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# Sociální pedagogika

S o c i a l E d u c a t i o n

časopis pro vědu a praxi

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## CONTENTS

Editorial ( <i>Editorial board</i> ).....	5
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### Articles

Denisa Denglerová <a href="#">Testing of Intellectual Abilities in Various Sociocultural Environments</a> .....	7
Anna Petr Šafránková, Karla Hrbáčková <a href="#">Teacher Self-Efficacy within the Context of Socially Disadvantaged Pupils' Education</a> .....	19
Jitka Vaculíková <a href="#">Proactive Coping Behavior in Sample of University Students in Helping Professions</a> .....	38
Soňa Vávrová, Jitka Vaculíková, Jan Kalenda <a href="#">Selected Aspects of Social and Legal Protection of Children: Expert Approach versus Public Opinion</a> .....	56

### Guest of the Journal:

**Carl A. Grant**

<a href="#">Profile in Multicultural Education</a> .....	75
<a href="#">Interview (March 2016)</a> .....	77

### Reviews

Grant, C. A. (2015). <a href="#">Multiculturalism in education and teaching. The selected works of Carl A. Grant</a> . New York: Routledge. ( <i>Jakub Hladík</i> ).....	81
Suchánková, E. (2014). <a href="#">Hra a její využití v předškolním věku [Play and its use in pre-school age]</a> . Praha: Portál. ( <i>Eva Šmelová</i> ).....	83

## Editorial

Dear Readers,

We would like to introduce the inaugural English issue of the Social Education Journal. Following the foregoing single-concept issue which has until now contained a topic subject (the relation between social education and social work), this issue is again open. In spite of that, in the articles introduced in this issue there seems to be a common denominator, one which is represented by a dialogue between environments, between the theoretical and empirical and between professional discourse and the public opinion.

The editorial board has been subjected to some personal changes during the last few months. First of all, we would like to thank the editor-in-chief Jiří Němec and the editor of the manuscript Radim Šíp for their three-year cooperation with our editorial board. We have appreciated the mutual cooperation and are happy that we can continue with the editorial board with Soňa Vávrová as its new member. Jakub Hladík became the new editor-in-chief of the Social Education Journal. The editorial board has been also reinforced by two new study editors, namely Karla Hrbáčková and Dušan Klapko. Jan Kalenda became the new reviews of books and information editor.

Consequently we will outline the editorial board's activities for the next time period. Next year in 2017, we will start with new scopes of studies along with the following changed instructions intended for authors:

- the recommended scope of study abstracts amounts to 900–1.500 characters including spaces;
- the recommended maximum scope of a study (full-text) amounts to 45.000 characters including spaces (it goes for all parts of the study);
- the maximum number of key words stays without changes and amounts to at most ten.

In terms of double-sided anonymous review procedure, the Social Education Journal will respect the recommendation of the American Psychological Association, which has issued its Publication Manual of the APA (6th edition, 2010) for these purposes. We are further respecting these conventions in terms of requirements on the bibliography citations, and expanding it to address other fields (text structures, text contents and presentation of results). We would therefore like to ask authors/reviewers to read this manual before publishing or reviewing in the Social Education Journal. We intend to bring the journal to a higher qualitative level in line with international standards.

It can be stated that activities of the professional journal's editorial board is not easy and there is a direct pioneering work if we take into account the other tasks, including directing the journal and the formulation of goals, means and visions. For this reason, we appreciate every published issue.

Now we are going to introduce the contents this issue's topic. An introduction to theoretical study entitled **Testing of Intellectual Abilities in Various Sociocultural Environments** opens a remarkable discussion about an highly relevant subject concerning fair testing of children in diverse sociocultural environments. Its author Denisa Denglerová focuses on not only a history of the development of testing intellectual abilities and their possible misuse, which she has demonstrated by means of four examples, which examine relations between intelligence and the instruments to measure it in diverse sociocultural environments. She, however, accents especially different options of assessment in such a way that they shall be widely used without reference to an environment from which an individual comes.

Following is an empirical study entitled **Teacher Self-Efficacy within the Context of Socially Disadvantaged Pupils' Education** by authors Anna Petr Šafránková and Karla Hrbáčková. Here, we meet phenomenon of a dissimilitude based on socialization in diverse sociocultural environments. The study, based on sociocultural theories of A. Bandura, obtains its main findings from research

procedures focused on the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their own efficiency against the perceptions of aspects concerning the education of socially handicapped pupils. Currently in the Czech education environment there is an important discussion about inclusion. That is why we are pleased that we are able by means of the given study to give space (at least marginally) to this topic.

The third study, titled **Proactive Coping Behavior in Sample of University Students in Helping Professions** by author Jitka Vaculíková, represents an empirical study as well. The author presents an item and scale analysis of the Czech version of the Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI) on a selected sample of university students in helping professions as well as the PCI subscales correlations with a subjective well-being, social support and depression. Furthermore, the author has been focused on using proactive coping according to gender, age, specialization and year of study.

The fourth study, **Selected Aspects of Social and Legal Protection of Children: Expert Approach versus Public Opinion**, represents two basic levels of the phenomenon under research: searching and finding a cross-point between the expert discourse (so called epistemology communities) and of the public opinion. Authors Soňa Vávrová, Jitka Vaculíková and Jan Kalenda indicate the co-existence and the possible antilogy of these two approaches through selected aspects of the social and legal protection of children. The study presents an interesting dialogue examining these two approaches.

This issue also contains another in a series of interesting **interview**. Professor Carl A. Grant from the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is among the most important experts in the field of multicultural education in the United States. During his long academic career he has written many books and professional studies which represent a valuable source of information and inspiration for readers around the world. We very much appreciate the fact that Carl A. Grant found the time to respond to the questions we sent him. You will find in the discussion Grant's point of view on average multicultural life in the United States, both in the past and today. Grant also considers what is relevant for successful multicultural education and offers his outlook on the struggle for equality and equity in education for all people. We have concluded the interview with a short **profile in multicultural education** (representing medallion) and a **book review** of Carl A. Grant's book *Multiculturalism in education and teaching. The selected works of Carl A. Grant*, concluded by Jakub Hladík. We intend in November 2017 to publish an issue of Social Education Journal focused on the diversity in education. The section "The Guest of the Journal" in this issue might represent a very interesting inspiration for authors.

The presented issue is concluded by Eva Šmelová with a **book review** of the publication *Play and its use in the pre-school age* (2014) from author Eliška Suchánková. Lastly, we would like traditionally to thank all the members of the editorial board, the authors and especially the reviewers for their cooperation to produce the first all-English issue of this journal. Furthermore, our thanks belong to all members of the editorial board and to others who participated and continue to participate in creating and building the journal.

*Editorial board*

# Testing of Intellectual Abilities in Various Sociocultural Environments

*Denisa Denglerová*

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**Abstract:** This study concerns possibilities for fair testing of intellectual abilities in the context of different sociocultural environments. It traces the history of testing and misuse of test results to discriminate against various groups. Using examples of specific items from currently used WISC tests, the study shows how the environment influences test results. It then describes four models of the relationship between intelligence and tools to measure it in various sociocultural environments. In the last part of the study we propose a possible development of psychological testing that might make it truly fair and thus widely usable. We mention different paths to culturally appropriate tests with an emphasis on principles of dynamic testing.

**Keywords:** test of intelligence, cognitive abilities, fluid intelligence, culture relevant test, dynamic testing, socially disadvantaged environment

## Testování intelektových schopností v různých sociokulturních prostředích

**Abstrakt:** Studie se zabývá možnostmi spravedlivého testování intelektových schopností v kontextu různých sociokulturních prostředí. Zabývá se dějinami testování a zneužitím testových výsledků k diskriminaci různých skupin. Na příkladech konkrétních položek z aktuálně používaných testů WISC ukazuje, jak prostředí ovlivňuje testový výsledek. Dále představuje čtyři modely vztahu mezi inteligencí a jejími měřicími nástroji v odlišných sociokulturních prostředích. V poslední části studie představujeme návrhy, jak by se mohlo psychologické testování vyvíjet, aby bylo opravdu spravedlivé a tudíž široce využitelné. Zmiňujeme různé cesty ke kulturně adekvátním testům s důrazem na principy dynamické diagnostiky.

**Klíčová slova:** test inteligence, kognitivní schopnosti, fluidní inteligence, kulturně relevantní test, dynamické testování, sociálně znevýhodněné prostředí

## 1 Introduction

The composition of our society is shifting from a relatively homogenous makeup to a more heterogeneous representation of members from various cultures. In psychology, taking into account the different needs of culturally diverse groups and the possibilities for meaningful mutual communication is the subject of intercultural psychology. Social pedagogy can benefit from the findings of intercultural psychology and transform its theoretical bases into meaningful interventions

in various sociocultural environments (whether these be immigrants, Romani or other socially disadvantaged groups). In the Czech environment, however, intercultural psychology emphasizes above all the subjects of differences among cultures in the areas of values, moral reasoning, attitudes to education, family education, gender stereotypes, communication styles, etc. (Průcha, 2010). Nevertheless, in countries with a greater number of immigrants and a long history of cultures mixing, intercultural, cognitive and developmental psychology in the last two decades has systematically examined how an individual's social and cultural background affects his or her way of thinking and understanding of the world (see, for example, Matsumoto & Juang, 2008; Kitayama & Cohen et al., 2010). Many studies show that cognitive abilities which traditional psychology had regarded as rather innate and little modifiable by the environment, are on the contrary strongly influenced by the environment, and their development is basically impossible to understand without taking into account the influence of the external environment (Denglerová, 2015).

This thesis about the cultural conditioning of cognition logically raises the question of how it is possible to fairly measure, evaluate and test cognitive abilities. This question, moreover, is not merely an academic exercise, because minority groups are tested by mainstream diagnostic tools in the Czech practice, and on the basis of thus poorly executed test examinations, or the interpretation thereof, the fate of specific individuals is decided (mostly in preschool diagnostics and diagnostics of school readiness and classifying children into a specific type of educational establishment, and furthermore in e.g. selection procedures for work positions). In our country, this issue concerns mostly Romani children and adults from socially disadvantaged and/or culturally different environments. In cases when Romani children with adequate intellectual abilities are, at the beginning of their educational path, already included in practical schools, primarily intended for the education of mentally handicapped children, their education possibilities and later professional lives are restricted. Such segregation of children is not only unethical and against the Schools Act, it also amplifies the poor social situation in which a large part of the Romani community lives, transferring it on to the next generation (Human Rights League, 2005). Romani children's unequal chances to receive a quality education are, indeed, not caused merely by improper testing of their intellectual potential. There is an entire system of causes, from the content of school curricula and teaching methods that do not reflect the needs of Romani children, through the unreadiness of teachers to educate these children, to the low level of aspiration of the children themselves (Dočkal et al., 2004). Similar causes, including inadequate assessment of cognitive abilities and ordinary teachers' lack of interest in the minds of Romani children, are also reported by Portik (2003).

