others.

1.2 **In methodology and process areas** of education a detailed model of a category system for observation of humanistic instruction was developed (Švec). This original contribution of the Slovak pedagogical science ranks among the most elaborated and large category systems which are known in the literature. The model was tested empirically in small-scale research projects in master's dissertations (Branická, Hupková, Klčová, Kozoň, Olejárová, Peštuková). It was applied creatively in doctor's dissertation by Beata Kosová (College of Education at University of M. Bel in Banská Bystrica) in which nontraditional (the so-called, alternative) and conventional instruction in primary schools was compared. It has also been applied in an in-service programme dissertation by Mária Štefanková which compared church and state secondary schools for health personnel, and also in the postgraduate dissertation by Erika Gajdošová (from elementary school in Banská Bystrica).

Since behaviouristic psychological and philosophical concepts of personality dominated so far, an attempt was made to outline a pedagogical definition of this concept (Švec), especially from a view of humanistic pedagogy and its orientation in teacher profession and training. Studies of Bartalošová, Timková, Kompolt, Švec and other fellow researchers have presented an analysis of personalization, socialization, enculturation, professionalization and other functions of schooling, which have been so far neglected. Special analysis of social differentiation and selection and also legitimization processes in the contemporary school was made (Kompolt, Timková).

2. Intra-, inter- and transdisciplinary conceptual and methodological aspects of the project were aimed at:

2.1 An attempt at systematizing of **philosophical and pedagogical reflections on neohumanistic anthropocentrism** in education (Švec, Žilínek, Matulčíková, Kusin). Proposals were made for respecting "geocentrism" in education, especially with uniting and dominant position of environmental education (Kusin) and global education in efforts of international nongovernment organizations.

2.2 **In historical and comparative perspectives** of the project an emphasis was put on analysis and re-assessment of John Amos Comenius's humanistic legacy - to commemorate the 400th anniversary of his birth (Pšenák, Švec, Kompolt, Žilínek and others); emphasis was also put on critical and creative application of the influential anthroposophic conception of "the Waldorf School" of Rudolph Steiner (Matulčíková) and the theoretical system of preschool education of M. Montessori (Baďuriková). Kompolt presented an interesting comparative analysis of contemporary trends in assessment of pupils' achievement in Germany. Historical development of esthetic education and its humanizing components were analyzed in works of Anna Fischerová.

2.3 **In the empirical part of the project** we have gathered facts about humanistic teaching in kindergarten, basic and higher schools (Švec with his fellow workers), particularly in lower grades of the so-called alternative schools in Central Slovakia (Kosová in her doctoral dissertation) and at secondary church schools (Štefanková in

her postgraduate thesis). A representative empirical survey of applying the principle of the unity of cognitive and noncognitive development in education of apprentices at (junior) vocational training schools (Bartalošová) have been conducted. Also, empirical findings of relationship between the quality and effectiveness of secondary agricultural schools and their inner and outer system contexts (Konôpka) were gathered. These studies contributed to building a sound factual basis of pedagogy. In particular, data on relationships and other findings were obtained and generalizations and practical recommendations were made.

2.4 The following works were submitted for **design evaluation and use**: textbooks and other teaching materials (Bazáliková, Kompolt, Žilínek, Konôpka et al., Kratochvílová, and others), curricula and graduation requirements in the field of education (Pšenák et al., Švec, Kratochvílová et al.), the innovated curricula for pedagogy (almost all project fellow workers), programme for esthetics education in schools (Fischerová) and other practice-oriented outputs (Fischerová and others).

2.5 **Studies on assessment** and other works were written (Baďuríková, Švec, Fischerová and others).

2.6 **Application of the project outputs in instruction** has been included in several studies (Bazáliková, Konôpka, Kratochvílová, Baďuríková, Fischerová, Bartalošová).

### **Evaluation of fulfillment of the research project goals**

Categorization of the research results presented here is framed by the project goals defined in the same order.

In course of the first year of the project work, two researchers left the team. They were engaged in writing university textbooks. Two fellow workers left the Department and also the research project. These circumstances did not make possible to fulfill fully our expectations and decisions as concerns the goals of philosophical and international comparative studies as well as of some other aspects of the project. During the period of the project, however, the team was extended by Maria Potočárová, a postgraduate student, by several talented pregraduate students of education and by three external fellow workers - Anna Fischerová (Ass. Prof. of the Department of Esthetics and Culturology of Comenius University Faculty of Arts) and Vasko Kusin (Prof. of Philosophy at the same faculty) and Beata Kosová (Department of Elementary School Education of Teachers College of M. Bel University in Banská Bystrica).

The success of the research project may be checked by comparison of its goals with obtained results, while given circumstances and conditions of the research will be taken into consideration. Before the grant was received for the project, hardware and other material and technical prerequisites were lacking. It is possible to claim that project results (either published and not published) have met the main expectations. In each year of reviewing by independent reviewers this project was rated among the top category of projects. Its final review by the Commission for Sciences of Man at the Grant Agency of the Slovak Academy of Sciences was also very positive. However, it is not possible now to evaluate well its effectiveness (including the citation index) without over-hasty generalizations.

This collection of studies PAEDAGOGICA 14 (1997) presents only some results of the research project. Other contributions have been or will be published. To make a more complete view of the research project findings, a **selected bibliography of some of the project works was annexed.**

The team will appreciate exchanging this collection of studies or individual papers for books in the field of teacher training and other education domains. Please send requests for book exchange and for offprints to the editor-in-chief:

**Štefan Švec**

Katedra pedagogiky	Department of Pedagogical Science
Filozofickej fakulty	College of Arts
Univerzity Komenského	Comenius University
Gondova 2	
818 01 Bratislava	
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	

Phone: ++4217 366015 / 4349173, Fax: ++4217 366016  
E-mail: stefan.svec@fphil.uniba.sk

**Resumé**

VÝSLEDKY VÝSKUMNÉHO PROJEKTU "HUMANIZÁCIA  
VÝCHOVNO-VZDELÁVACIEHO OBSAHU A PROCESU V CELOŽIVOTNOM KONTEXTE"  
*Štefan Švec*

Vypracovala sa originálna teoretická koncepcia a špecifikovala sa akceptovateľná metodologická paradigma humanistickej pedagogiky ako antropogiky v porovnávacom kontexte so súperiáciami teoretickými orientáciami. Načrtli sa nové prístupy k humanizácii obsahu všeobecného vzdelávania v podobe špecifikovaných návrhov sedem gradačných rovin na jeho inovačné a reformné zmeny. Vypracoval sa a empiricky validizoval operatívny model kategoriálneho systému observačnej mikroanalýzy a evalvácie humanistickej výchovy, ktorý ako inovácia bol uplatnený v inom výskume netradičných prístupov tzv. alternatívnych základných škôl. Rozvinulo sa päťzložkové systémové poňatie problematiky so šiestimi metodologickými aspektami.