In this theoretical study, however, we deal with the options of fair testing across<sup>1</sup> varying sociocultural environments. We use the history of testing to demonstrate the discrimination that results from inadequate testing or misinterpretation of test results. This discrimination emerged shortly after the first tests were made available. For example, the immigration policy in the United States in the 1920s was made significantly stricter on the basis of the low results that European immigrants scored in tests of intelligence (Gould, 1998). After a brief look at the history of the testing of intelligence, we focus on the relationship between intelligence and the measurement of it in the contemporary humanities. Then, we outline possible ways for taking into account sociocultural aspects of the environment when testing intellectual abilities, so that no tested proband is discriminated against.

The most discussed, and most tested area of cognitive abilities is intelligence. This is somewhat ironic, as despite the great attention paid to intelligence in the fields of pedagogy and psychology,

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<sup>1</sup> When the term "testing" is used throughout this text, it is meant as testing of cognitive abilities, especially intelligence. We are not primarily concerned with other personal characteristics, although the majority of ideas on how to correctly use a test and not discriminate against any population group on the basis of it, are also applicable to general principles of testing. The history of testing over its two decades also equals the history of testing of the cognitive abilities. It was not until 1921 that Hermann Rorschach published his complex test, thus shifting attention from testing intellectual abilities to testing the personality as a whole.

experts do not agree on its exact definition. Various definitions differ primarily in what they include in intelligence. This study does not endeavour to provide an exhaustive comparison of various approaches to intelligence. At first, we will need only a general understanding of intelligence as a disposition to solve problems and an ability to adapt to conditions imposed by the environment. We will then further refine the definition of intelligence, and modify it according to the individual authors of intelligence tests and their own interpretation. Given that the text analyses options and methods of measuring intelligence (including their erroneous or improper implementation) we implicitly assume that intelligence is measurable. In defining this ability we assume the psychometric attitude towards intelligence, which stresses the measurability of intelligence. Even though there are hundreds of definitions of intelligence, most of them include the reaction of an organism to its external environment and emphasize adaptation to this environment as a key component of intelligence. The environment and its impact on the shaping of a personality, as well as working with the environment in which a man develops, are the remit of social pedagogy. Bakošová (2005) reports that social pedagogy can be understood as learning by environment, and education within its framework is understood as a help for all age categories, including the preschool period. If we wish to increase the test success rates of people from socially disadvantaged environments, we need to be aware of their environment's specific features, we must evaluate and appreciate their ability to adapt to their primary environment and not the environment of the majority population.

## 2 History of the testing of intellectual abilities

The dawn of testing of intellectual abilities was quickly followed by misuse of tests to exclude people. Alfred Binet<sup>2</sup> is considered the first creator of intelligence tests as we know them today. Originally he had no intention to develop such tests. In accordance with the dogma of his time, he performed craniometric<sup>3</sup> research, but he repeatedly discovered that the skull circumferences of children that he measured had no connection to the intellectual performance these children displayed at school. Binet bravely published these findings, despite contemporary scientific authorities being convinced otherwise. In 1905 he published the first version of the intelligence scale, which was supposed to detect children who, due to their lower intellectual abilities, would perform poorly in the classic school lessons, and therefore should be given special pedagogical care (Svoboda, 2010). The test was created at the order of the French Ministry of Education. Interesting for us is Binet's attitude to testing of children's intellectual abilities. He emphasized that his tests measure the "state of the intellectual capacity of a child at the given time, nothing more" and he focused on "purely and simply establishing the truth regarding the current mental state of the child" (Gould, 1998). By this he endeavoured to emphasize that his test would not capture the developmental aspects of intellectual abilities, nor would it predict the possibility or impossibility of a future change. The intellectual deficits revealed by Binet might have various causes and he himself did not dare to assess whether they were inherited or acquired during development. He was moreover convinced that when given appropriate assistance, each child could improve, although some more than others. According to Binet, the special interventions for children with intellectual deficiency cannot be the same for every child, and it is crucial to make accommodation for the character, abilities, needs and potential of each pupil.

As a first step he recommended a substantial change of environment and education in small classes of about 15 children (compared to the usual 60 children in France of the beginning of the 20th century) (Gould, 1998). Although these ideas are a century old now, they correspond with our

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<sup>2</sup> Alfred Binet was a French psychologist, born in 1857 and working in the late 19th and early 20th century.

<sup>3</sup> Craniometry is an anthropological method used to measure the size and shape of the skull. Until the beginning of the 20th century, there was a strong conviction in Europe and the USA that the size of the skull correlated with intelligence.

view on helping children who score low in intelligence tests.<sup>4</sup> However, the ideas seem to have been forgotten during the 20th century and an understanding prevailed of intelligence as an unchangeable feature that was little subject to influence. Measuring of intelligence thus became a very important act that segregated children based on the single-time readings obtained of their intellectual abilities, predetermining the course of their education (and thus, to some extent, also of their lives).

The particular way of using intelligence tests and interpretation of their results was thus connected with abuse of the tool, whether intentionally or as the result of inappropriate application. Binet's original thoughts were abandoned quite early: When his test spread over the USA it was adopted by supporters of hereditarism,<sup>5</sup> who started to use its translated and modified versions to validate their opinions. They thus did not respect Binet's basic thesis and considered the test outcomes unchangeable, characterising the intellectual abilities of test subjects not only in the present, but also in the future. When carrying out tests on children and adults, the hereditarists suggested separating individuals in which intellectual deficiencies were detected from society, rather than offering them assistance in developing their abilities. The tests were often performed in unsuitable and exhausting conditions. An extreme example of such completely inappropriate testing was the examination of the intellectual abilities of the immigrants right after they landed at Ellis Island, after the long sea voyage from Europe. By this testing, Goddard succeeded in "proving" that among immigrants, many intellectually deficient people were entering the USA, and thus successfully increased the number of people denied access to American soil based on poor test results (Gould, 1998). Such obvious examples of the abuse of intelligence tests aside, we still find other errors in their usage. Another shift from Binet's intentions was the use of his scale to evaluate the intellectual abilities of intact children,<sup>6</sup> and subsequently comparing results and making recommendations as to what education level children should receive.

The above-mentioned scientists who tested intellectual abilities were building on empirical experience. They did not rely on any theory that would describe intellectual abilities in detail. Binet himself pointed this out and he considered the test to be a mere simple tool to meet the order of the Ministry of Education. He probably would have been quite surprised to see how the tests were employed and what importance they gained in the examination of human subjects.

The first factor-analytic model was developed in the 1920s by Charles Spearman, who with the help of factor analysis concluded that intelligence consists of a general factor *g* and specific factors (Ruisel, 2001). The general factor pervades the entire intellectual performance of a person. Spearman also studied what determined the level of the general factor *g*. He came up with a term "mental energy," including (without further specification) the subject's attention, the plasticity and complexity of the nervous system, etc. (Sternberg, Kaufman, & Grigorenko, 2008). Spearman did not directly address the question of whether intelligence is innate or influenced by the environment, but the qualities he hides under the concept of mental energy rather refer to biological potential and therefore a greater genetic determination of intelligence.

Cattell disagreed with Spearman's concept of intelligence as a uniform ability and already in the 1940s he divided Spearman's *g*-factor into two separate factors. Cattell considered "fluid intelligence" the general ability to assess and understand relationships, and he assumed that this ability is largely genetically determined. He defined "crystallized intelligence" as an ability that develops due to learning and life experience, and so education may have a positive effect on its growth, but a sufficient level of fluid intelligence is a prerequisite for the development of crystallized intelligence (Plhánková, 1999). In its time, this classification was quite groundbreaking and especially the thesis that a person's environment and education are responsible for a particular part of his or

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<sup>4</sup> We purposely leave aside the question of inclusion in education for the time being, focusing on the idea of supporting children with low scores in intelligence tests.

<sup>5</sup> Goddard in the 1890s and Terman in the 1920s represented leading figures of hereditarism.

<sup>6</sup> They used Binet tests as a sieve to capture children with low intellectual performance.

her intelligence was something new. From a modern perspective, we must say that Cattell still underestimated the influence of the environment. Cattell focused primarily on testing of fluid intelligence and he developed a test which, he believed, measured the intellectual abilities of a person regardless of his or her sociocultural environment. In 1949 he published the first version of the Cattell Culture Fair Intelligence Test, which was, according to its author, suitable for testing the intelligence of children from eight years of age and adults, and it contained items that focus on deducing relationships between graphic symbols (Fajmonová, Hönigová, Urbánek, & Širůček 2015). This test has been particularly beneficial by filtering knowledge from school, otherwise culturally determined knowledge, and knowledge gained through the course of one's life out of the concept of intelligence. However, Cattell's apparently well-intentioned effort to design a culturally fair test was mainly focused on removing the verbal content of the test (the instructions, however, were given verbally) and thus minimizing the influence of one's mother tongue. The test could thus be useful for testing people growing up in a given (American) culture, whose native language is not English (but a certain level of language knowledge was expected and necessary for understanding the test instructions).

Even different ways of thinking and their preferences (in the case of the Cattello test, searching for relationships between objects) are, however, culturally conditioned. For instance, Nisbett (2003) through his repeated studies has shown differing preferences of representatives of Western and Eastern cultures in the spontaneous sorting of objects. Other researches have shown the influence of cultural context on fluid intelligence as well, for example by comparing the overall cognitive development of children from disadvantaged minorities with that of children growing up in stimulating environments. Cattello's concept of intelligence, revolutionary in its time, is still widely cited and used (even abused) by supporters of hereditarism to enforce the proposition that most of the differences in cognitive abilities between people or various groups of people are determined by heredity, and therefore the effort to develop what little can be influenced by upbringing and education is ineffective and uneconomical for society as a whole. Hereditarists are convinced that there simply are groups of people, usually ethnically or socially defined, with innate lower intelligence ability (Denglerová, 2015).

A further advance in testing the development of intelligence was brought by David Wechsler's tests. The first of these, designed for adults, was published in 1939. Both the versions for adults and the versions for children that were developed later have been revised and modified numerous times since then. Wechsler perceived intelligence as the complex and global ability of an individual to act, think rationally, successfully cope with its environment, understand the world and effectively handle its challenges (Krejčířová, Boschek, & Dan, 2002). This definition has two fascinating aspects: How modern it actually is, and how it emphasizes the aspect of the environment a person lives in. However, because of its connection with the environment that surrounds a person, the test may not be suitable for individuals outside the mainstream of society, and this quite logical reservation often goes unnoticed by the professional community.

Each version of Wechsler's test consists of two basic parts, a verbal one and a non-verbal one. In a simplified way, these parts correspond to Cattello's classification of crystallized and fluid intelligence. The verbal part of the test includes items that test mainly the ability to understand and use language, vocabulary, to logically extrapolate from verbally specified content, and the like. These skills are generally considered to be subject to influence from learning and the surrounding environment. The non-verbal or opinion section consists of items which are given mainly in the form of images and symbols, and it is believed that it tests in various ways fluid intelligence, and therefore it is little influenced by the environment shaping a human being.

This concept is, however, erroneous, as we illustrate by several of the items from the currently used version of Wechsler's tests<sup>7</sup> for children. For example, in one of the subtests the child is instructed to sort flashcards which, in a correct order, form a certain short story. Depending on the task difficulty, there are 3 to 5 cards. One of the simpler items in this test contains three images (listed in the correct order): A child climbs a ladder to a slide, the child sits on top of the slide, the child slides down the slide. If the tested child knows the principle of a slide, he or she has no problems sorting the cards accordingly. However, the item certainly does not test anything that would be connected to the ability to learn new things or understand the world and its challenges. It tests the child's knowledge, or rather his life experience based on the thousands of various slides that he or she has climbed up on and slid down (or watched this being done by other children on the playground). On the other hand, for a child who has never been to a playground and has not gone down a slide, this picture can actually serve as an impulse for thinking and understanding the principle behind the picture. A smart child can come up with a correct order for the pictures without actually being familiar with any slide (the item could therefore be more valid for children who have no experience with slides), but it will take some time. Sorting pictures in Wechsler's test is not rated only as success or failure, bonus points are given for quick sorting of the picture series. Such a rating clearly discriminates against children without the experience illustrated on the pictures, and as such is strongly dependent on the sociocultural environment of the children (Denglerová, 2015).

In another type of task, a child was supposed to reveal the relationships between the objects pictured. The tested child is, for example, shown a picture of an open refrigerator and a bottle of milk. On another picture, the child sees several pieces of folded laundry and is instructed to choose a picture that is in a same relationship to this picture as the bottle of milk to the fridge. The child can select from a mailbox, a stove, an open suitcase and a handbag. A child with no experience with a refrigerator and no knowledge of it being used for food storage cannot replicate the same relationship, so this item again invisibly depends on a certain knowledge (however common such knowledge is in the mainstream society), and therefore it is not suitable for testing children from a significantly different cultural background (in this case children from poor families living in socially excluded areas without the usual appliances). Nonetheless, items not depicting particular things and everyday objects are not a solution either. If a child is, for example, supposed to find a symbol to fill in an empty space in a row of symbols (a verified way of evaluating abstract thinking) and has never done a similar task before, nor has he or she ever been in a situation that required this way of thinking, this child will probably not be able to solve the problem correctly, or the child will need a substantially longer time to solve it than his or her peers who have more experience with a similar way of thinking.

### **3 Models of the relationship between intelligence and tools to measure it in various sociocultural environments**

Current views on intelligence in a sociocultural context and the possibilities for measuring it are reviewed by Sternberg (2004). He does not address a specific definition or particular concept of intelligence, but he assumes that in all cultures it is the ability to solve new problems and adapt to new situations. He focuses on two basic questions, namely whether there are innate differences in the mental processes contained in intelligence across cultures, and whether there are fundamental differences among tests measuring intelligence, arising from cultural differences (Sternberg, 2004).

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<sup>7</sup> WISC III is the most-used complex test for testing intelligence in children aged 6–16 in the Czech Republic. It was first published in the Czech Republic in 1996, and again in 2002 (Krejčířová, Boschek, & Dan, 2002), this time with Czech standards. Before that, a PDW variant was used, and WISC IV is the version used most around the world today.

Based on the answers to these questions and their combination, Sternberg introduces four models on how to relate to intelligence across various cultural environments.<sup>8</sup>

In the first model, the nature of intelligence is completely the same across all cultures, and therefore the principles of evaluating it should be the same. According to this opinion, intelligence across cultures should be measured by the same intelligence tests. The tests should indeed be appropriately localized in terms of language, but apart from that there should be no modifications for any particular culture. We fundamentally disagree with this model; the arguments against it follow from the above-mentioned analysis of items in these tests of intelligence. A further proof of the inaccuracy of the model is also the generally accepted hypothesis of linguistic relativity, according to which the human understanding of the world is influenced by the language skills of a particular society (Budil, 2003).

In the second model, we encounter a different concept for intelligence, but the same measurement tools. Intelligence tests or their individual items, however well translated, thus measure something structurally different in each culture. For example, Nisbett (2010) used the same tests to show how differently people think about things in different cultures. This approach has its relevance, but comparisons of such results across cultures or even their evaluation in terms of "better versus worse" must be strictly rejected.

The third model assumes that the nature and dimensions of intelligence are the same in all sociocultural environments, but it is necessary to measure them by different tests adequate to each culture. This does not mean that no intelligence tests could be used for measurements across different cultures, but besides a high-quality translation, we must not forget about the emic aspect and ensure that the psychological meaning of the test question remains, or modify the items so that the original meaning is transferred to another culture (Denglerová, 2015). Sternberg (2004) considers this third model the most suitable and he claims that the concept of successful intelligence that he had formulated before is in agreement with this model. This model is widely used (more or less reflectively) also among researchers dealing with minorities living in socially disadvantaged environments.

This can be illustrated by the example of an item from the intelligence<sup>9</sup> test developed and validated on children from Romani settlements in eastern Slovakia by Dočkal and others (2004). In the picture task, children are instructed to arrange four flashcards in a logical order. The pictures display a girl waking up, getting dressed, having breakfast and leaving to school. To make the pictures understandable for children from Romani settlements, some objects that were unknown and confusing had to be left out, among others a clock above the bed, a carpet in the room, a school bag, etc. Even after that, the children kept arranging the pictures in a different order than expected. A common sequence was waking up–getting dressed–leaving to school–having breakfast (compared to the expected sequence of waking up–getting dressed–having breakfast–leaving to school), because most of the children from the settlements do not get any breakfast and they are given the first meal of the day at school. This item, therefore, had multiple correct solutions among children from poor Romani settlements, which is not common for classic intelligence tests. Yet when it was modified and adapted to the conditions where the children were growing up, the item distinguished well between

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<sup>8</sup> In a similar way we could view and combine models also for other characteristics beside intelligence, and their measurement across cultures. Indeed, nobody in the scientific community today would consider, for example, emotions and the way of expressing them to be the same in all cultures, and nobody would attempt to evaluate such using the same key.

<sup>9</sup> This is a battery of tests published as an RR screening, which is designed for children aged six to ten years old, and the aim of which is to distinguish children with mental retardation from children with intact intellect. The test was custom designed to re-measure the intellectual abilities of Romani children in Slovakia attending special schools (similar to Czech practical schools). Based on the test results, efforts are being made to integrate children for whom mental retardation has been ruled out into mainstream schools and thus increase their level of education (Dočkal et al., 2004).

children with mental retardation (who arranged the flashcards in a random order and failed to explain their choice) and children with intact intelligence (Dočkal, 2007). In a similar way, other items of the test were also modified.

The fourth model assumes that the nature of intelligence and its various dimensions are highly dependent on the culture an individual is a part of, and also the measuring instruments must be different. This approach is radically constructivist and emphasizes that intelligence can be understood and measured only in the context of the original culture (Denglerová, 2015). This approach can be illustrated, for example, by the fact that Dočkal and his colleagues completely eliminated from their test battery subtests aimed at classification and elimination, i.e., tasks that require the ability to generalize. They claim that such mental operation is hardly developed in children from poor Romani settlements, because they do not need it in their environment, and therefore it makes no sense to test for it within tests of intellectual abilities (Dočkal, 2007). In contrast, in conventional intelligence tests designed for the mainstream population, items utilizing the principle of generalization are widespread and well discriminatory. The question remains whether, in this constructivist conception, a researcher coming from the outside (and therefore a different cultural framework) can actually capture all the nuances and subtleties of the cognitive skills of the studied population and create an adequate measuring tool.

Based on our own experience and research, we do not dare to clearly answer Sternberg's question of whether there are innate differences across cultures in intellectual processes. We are aware of a significant impact of the sociocultural environment on the development of cognitive skills, as we have reported in previous studies (Denglerová, 2012b, 2015). At the same time, however, we do not deny the possibility that there are some innate aspects of cognition. On Sternberg's second question regarding the possibility or even necessity of differences between tools to measure intelligence in different cultures, we clearly answer that it is necessary to adequately modify and adapt the tests to match the structure of thinking that is characteristic for the particular culture. In our reflections, therefore, we do not consider the first and second model meaningful, and we work within the third and fourth models.

#### **4 Potential ways of non-discriminatory testing**

The effort to develop an intelligence test which would neither discriminate against nor treat preferentially any group of people is more than half a century old. It goes back to Cattello's attempt to create a culturally independent test as we described earlier. Today's perspective, however, shows that it is almost impossible to develop a culture-independent test, because every person is strongly shaped by his or her culture and is basically an inseparable part of it. Items that would constitute such a test would have to be aimed at testing the ability of abstract thinking (because with such items we could at least partially abstract from cultural determinants). Such items would also have to be presented to tested persons after thorough training and explanation of the principles behind the items, which would be closer to the principles of *dynamic diagnostics*. Additionally, a test with items focused only on the level of abstract thinking would not be relevant for the majority understanding of intelligence as an ability to navigate effectively in the real world, and it would only evaluate a small slice of the capabilities included in the concept of intelligence (Denglerová, 2015).

The next step in the development of non-discriminatory tests of intelligence was represented by so-called culturally fair tests with verbal items that relate only to those objects and events that should be known to all people regardless of their social background. The idea of such tests is based primarily on a contextual approach to intelligence. But even here many authors have come to the conclusion that it is not possible to construct a culturally fair test, given that performance is nearly always influenced by cultural factors (Konečná, 2010). In recent years, the term "culturally relevant intelligence tests" (Sternberg, 2001) has appeared, taking into account the social background of the person studied. Synonymous with "culturally relevant" is the term "culturally adequate," which was

probably first used in the DSM-5 (Raboch et al., 2015), where the part on diagnosis of various mental illnesses, including cognitive deficits, emphasizes that tests and methods that are adequate to the sociocultural environment from which the diagnosed person comes from must always be used for the final diagnosis. Standards for pedagogical and psychological testing (Klimusová, 2001) are also based on the principle of fair attitude to testing, and rule out – among others – items which “...lead to a different meaning of scores gained by members of different categories of people...”

In the last part of the study, we introduce suggestions for how tests of cognitive abilities could be developed to be truly fair and thus widely usable. We suggest and analyse various ways to create culturally adequate tests. A relatively simple, albeit tedious, way is to build on existing intelligence tests, which should, however, undergo a new process of standardization that would focus on specific populations, primarily on children from Romani families. It is necessary to concentrate on a detailed analysis of items and decide which ones are valid in this population considering the intended characteristic tested. Some items just need to be modified, while others would have to be completely excluded from the test. An example of such analysis of individual items is Dočkal’s RR screening (Dočkal et al., 2004) as mentioned above.

Another way to avoid the use of conventional tests of intelligence (and thus their potential cultural conditioning) is measuring of the so-called *adaptive abilities* of an individual. Adaptive abilities describe how individuals are able to function (adequately to their age) in their sociocultural environment and to cope with the demands of everyday life. Adaptive skills are assessed in the natural environment of the individual with respect to all aspects of his or her life. Evaluation of adaptive capabilities is usually employed to search for children and adults with mental retardation and does not aim to measure and compare the intelligence of people within broader standards.

We prefer the option of dynamic testing, which stresses the process of learning in cognitive abilities and attempts to evaluate it. Dynamic diagnostics is primarily focused on the extent and nature of change that will take place in the test subject after the application of a certain intervention strategy, so it is a test of learning ability and adaptation, in the broadest sense of the term (Chuchutová, 2008). The concrete possibilities for the technical implementation of dynamic testing are several, but the very essence always remains – trying to help the tested person to improve their score. That means that during intervention we provide feedback on the individual’s performance, help him or her clarify the principle behind the items, explain any mistakes made, and so on.<sup>10</sup> Only the second or subsequent testing will show whether and how the tested person is able to improve their performance. The intervention may be minimal, lasting several minutes, or may take the form of several hours of training. For example, Grigorenko (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002) reports on her experiences with examining various cognitive abilities in children from rural areas in Tanzania. It was discovered that for a child to substantially and permanently improve his or her performance in deducting conclusions from linear syllogisms,<sup>11</sup> a five to ten-minute intervention clarifying the principle of the tasks in verbal and graphic form was usually sufficient. Also in our research, primarily focused on visual perception (Denglerová, 2012b), Romani children from socially disadvantaged environments far more often failed in distinguishing between pairs of identical and different elements. After about five minutes of intervention explaining the terms “same” and “different” and demonstrating these by means of wooden dice, most children markedly improved their performance.

On the contrary, in one of the sophisticated systems for diagnostic testing, the so-called LPAD (Learning Potential Assessment Device) by Reuven Feuerstein, interventions aimed at development of the tested child occupy most of the time allotted to the examination of each child. Such

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<sup>10</sup> This is in direct contradiction with the procedures of classic static testing. Providing feedback other than information about the achieved score, e.g. error analysis, is considered as a source of measurement errors (the training effect), and therefore is not carried out.

<sup>11</sup> Children worked with items such as “Adam is taller than Albert. Cyril is taller than Adam. Who is the tallest?”

examination usually lasts from several days to a week. As early as the 1950s, Feuerstein argued against the majority belief of educators and psychologists that intelligence is innate and immutable. He claimed that intelligence is not something that is given to us once and for all, but on the contrary it is a dynamic quality of a person, which can be developed in any stage of life (Feuerstein, Feuerstein, & Falik, 2010). This represents the base of his test battery. It is a set of tests on the development of the ability to learn. Some items are directly taken from Raven's matrices or Rey-Osterrieth's figure, while others are loosely inspired by them. However, testing involves an intervention part, which is focused on introducing and explaining a certain intellectual principle, and only then a successive solving of other items, based on a similar principle in various forms and difficulty levels, is evaluated. Experts agree that compared with traditional diagnostic methods, dynamic testing provides a lower level of discrimination, and therefore it is suitable for ethnic minorities, socially disadvantaged people, and children with learning disorders or affective disorders (Chuchutová, 2008).

It is particularly suitable for measuring the cognitive abilities of children from socially disadvantaged environments, since no emphasis is given to the element of surprise and to seeking out what the child in his or her cultural environment has not encountered, but rather makes it possible to eliminate these shortcomings within the intervention and to identify the child's potential during the learning process. A disadvantage of dynamic testing, which has hindered a significant expansion of it, is its duration and therefore the economic costs. Despite this, we are confident that in the near future dynamic testing will be encountered more often, because it gives a sense to assessing the abilities of persons outside the mainstream population.

## 5 Conclusion

The aim of the article was to point out that the commonly used intelligence tests are not usually able to capture and process the ability of people outside the mainstream population. Their use in the testing of children from socially disadvantaged environments (in our context typically Romani children) leads to incorrect conclusions about these children's abilities. A look at this history of testing makes it clear that discrimination against various groups of the population, mostly immigrants or the poor, occurred soon after the first tests emerged. In this text we have attempted to give solid examples of the most common erroneous principles on which the intellectual abilities of people from socially disadvantaged environments are evaluated, without clearly declaring that the test records rather poverty or a difference of environment and a potential impact of this environment on the development of intellectual abilities.

The study also highlights the principle of dynamic diagnostics that is not widespread in the Czech Republic, but which still has a potential to overcome the problems behind the classic cognitive testing. In terms of capturing the impact of the sociocultural environment on the development of cognitive skills, we consider dynamic testing to be a suitable alternative.

Social pedagogues are not expected to be able on their own to construct new culturally relevant and adequate tests of intellectual abilities, but should have a view on the issue and take the results of conventional tests of intelligence presented by their clients with reservations. We hope that in the near future, social pedagogues will be a part of the teams creating the new tests, and they will ensure consideration of environmental factors. Also within dynamic diagnosis, social pedagogues should be trained to provide appropriate interventions for persons tested that come from a different sociocultural environment.

We also want to point out that the naming of a particular behaviour, where children from disadvantaged backgrounds display lower performance, matters. For example, Ramey and Ramey (2000) show how negative naming of issues affects the direction of their solutions. Repeated studies in the USA and the UK have showed that children exhibiting the same or similar problems in school

were significantly more often diagnosed as “mentally retarded” if they came from the lower social classes, whereas if they came from a middle class, they were usually labelled as “having problems or learning difficulties.” Children with learning problems and disorders are given more attention and expert intervention in an effort to help them, while such assistance for the children labelled as mentally retarded is severely limited. Also, inappropriate use of intelligence tests may further contribute to referring to children outside the mainstream population as mentally retarded and thus significantly reduce their chances of a meaningful education appropriate to their needs.

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# Teacher Self-Efficacy within the Context of Socially Disadvantaged Pupils' Education

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**Abstract:** The teachers' self-efficacy (TS) is one of the important determinants, which affects teachers' behavior and also affects the effectivity of educational process. The presented study is based on the concept of Gibson and Dembi, who characterized the teachers' self-efficacy by two dimensions – Personal Teaching Efficacy (PTE) and General Teaching Efficacy (GTE). Our goal is to present results of the research which was focused on determination of the relation between teachers' self-efficacy and the factors related with the education of socially disadvantaged pupils. Among the mentioned research tool it was used the semantic differential method. We found out that the teachers from the chosen primary schools are more convinced about their abilities to influence pupils' learning and behavior (PTE) and less convinced about the overcoming unfavorable effects of environment through the education (GTE). We also discovered that the teachers' self-efficacy rate from chosen primary schools is not correlated with their experience (with the education of socially disadvantaged pupils) and there is no significant difference between TS and the territory of teachers' work. The self-efficacy rate is strongly correlated with the evaluation of the concepts related with the education of socially disadvantaged pupils.

**Keywords:** teacher self-efficacy, socially disadvantaged pupils, teachers, semantic differential

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## Vnímaná vlastní účinnost učitelů v kontextu edukace sociálně znevýhodněných žáků

**Abstrakt:** Vnímaná vlastní účinnost učitelů (teacher self-efficacy - TS) je jednou z významných determinant, která působí na učitelovo jednání a zpětně tak ovlivňuje efektivitu vzdělávacího procesu. Překládaná studie vychází z konceptu Gibsona a Dembiho, kteří charakterizovali vnímanou vlastní účinnost učitelů na základě dvou dimenzí – hodnocení vlastních schopností ve vztahu k rozvoji žáka (PTE) a posouzení vlastních potencialit překonat nepříznivé přirozené prostředí žáka (GTE). Naším cílem je prezentovat výsledky výzkumu zaměřeného na zjištění vztahu vnímané vlastní účinnosti učitelů a vybraných faktorů souvisejících se vzděláváním sociálně znevýhodněných žáků. Pro tyto účely jsme vedle zmiňovaného výzkumného nástroje využili metodu sémantického diferencálu. Zjistili jsme, že učitelé působící ve vybraných základních školách jsou více přesvědčeni o vlastních schopnostech ovlivnit učení a chování žáků (PTE) než

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o tom, že na základě vyučování mohou překonat nepříznivé vlivy prostředí (GTE). Zároveň jsme zjistili, že míra vnímané vlastní účinnosti učitelů působících ve vybraných základních školách nezávisí na zkušenosti učitelů se vzděláváním sociálně znevýhodněných žáků a výrazně se neliší v závislosti na tom, v jakém kraji učitelé působí. Míra vnímané vlastní účinnosti je výrazně spojená s hodnocením pojmových indikátorů vztahujících se ke vzdělávání sociálně znevýhodněných žáků.

**Klíčová slova:** vnímaná vlastní účinnost učitele, sociálně znevýhodnění žáci, učitelé, sémantický diferencál

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## 1 Introduction

Socially disadvantaged pupils'<sup>12</sup> education is being currently discussed mainly within the context of inclusive education with the accent on all players in the school environment. As prism of inclusive education and paradigm according to Rogers (Kirschenbaum & Henderson, 1989, p. 225) an unreserved positive accepting of each pupil (disregarding his/her handicap or disability), both by schoolmates and teachers, appears to be significant. This means in practice that every teacher should accept diversities and specifics of all pupils and guide pupils retrospectively towards this respectful behaviour.<sup>13</sup>

Considering the above mentioned and the fact that a teacher jointly forms education environment, classroom climate, organizes and coordinates activities of pupils, manages and evaluates the teaching process and its results (Průcha et al., 2009, p. 326), discussions relating to teacher's profession as one of significant factors of educating pupils occur logically in the conceptual and research field (see also Starý et al., 2012, p. 9). And thus, teacher's influence, teaching, attitudes towards pupils, work with pupils and **teacher's self-efficacy** (Průcha et al., 2009, p. 326) are besides family environment an important factor, which affects learning of pupils and their school results.

So, it can be claimed that **self-efficacy** or as the case may be the way how a teacher evaluates and perceives himself/herself as a teacher and has beliefs about himself/herself is one of significant determinants of teacher's efficacy (in addition to his/her qualification, personality traits, competences and others) within his educating activities. Teacher's perceived self-efficacy can be understood within this context as a catalyst or inhibitor of teacher's positive behaviour in relation to his/her education activities (Gavora, 2008; Ross, 1994), a factor that can affect school results of pupils (e.g., Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Ross, 1992; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998), perceived self-efficacy of pupils (Anderson et al., 1988) and a level of pupils' motivation (Midgley et al., 1989). Researches also prove that teachers with a high level of perceived self-efficacy tend to apply new approaches and methods to education, use methods supporting autonomy of pupils and tend to support pupils in need of individual support (Guskey, 1988, Gillnerová et al., 2011; Ross, 1994;). Similarly, Buel et al. (1999) discovered within his research a relation between teachers' self-efficacy and his/her attitude towards educating pupils with special education needs. Teachers with higher self-efficacy perceive pupils' diversity positively and they are as well self-confident to

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<sup>12</sup> For the purposes of this study we consider socially disadvantaged, as pupils coming from a family who, because of its socioeconomic and cultural conditions insufficiently encourages or insufficiently allows, or completely disallows the mental, emotional and volitional characteristics of the child and which is socio-economically and culturally different from the environment in which pupils coming from the majority population grow up in. This difference significantly impedes their full-fledged participation in society and from fully developing their educational potential. (Šafránková & Kocourková, 2013a).

<sup>13</sup> Dewey's words (as cited in Kirschenbaum & Henderson, 1989, p. 225) that acceptance should not be dependent on a selective evaluation attitude: "You are wrong in this, but in this you're good."

manage hard situations and demands at educating this specific group of pupils. On the contrary, teachers with lower self-efficacy may not perceive pupils' diversity positively (e.g., since they do not feel to be competent adequately) (see also Bender et al., 1995).

In consideration of the above mentioned and based on other researches (e.g., Brownell & Pajares, 1999) we can deliberate over relation between teacher's self-efficacy and his/her attitude towards certain group of pupils (in case of the submitted study towards socially disadvantaged pupils), who need special attention in terms of use of compensating measures, specific forms, teaching methods and others.

The study submitted is focused on determining the teachers' self-efficacy in selected regions and determining, whether there is a relation between teachers' self-efficacy and length of educational experience, age, region, where teachers are employed, experiences in educating socially disadvantaged pupils and further perception of selected conceptual indicators that relate to education of socially disadvantaged pupils.

Sense of self-efficacy can be understood within a wider concept, the so-called teachers' beliefs, which Bandura (1997) names as a factor affecting individual's activities. In addition to the teacher self-efficacy we can find teachers' beliefs about pupils within this concept (e.g., Brownell & Pajares, 1999). Within this concept, we can deliberate over relation between teachers' self-efficacy and their **attitude towards socially disadvantaged pupils**. Even though the mentioned researches prove that due attention has been already paid to the area of teachers' self-efficacy in relation to various aspects of education, researches focused on relation between teacher self-efficacy and teachers' beliefs about socially disadvantaged pupils belong rather to the rare ones. We consider this connection as a significant research topic, since we work on the assumption that teacher self-efficacy can be associated with teacher's beliefs about certain group of pupils. Besides other things it can affect activities of a teacher in relation to this group of pupils retrospectively and further not only the quality of education process, but also efficacy of inclusive education in general or as the case may be teacher's self-efficacy can be conceived to be a predictor of his/her thought and actions.

## 2 Theoretical framework of self-efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy as beliefs about personal qualities to achieve defined output level, affected by events in our lives (see also Ardel & Eccles, 2001; Bandura, 1994), was elaborated for the first time by Albert Bandura (1977) within **social-cognitive theories**. This theory is a framework for understanding and explanation of human behaviour (Gillernová et al., 2011, p. 154). Social-cognitive theories accent *various aspects of social-cultural transactions between a human and his/her environment* (Bertrand, 1998, p. 117). A model of triadic reciprocal determinism, which is built against one-sided interpretation of behaviour based only on effects of one determinant or as the case may be environment or inner dispositions, is the centre of this theory. This model consists of three factor groups (*personal qualities, behaviour and social environmental effects*), which are connected one with another and integrate together. Janoušek (1992, p. 386) states that *determinism is conceived as a resultant effect of an aggregate of interconnected influences, which is perceived within this meaning rather as probable than linear*. Bandura (1997) expects based on the mentioned model that individuals are not quite free and they are affected by the environment, nevertheless they are not subjected to environmental effects passively or as the case may be individuals are perceived as proactive and self-regulating human beings capable of their own organization and views. Bandura (as cited in Janoušek, 1992, p. 389) names the moment of self-influencing of mutually interacting determinants as the term "**self-efficacy**".

According to Bandura (1997, p. 2) the concept of self-efficacy is based on the fact that the level of human motivation and behaviour is rather based on in what individuals believe (on their beliefs) than on their objective qualities. And thus, beliefs about self-efficacy are the base how people feel and

think and it is associated closely with motivation, since beliefs about self-capacities obviously affect expectations with respect to future behaviour. (Bandura, 1994; Pajares, 2002) Strong sense of self-efficacy affects the way how individuals approach to demanding tasks, which they take rather like a challenge than a threat (Bandura, 1994). Some authors (Gillnerová et al., 2011; Rutter, 1990; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995) name it a relation between self-efficacy and resilience of an individual. It can be claimed in general that a high level of self-efficacy results in setting of demanding targets, making effort to achieve them, smaller probability to be beaten by stress, controlling own emotional states and also in active approach to hardship (Bandura, 1994; Gillnerová et al., 2011). On the contrary, individuals with a low level of self-efficacy have doubts about their qualities, they tend to be beaten by stress, attempt to avoid demanding tasks, since they take them as a threat, and their aspirations are low like their resolve to achieve these tasks (Bandura, 1982, 1994; Gillnerová et al., 2011, Pajares, 2002). Beliefs about self-efficacy consist according to Bandura (1994) of four main sources: 1. Experience of success at managing an unfavourable situation (or as the case may be positive experience); 2. Social modelling, i.e. mediated vicarious experience of others at managing given situation; 3. Social persuasion (verbal support from others, beliefs about abilities to manage given situation); 4. Physiological and emotional states of the teacher.

According to the above mentioned facts the self-efficacy can be considered within the context of social-cognitive theories as a significant determinant, which can have effect on teacher's activities and affect educating of pupils retrospectively. We focus more particularly on teacher's sense of self-efficacy for purposes of the study submitted.

## 2.1 The nature of teacher self-efficacy

Teacher's beliefs about his/her professional qualities and skills or as the case may be how he/she evaluates himself/herself in terms of his/her profession appear to be significant besides professional qualities and skills that characterize the teacher in relation to his/her education work. So, teacher's sense of self-efficacy can be also defined as his/her beliefs about his/her qualities that result in achieving required (positive) outcomes in the area of involvement and learning, specifically also of students, who show a lower level of motivation and who need specific individual support (Armor et al., 1976; Bandura, 1977). A significant factor affecting teacher's behaviour in various education situation is concerned, specifically reflecting into teacher's beliefs about how he/she acts on pupils and what education output he/she can achieve (Gavora, 2008).

A teacher with high self-efficacy approaches to his/her education work with beliefs about his/her professional knowledge, qualities and skills, and therefore he/she makes more effort during preparation and realization of teaching (Gibson & Dembo 1984; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). These teachers perform their education work with beliefs *that with making special effort, effective teaching and with application of special techniques, which can include also support of family,*<sup>14</sup> *negative effects of community on a child can be prevented* (Gillnerová et al., 2011, p. 156). On the contrary, teachers with low self-efficacy attempt to avoid demanding situations and if such situation occurs teacher does not have beliefs about his/her capabilities to manage such situation adequately (Mareš, 2013). These teachers believe that regardless of making more effort they can do only a little, if pupils are not motivated (Gillnerová et al., 2011, p. 156). Low self-efficacy can become evident in his/her aggressive behaviour (motivated by fear to fail), but also in quitting his/her attempt at improving school results of pupils, who do not achieve the required school results in short time period<sup>15</sup> (Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

In general, it can be claimed concerning teacher self-efficacy that: 1. it is formed by teacher himself/herself (i.e. it is not a priori given, it is formed already during pre-gradual preparation and continues to develop with exercise of teacher's practice; 2. it can acquire different level; 3. it

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<sup>14</sup> Cooperation with family is quite significant in education of socially disadvantaged individuals.

<sup>15</sup> In this case it is concerning e.g. socially disadvantaged pupils.

functions rather functionally (teacher may not always come to realize it and analyse it; 4. it is constant relatively, i.e. even though changes can occur based on many factors, it does not change quickly only based on certain occasional situations; 5. it can be investigated at teachers with various orientations, taught subjects and others. (or as the case may be it is conditioned by situation) (Gavora, 2008; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Wertheim & Leyser, 2002).

Teacher self-efficacy became a subject of a lot of researches (see e.g., Klassen et al., 2011). Researches of self-efficacy apply both the research qualitative strategy (e.g., Cantrell & Callaway, 2008; Cheung, 2008; Milner & Woolfolk Hoy, 2003; Onafowora, 2005; Webb & Ashton, 1987) and the quantitative research strategy (Gavora, 2008, 2010, 2011; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Greger, 2011; Guskey & Passaro 1994; Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998). **Teacher Efficacy Scale** – TES, from Gibson and Dembo and others (1984), became one of frequently used research tools (also used for our research). This research tool originally consisted of 30 statements that were assessed by teachers on the six-point Likert's scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). Two factors were extracted based on the factor analysis: 1. Teacher's beliefs about his/her qualities (*Personal Teaching Efficacy* – PTE) i.e. teacher's beliefs about his/her qualities to affect learning and behaviour of pupils; 2. Potentiality of teaching perceived by a teacher (*General Teaching Efficacy*) i.e. teacher's beliefs about his/her qualities to overcome or reduce adverse external factors, which could affect educating of pupils (e.g., non-stimulating family environment of a pupil) (Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

According to the above mentioned facts teacher self-efficacy can be a significant determinant, which can have positive/negative effect on educating of pupils, who come from socially disadvantaged family environment, since just teacher's beliefs about socially disadvantaged pupils and about his/her self-efficacy have effect on teacher's education work in relation to the group of pupils mentioned.

### 3 Research survey

The study submitted presents results of realized research, of which target was to determine the level of self-efficacy (*Teacher Self-Efficacy*) of teachers (TS) at primary schools in selected regions. We were interested in how teachers assess the level of self-efficacy in the area of potentiality of teaching perceived by a teacher (*General Teaching Efficacy*) and teacher's beliefs about his/her qualities (*Personal teaching Efficacy*), i.e. up to what extent it is possible in view of a teacher to overcome or at least reduce adverse factors not on the teacher's side based on teaching, for example poor abilities of a pupil, unfavourable family environment of a pupil (GTE), and up to what extent a teacher believes in his/her abilities to have influence on learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE).

We focused on finding differences in teachers' self-efficacy (TS) in selected regions, where they are employed. These regions were selected based on social-demographic analysis according to the level of social disadvantage. We assumed that the perceived self-efficacy, in particular teachers' beliefs about possibilities to overcome unfavourable pupil's environment (GTE), would manifest itself differently in a region with a higher rate of endangered children. We were also interested in what is the relation between the teachers' self-efficacy and length of their education practice, age and experiences in educating socially disadvantaged pupils. This experience can be reflected significantly into the teacher's self-efficacy. Considering the fact that the self-efficacy is according to Bandura (1994) based on four primary sources (1. positive experience in managing a situation; 2. vicarious experiences mediated by means of social models; 3. social persuasion; 4. opinion on self-condition) and it can be changed in the course of individual's life, experiences and professional career. We were investigating during our research a relation between GTE/PTE and perception of selected conceptual indicators that relate to education of socially disadvantaged pupils (*socially disadvantaged pupil*,

*pupil from a culturally different family environment, inclusion, segregation, our school, me*).<sup>16</sup> We assumed that the perceived level of self-efficacy was associated with assessment of selected terms that relate to education of socially disadvantaged pupils, in particular teacher's beliefs whether he/she can overcome unfavourable pupil's environment (GTE). This connection can manifest itself differently in significance (factor) of assessment (whether assessment of positive/negative significance of given term is concerned, i.e. factor of evaluation, or whether an assessment connected with making certain effort/energy to achieve a change, i.e. energy factor, is concerned).

### 3.1 Research questions

Our research was focused on answering the following questions:

1. What is the level of perceived teachers' self-efficacy employed in selected primary schools?
2. What are the differences in teachers' self-efficacy dependent on a region, where they are employed? What is the difference in teachers' self-efficacy employed in the Central Bohemia region, Vysočina region and Moravian-Silesian region in the area of potentiality of teaching perceived by a teacher (GTE) and teacher's beliefs about his/her qualities (PTE)?
3. What is the relation between the perceived teachers' self-efficacy and length of their education practice, age and the fact whether they have experiences in educating socially disadvantaged pupils?
4. What is the relation between perceived teachers' self-efficacy and their assessment of selected conceptual indicators that relate to education of socially disadvantaged pupils?

### 3.2 Methods

The research set was formed by teachers in selected regions (Central Bohemia region, Vysočina region, Moravian-Silesian region) employed according to the international standard classification of education ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 (or more precisely at primary schools). Considering the research purpose and multi-dimensional character of social handicap (determining environment) regions were selected intentionally and selection was performed based on social-demographic analysis (SocioFactor s.r.o., 2013, p. 429).<sup>17</sup>

We selected based on this analysis **three regions, which report the smallest, average and highest level** (stated below in order) **of children in danger** from view of the above mentioned dimensions. The following regions are concerned: Central Bohemia region, Vysočina region and Moravian-Silesian region. Due to our attempt to capture specifics of common primary schools, church's schools, special, alternative and international schools were not included into selection. Request to fill in a questionnaire was addressed to all directors of primary schools in selected regions with appeal to transmit information to teachers at the given school. Addresses of directors of these schools were found in a directory of schools and school facilities maintained by the Ministry of School, Youth and Sports.

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<sup>16</sup> When we are talking about the evaluation of the term "socially disadvantaged pupil", in the text there is always emphasized that it is only the evaluation of the term. While evaluating all presented terms and in the context of education of the concrete group we talk about the education of the socially disadvantaged pupils (more precisely, the relation between the term "socially disadvantaged pupil" and the specification of the education of socially disadvantaged pupils is subordinant, where the term is part of bigger unit).

<sup>17</sup> In the Czech environment the analysis focusing on the socio-economic background of pupils occur rather infrequently ("Rovný Přístup," 2014, p. 41). That analysis (Socio-demographic analysis – mapping the distribution of vulnerable children and families in the Czech Republic) examines the area in terms of three dimensions: demographic and social environment; economic activity, unemployment; incompleteness of family and malfunction of the family and its threats.

Research file consisted of 245 teachers (204 women and 41 men), out of it 105 from the Central Bohemia region, 76 from the Moravian-Silesian region and 64 teachers from the Vysočina region. Teachers within the range of age from 40 to 59 years (159 teachers in total) were most represented. The least represented group included teachers under the age of 25 years (5 teachers) and teachers above the age of 60 years (14 teachers). The biggest group included teachers having experiences of above 21 years (120 teachers), on the contrary the smallest group included teachers, who are employed for their first year (8 teachers) or teachers having experiences of 1–2 years (8 teachers). The research file consists of 177 teachers, who had experiences (during the past ten years) in education of socially disadvantaged pupils, and 68 teachers, who did not have this experience. We do not consider this research to be representative and results address only the selected set of teachers.

**Questioning method and semantic differential methods** were applied for the purposes of this survey. In order to determine teacher's self-efficacy a questionnaire *Teacher Self-efficacy Scale* from Gibson and Dembi (1984) was used and adapted and translated to the Czech education environment by Greger (2011). It is a self-evaluating tool, by means of which teachers express their beliefs about their abilities to solve certain teaching situations. We came from 16-item questionnaire<sup>18</sup> divided into two factors (PTE and GTE) during the research survey. A teacher rated his level of consent with given characteristics on 6-point scale from "strongly agree" (6) to "strongly disagree" (1), this means the higher point score is, the higher self-efficacy is. Received data were subjected to factor analysis with the application of the method of main components and rotated solution (Direct Oblimin). Four items were rejected due to low value of communality and/or high factor load in both factors (items No. 6, 7, 8 and 15). We used 12 items from the original 16 items. With application of the factor analysis we confirmed that 12 items were decomposed into two factors, which corresponded with the area PTE and GTE. Two extracted factors explain 53.95% variance. **Factor 1** includes 7 items with a factor load from .77 to .62 and explains 32.97% variance. This factor corresponds with the PTE area (teacher's beliefs about his/her qualities), which determines beliefs in their ability to bring about positive pupils and learning outcomes to have positive effect on learning and behaviour of pupils. **Factor 2** includes 5 items with a factor load from .84 to .65 and explains 20.98% variance. All these items are reversible. This factor corresponds with the GTE area (*potentiality of teaching perceived by a teacher*), which is focused on general findings, up to what extent in teacher's view teaching can overcome unfavourable environmental effects and characteristics of pupils (lack of motivation, non-stimulating family environment and the like). Cronbach's alpha reaches the value  $\alpha = .76$  for all 12 items, which indicates mean strong inner consistency. Factor 1 (PTE) achieves high inner consistency  $\alpha = .85$ , factor 2 (GTE) can be also considered as inner consistent ( $\alpha = .78$ ).

In order to determine how teachers perceive individual selected indicators relating to education of socially disadvantage pupils, the method of **semantic differential** was applied. This method is characterized with linking psycholinguistics, psychology of sensing and psychology of individual cognizance together (Maršálová & Mikšík, 1990, pp. 294–300). This method was developed by Osgood based on many analyses. They came from the assumption that a certain object conceals both the denotative content and connotative content to an individual (Osgood, 1975, pp. 320–321). Respondents were recording their cognizance of terms under assessment (*socially disadvantaged pupil, pupil from culturally different family environment, inclusion, segregation, our school, me*)<sup>19</sup> on

<sup>18</sup> The original questionnaire TES made by Gibson and Dembi (1984) was consisted of 30 items. Nevertheless, for better quality in terms of educational measurements, it was reduced at 16 items (Henson, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> The term of *socially disadvantaged pupil* (according to school legislation valid until 31. 8. 2016) and *pupil from a culturally different environment* were chosen with respect to the investigated problem and with respect to as possible close determination of these terms. Attention has been already paid to the term *socially disadvantaged pupil* in this study (see above) *a pupil from culturally different family environment* means according to the Czech education policy ("Rámcový vzdělávací," 2013) an individual from various minorities living in our country, with dissimilar ethnic and nationality origin, or possibly a pupil who came to our country within migration (in particular a recognised refugees or asylum-seekers). The terms *inclusion* and *segregation* are understood also in compliance with the Czech education policy (see, for example,

7-point scale, formed by opposite adjectives. We applied the 2-factor **semantic differential – ATER** (*Attitudes towards Educational Reality*) (Chráska, 2007, p. 221). Usually three factors are observed for each term – *factor of evaluation, factor of potency and factor of activity*, which form a three-dimensional semantic space (Chráska, 2007, p. 221). In view of the fact that factors of evaluation and energy<sup>20</sup> characterize significance, which we intended to investigate in relation to the issue of education of socially disadvantaged pupils (i.e. individual significance of selected conceptual indicators). That is why we worked with these two factors (see also Chráska, 2007). Bipolar scales of individual factors were drawn from the original Osgood's list, which quotes Chráska (2007, pp. 223–224) in Czech version. Bipolar adjectives *clean – dirty; weak – strong* related to 10 bipolar scales (ATER) were completed based on previous researches (e.g., Hladík, 2010; Šafránková & Kocourková, 2013b). In total, we worked with 12 bipolar scales (see below). **Factor of evaluation** (in conformity with Osgood, 1975; Chráska, 2007) expresses up to what extent the term under assessment is perceived by respondents as “good” (1) or “bad” (7). Higher value in the given factor expresses more negative assessment of selected term (*pleasant – unpleasant, clean – dirty, beautiful – ugly, bright – dark, good – bad, sweet – sour*). **Factor of energy** in the area of measuring of education reality shows a relation of term with movement and changes (Chráska, 2007, p. 221). Higher value in the given factor expresses assessment associated with lower movement towards change. On the contrary, lower value represents assessment associated with expending more energy towards change (*demanding – undemanding, difficult – easy, strict – lenient, troubled – problem-free, weak – strong, heavy – light*). Factor analysis with rotation VARIMAX<sub>norm</sub> was used to verify constructional validity of scales. It was found out that factor 1 (evaluation) included 6 bipolar scales with a factor load from .42 to .86. and factor 2 (energy) included 6 bipolar scales with a factor load from .41 to .93. Reliability was determined with the use of Cronbach's alpha and reached the value  $\alpha = .70$ .

We used descriptive statistics (mean value and standard deviation) in order to determine a level of perceived teachers' self-efficacy (and perceived level of teachers' self-efficacy in areas of perceived efficacy). Using the one-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) we investigated the differences in the teachers' self-efficacy depending on the region where teachers work. We applied the independent samples t-test to discover what are the differences in perceived level of teachers' self-efficacy dependent on teachers' experiences in education of socially disadvantaged pupils. We verified relation between the perceived level of teachers' self-efficacy, length of their education practice and age of teachers, as well as connection of perceived level of teachers' self-efficacy with assessment of selected conceptual indicators that relate to educating socially disadvantaged pupils, with the Pearson's correlation coefficient. Testing was performed in the IBM SPSS Statistics (V21.0.0) program.

### 3.3 Research survey results

**The level of perceived teachers' self-efficacy** (TS) employed at selected primary schools (table below) reaches an average value  $M = 3.67$  points,  $SD = .44$  (on the 1–6 scale). Their assessment of self-efficacy is slightly above the mean value. Teachers tend to think that they can rather influence learning and behaviour of pupils.

**Teacher's beliefs about his/her capabilities** (PTE) show a higher average value ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = .60$ ) than **teacher's perception of potentiality of teaching** (GTE), which reaches an average value

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“Strategie Vzdělávací Politiky,” 2014; “Akční plán inkluzivního,” 2016). We were also interested within the context of perception of semantic closeness of individual terms in how teachers perceive the term *me* and *our school* or as the case may be terms, which are more closely linked to the teacher's profession and personality.

<sup>20</sup> Our research is based on the research tool ATER in which the factor of energy is considered in the link with the factor of activity and potency (it means, it is analogous to mechanical energy = potential energy + kinetic energy). In this context the energy factor indicates the extent to which respondents have given the term associated with exertion, difficulties or changes activity (Chráska, 2007, p. 228).

M = 3.14, SD = .79. Teachers' beliefs about his/her capabilities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE) are higher than general teachers' conviction of possibility to overcome or reduce adverse environment effects (GTE). We can observe that this general conviction is slightly under a mean value, which means that teachers on average rather do not agree that based on teaching they can overcome adverse factors laying outside them (GTE).

Table 1

*Level of perceived teachers' self-efficacy at selected primary schools*

Self-efficacy	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
GTE	1.00	6.00	3.14	.79
PTE	1.00	6.00	4.06	.60
TS	2.42	5.00	3.67	.44

We can observe (table below) at the same time that assessment of teacher's self-abilities to influence learning and behaviour of a pupil (PTE) correlates with teacher's conviction of possibilities to overcome adverse environment effects (GTE). This means that the higher teacher's conviction of his/her own abilities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE) is, the lower their conviction of possibilities to overcome or reduce adverse environment effects (GTE) is and the other way around ( $r = -.16$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Table 2

*Connection between teacher's conviction of his/her own abilities (PTE) and conviction of possibility to overcome adverse environment effects (GTE)*

Self-efficacy	PTE	GTE
PTE	-	-
GTE	-.16*	-

Note. \*= Differences are significant at the .05 level.

**Perception of teachers' self-efficacy (TS) in selected regions is not different significantly in terms of statistics** ( $p = .94$ ). Selected teachers show a similar level of self-efficacy (table below) in the Central Bohemia region, Vysočina region and Moravian-Silesian region. Mean values are within the range from M = 3.66 to M = 3.68 points. **Teachers at selected schools in the Moravian-Silesian region, Vysočina region and Central Bohemia region perceive the level of self-efficacy in the area of potentiality of teaching (GTE)** ( $p = .20$ ). Average values are within the range from M = 3.04 to M = 3.24 points, which indicates that teachers in all three regions on average rather disagree that their teaching can overcome adverse external factors. Average values of **teacher's conviction of his/her abilities (PTE)** reach values from M = 3.99 to M = 4.10 points in all three regions. In contrast to the level of self-efficacy in the area of potentiality of teaching (GTE) teachers' conviction of own abilities (PTE) is higher at selected schools this conviction **of selected teachers does not differ in terms of statistics in individual regions** ( $p = .42$ ).

Table 3

*Perception of teachers' self-efficacy in selected regions*

Selected regions	GTE		PTE		TS	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Central Bohemia region	3.24	.73	3.99	.54	3.68	.43
Vysočina region	3.04	.97	4.10	.71	3.66	.43
Moravian-Silesian region	3.08	.69	4.10	.57	3.67	.47

The level of perceived self-efficacy (TS) correlates positively with age of teachers at selected schools ( $r = .14$ ,  $p = .03$ ) and also with length of their education practice ( $r = .15$ ,  $p = .02$ ). The level of

teachers' self-efficacy (TS) employed at selected primary schools (table below) is increasing together with age and length of education experience.

Table 4

*Relation between perceived teachers' self-efficacy, length of their education experience and age of teachers at selected primary schools*

Selected variables	TS	Age	Experience
TS	-	.14*	.15*
Age		-	.82**
Experience			-

Notes. \*= Differences are significant at the .05 level. \*\*= Differences are significant at the .01 level.

**The level of perceived teachers' self-efficacy (TS) employed at selected primary schools is not dependent, whether a teacher had experience (during the past ten years) in educating socially disadvantaged pupils** ( $p = .27$ ). Teachers, who had experience in educating socially disadvantaged pupils, perceive their self-efficacy (TS) like ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = .44$ ) teachers, who do not have this experience ( $M = 3.72$ ,  $SD = .42$ ). Teachers' experiences in educating socially disadvantaged pupils do not show in individual areas of self-efficacy (PTE/GTE). Beliefs about own qualities to have positive impact on pupils' results (PTE) achieve a comparable level ( $p = .97$ ) at teachers, who have experience in educating socially disadvantaged pupils ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = .64$ ), like at teachers, who do not have this experience ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = .45$ ). Disregarding experience in educating socially disadvantaged pupils teachers are in accord that they do not have such possibilities to overcome adverse environment effects and characteristics of pupils (GTE) based on teaching. Teachers, who have experience in educating socially disadvantage pupils, reach average value  $M = 3.09$  ( $SD = .82$ ) and teachers, who do not have this experience, reach average value  $M = 3.25$  ( $SD = .70$ ). Differences in assessment of potentiality of teaching to overcome unfavourable family environment of pupils (GTE) are not significant in terms of statistics ( $p = .27$ ).

Table 5

*Differences in perception of teachers' self-efficacy dependent on experience in educating socially disadvantaged pupils*

Self-efficacy	Experience	Mean	SD	SE
GTE	No	3.25	.70	.09
	Yes	3.09	.82	.06
PTE	No	4.06	.45	.06
	Yes	4.06	.64	.05
TS	No	<b>3.72</b>	<b>.42</b>	<b>.05</b>
	Yes	<b>3.65</b>	<b>.44</b>	<b>.03</b>

**The level of perceived self-efficacy (TS) at selected teachers correlates significantly<sup>21</sup> with assessment of conceptual indicator of socially disadvantaged pupil** ( $r = .33$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and with assessment of conceptual indicator *pupil from a culturally different environment* ( $r = .18$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The higher self-efficacy (TS) is, the more positive the teachers' assessment of the term *socially disadvantaged pupil* and *pupil from culturally different environment* is (and the other way around). More positive assessment of conceptual indicator *socially disadvantage pupil* is evident at teachers, who believe that they can overcome adverse pupil's environment through teaching (GTE) ( $r = .29$ ,

<sup>21</sup> We kept the line of assessment on the overall rate of perceived self-efficacy (TS) in relation to individual terms and consecutively in partial areas (GTE and PTE) in relation to selected terms at assessing connections between perceived level of teachers' self-efficacy and assessment of selected conceptual indicators relating to education of socially disadvantaged pupils. We intended in particular to capture the level of self-efficacy in relation to assessment of selected terms, not primarily assessment of selected terms.

$p < .01$ ). Assessment of self-abilities in relation to influencing of learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE) is not connected with assessment of the conceptual indicator *socially disadvantaged pupil* ( $r = .12$ ,  $p = .06$ ). On the contrary, there is evident a connection with assessment of self-abilities to influencing of behaviour and learning of pupils (PTE) ( $r = .15$ ,  $p = .02$ ) at assessing the conceptual indicator *pupil from culturally different environment*. Assessment of this term is not connected with teacher's beliefs about possibility to overcome or reduce adverse external factors (GTE) ( $r = .07$ ,  $p = .31$ ).

**The level of perceived self-efficacy (TS) correlates significantly with the conceptual indicator inclusion** ( $r = .26$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Assessment of the conceptual indicator *inclusion* is associated both with assessment of self-abilities to influencing of behaviour and learning of pupils (PTE) ( $r = .14$ ,  $p = .03$ ) as well as with teacher's beliefs about possibility to overcome or reduce adverse natural pupil's environment (GTE) ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

**Assessment of the conceptual indicator our school** ( $r = .23$ ,  $p < .01$ ) **and the conceptual indicator me** ( $r = .18$ ,  $p < .01$ ) **is associated with the level of perceived self-efficacy (TS)**. Teachers, who achieve a higher level of self-efficacy (TS), assess at the same time the term *me* and the term *our school* more positively. The higher the level of teachers' self-efficacy (TS) is, the more positive their assessment of themselves (the conceptual indicator *me*) and the term *our school* is. More positive assessment of the conceptual indicator *me* and the conceptual indicator *our school* is evident in case of higher assessment of self-abilities in relation to influencing of a pupil (PTE). Teachers, who believe in their self-abilities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils positively (PTE), assess the conceptual indicator *me* ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and the conceptual indicator *our school* ( $r = .27$ ,  $p < .01$ ) more positively. Teachers' opinion up to what extent they can overcome through teaching adverse environment effects and characteristics of pupils (GTE) is not associated with assessment of the conceptual indicator *me* ( $r = .02$ ,  $p = .75$ ) nor with assessment of the conceptual indicator *our school* ( $r = .02$ ,  $p = .82$ ).

**The level of self-efficacy (TS) is not associated with assessment of the conceptual indicator segregation** ( $r = -.07$ ,  $p = .28$ ). The way how teachers assess their self-efficacy (TS) is not reflected into assessment of the term *segregation*. Assessment of the conceptual indicator *segregation* is not associated with teachers' beliefs about their own qualities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE) ( $r = .06$ ,  $p = .35$ ), but on the contrary it is associated with finding, to what extent (in teacher's opinion) teaching can overcome adverse environment effects and characteristics of pupils (GTE) ( $r = -.17$ ,  $p = .01$ ). **The more teachers at selected primary schools are convinced that they can overcome or at least reduce adverse factors laying outside teachers (GTE) through teaching, the more negative their assessment of the term segregation is.**

Table 6

*Connection between perceived teachers' self-efficacy and their assessment of selected conceptual indicators in the factor of assessment*

Conceptual indicators	GTE	PTE	TS
Socially disadvantaged pupil	.29**	.12	.33**
Pupil from culturally different environment	.07	.15*	.18**
Inclusion	.20**	.14*	.26**
Segregation	-.17**	.06	-.07
Our school	.02	.27**	.23**
Me	.02	.20**	.18**

Notes. \* = Differences are significant at the .05 level. \*\* = Differences are significant at the .01 level.

**Level of perceived self-efficacy (TS) at selected teachers correlates negatively with assessment of the conceptual indicator socially disadvantaged pupil at the energy factor** ( $r = -.20$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Teachers with a higher level of perceived self-efficacy (TS) link the term *socially disadvantaged pupil*

to a lower level of expended energy. This connection is evident at assessing potentiality of teaching to overcome adverse pupil's natural environment (GTE) ( $r = -.26, p < .01$ ). The less teachers at selected primary schools believe that they can overcome adverse environment effects and characteristics of a pupil (GTE) through teaching, the more they associate the term of *socially disadvantaged pupil* with expending energy towards change (effort) (or more precisely the higher teachers' conviction of possibilities to overcome adverse external factors is, the less they associate the term of *socially disadvantaged pupil* with making some effort). **Assessment of self-abilities to influencing of learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE) is not connected with assessment of the conceptual indicator *socially disadvantaged pupil*** ( $r = .01, p = .99$ ) at the energy factor.

**Connection between teachers' self-efficacy (TS) employed at selected primary schools and their assessment of the conceptual indicators *pupil from a culturally different environment*** ( $r = -.02, p = .81$ ), ***inclusion*** ( $r = -.02, p = .74$ ), ***segregation*** ( $r = .09, p = .16$ ), ***our school*** ( $r = -.02, p = .70$ ), ***me*** ( $r = .02, p = .77$ ) **was not proved at the energy factor.** The way how teachers at selected primary schools assess the level of self-efficacy (whether assessment of self-abilities, behaviour and learning of pupils or assessment of possibilities how to overcome adverse natural pupil's environment is concerned) is not associated up to what extent they associate selected terms (*inclusion, segregation, our school, pupil from culturally different environment or me*) with attempt or quantity of expended energy.

Table 7

*Connection between perceived teachers' self-efficacy and their assessment of selected conceptual indicators in terms of the energy factor*

Conceptual indicators	GTE	PTE	TS
Socially disadvantaged pupil	-.26**	-.01	-.20**
Schoolchild from culturally different environment	-.02	-.01	-.02
Inclusion	-.07	.02	-.02
Segregation	.03	.12	.09
Our school	.09	-.10	-.02
Me	.04	.01	.02

Notes. \*= Differences are significant at the .05 level. \*\*= Differences are significant at the .01 level.

## 4 Summary and discussion

Our research was focused on findings what is the relation between perceived teachers' self-efficacy at primary schools and selected factors associated with educating of socially disadvantaged pupils. We found out that teachers employed at selected primary schools **believed more in their education capabilities to influence on learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE) than in their possibilities to affect adverse effects of external environment (GTE). Teachers on average rather agree that they have qualities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE)**, although they tend to think that **based on education they can overcome adverse factors laying outside them (GTE) in lower extent**, i.e. lack of motivation, non-stimulating family background of pupils etc. Similarly, teachers achieve higher score in the area of PTE contrary to the area of GTE in a number of other researches, or as the case may be they have beliefs about their education qualities in relation to education and upbringing of pupils than about their possibilities to compensate adverse effects of external environment (e.g., Cerit, 2010; Gavora, 2011; Gavora & Majerčíková, 2012; Graham, 2011; Gorrell & Hwang, 1995; Greger, 2011).

It is interesting that the more teachers from selected primary schools are convinced of their own qualities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE), the less they are convinced that they can overcome adverse environment effects (GTE). It is possible that they come to realize more strongly impact of natural environment of pupils (fundamental impact of family on behaviour and

learning of pupils), even though they are convinced of their possibilities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE). We would expect that teachers, who are convinced of their own qualities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE), are also convinced that they can overcome adverse environment effects (GTE).

Every life period places various demands on abilities to function successfully, which is also reflected into dynamics of perceived teachers' self-efficacy. The level of perceived self-efficacy (TS) correlates positively with age of teachers and also with length of their education practice. It is obvious that **the level of teachers' self-efficacy (TS) employed at selected primary schools is increasing together with age and length of education experience**. It is not surprising that together with gained experiences (professional and life experiences) their beliefs about self-abilities and their conviction of possibilities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils grow. Education experience can contribute up to certain extent that teachers of selected primary schools have higher certainty (this means that they probably know their possibilities and limits) in that they can affect learning and behaviour of a pupil (see also Bandura, 1994; Ďurkovičová, 2013).

It follows at the same time from the research results that **the level of perceived self-efficacy of teachers (TS) employed at selected primary schools is not dependent on teachers' experience in education of socially disadvantaged pupils**. Teachers, who have experience in educating socially disadvantaged pupils, perceive their self-efficacy (TS) like teachers, who do not have this experience. Disregarding experience of teachers in education of socially disadvantaged pupils, teachers from selected primary schools have comparable level of beliefs about their own capabilities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE) and they hold similar view that they rather cannot overcome adverse external effects (GTE) through teaching. It follows indirectly from these results that even though education experience and age of a teacher at selected primary school are to some extent reflected into teacher's beliefs about self-efficacy, this experience does not need to be connected with education of socially disadvantaged pupils. We suppose that experiences, which result from various education situations that teachers solve at the course of their everyday education practice, are concerned. In fact, any experience is reflected into the perceived level of self-efficacy (and it does not need to be connected with education of socially disadvantaged pupil). Conclusions from some researches give evidence that substitute experience and social pressure can have effect on conviction of teachers to overcome adverse external environment effects (GTE) (Watters & Ginns, 1995) and teacher's beliefs about his/her own abilities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE) are rather affected by actual education experience (Housego, 1992; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990).

It is not surprising in continuity of previous findings that **teachers' self-efficacy (TS) does not differ significantly at selected primary schools depending on region, where teachers are employed**. Teachers have comparable level of beliefs about their abilities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE) disregarding whether a region reports the smallest, average or highest level of children in danger in all selected regions (Central Bohemia region, Vysočina region and Moravian-Silesian region). They are in accord that they can overcome in smaller extent adverse environment effects laying outside them (GTE) through teaching. In consideration that experiences in education of socially disadvantaged pupils are not reflected significantly into the level of teachers' self-efficacy we are not surprised that there are not significant differences in teachers' self-efficacy in selected regions with different level of social disadvantage (where this experience can play principal role).

Research results indicate that perceived **teachers' self-efficacy at selected primary schools is associated with assessment of conceptual indicators relating to education of socially disadvantaged pupils**. This connection (with assessment of conceptual indicators that relate to educating of socially disadvantaged pupils) occurs differently according to what area of perceived self-efficacy is concerned (GTE/PTE) and according to significance (factor) of assessment (whether assessment of positive/negative significance of given term is concerned, i.e. factor of evaluation, or assessment associated with making certain effort/energy towards change, i.e. energy factor, is concerned). Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998) states that teachers with high level of

perceived self-efficacy (TS) tend to individual approach towards individuals in need of specific support. However, we can only assume within this context that results of assessment of individual terms by means of a semantic differential can predict willingness/unwillingness of respondents aimed at certain activity<sup>22</sup>. Similarly, Guskey (1984) states that higher level of perceived self-efficacy has effect besides others on positive attitudes towards education.

Perception of teachers' self-efficacy (TS) is associated with assessment of conceptual indicators *socially disadvantaged pupil*, *pupil from culturally different environment*, *inclusion*, *our school* and conceptual indicator *me*. This means that **the higher level of perceived teachers' self-efficacy at selected primary schools (TS) is, the more positive their assessment of the term *socially disadvantaged pupil*, *pupil from culturally different environment*, the term of *inclusion*, *our school* and the conceptual indicator is**. The level of perceived self-efficacy (TS) is not associated with how teachers from selected primary schools assess the term *segregation*. **Similarly also other researches** (e.g., Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998; Weisel & Dror, 2006) confirm influence of perceived teacher's self-efficacy on positive/negative attitude towards inclusion.

Teacher's beliefs about possibilities to overcome or reduce adverse pupil's environment (GTE) are associated with assessment of the term *socially disadvantaged pupil*, of the terms *inclusion* and *segregation*. **The more teachers at selected primary schools are convinced of possibilities to overcome or reduce adverse external factors (GTE), the more they assess positively the term of *socially disadvantaged pupil*, the term of *inclusion*, and asses more negatively the term of *segregation***. It is not surprising from this view that teachers from selected primary schools are convinced that they cannot influence adverse environment effects and characteristics of a pupil (GTE) through education and they may associate education of socially disadvantaged pupils with unpleasant feelings and negative perception of these pupils.

It turned out that conviction of teachers from selected primary schools of their own qualities to affect learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE) was associated with assessment of the terms *pupil from culturally different environment*, *inclusion*, *our school* and with assessment of himself/herself (the conceptual indicator *me*). **The more teachers from selected primary schools are convinced of their own qualities to affect learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE), the more they assess positively the terms *pupil from culturally different environment*, *inclusion*, *our school* and the term *me***. If a teacher believes in his/her own qualities, there is a probability that he/she associates school, where he/she is employed, with positive assessment and he/she perceives himself/herself positively.

The level of perceived conviction of teachers' self-abilities (PTE) at selected primary schools does not relate to assessment of terms *socially disadvantaged pupil* and *segregation*. Perception of the term of *segregation* is not probably unequivocal and a lot of other factors will play a role. It is obvious that teachers from selected primary schools, who have higher beliefs about their qualities (PTE) perceive differently significance of terms *socially disadvantaged pupil* and *pupil from culturally different environment*. Even though teachers are convinced of their own capabilities to influence learning and behaviour of a pupil (PTE), they assess the term of *socially disadvantaged pupil* differently (both positively and negatively). Their conviction in this regard is not associated with perception of the term of *socially disadvantaged pupil*. It could occur due to the fact that perception of socially disadvantaged pupils is affected for the most part by other variables, for example education experience, which is connected with teachers' self-efficacy at selected primary schools (TS).

The level of perceived self-efficacy is associated significantly with assessment of conceptual indicators relating to education of socially disadvantaged pupils at the factor of evaluation, i.e. in positive or negative sense. It is then associated in lower extent with assessment of conceptual indicators at the energy factor, i.e. whether teachers associate the term with expending of more or

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<sup>22</sup> We assume that the method of semantic differential measures the attitudes (consisting of cognitive, emotional and conative components) individuals to a particular concept.

less energy towards change. This connection appears only at assessing the term of socially disadvantaged pupil (in the GTE area).

Teachers with a higher level of perceived self-efficacy (TS) link the term *socially disadvantaged pupil* to a lower level of expended energy. This connection appears distinctly in the area of potentiality of teaching (GTE). This means that **the lower teachers' conviction of possibilities to overcome adverse external factors (GTE) at selected primary schools is, the more they associate the term of *socially disadvantaged pupil* with making certain effort.** Selected primary school teachers' conviction of possibilities to overcome or reduce adverse effects of family environment (GTE), as well as teachers' beliefs about their own abilities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE), are not associated at all with assessment of the term of *pupil from culturally different environment, inclusion, segregation, our school* nor with the conceptual indicator *me*.

Teachers from selected primary schools associate the terms relating to education of socially disadvantaged pupils with various power intensity (expending energy). Their conviction of their own qualities to influence school results and learning of pupils (PTE) is not associated with whether they connect selected terms with making certain effort.

Teachers' conviction of their own qualities to influence learning and behaviour of pupils is connected with other factors than with perception of significance of terms at the energy factor (certain movement towards change). It is obvious from results that this conviction is rather connected with positive or negative perception of selected conceptual indicators (at the factor of evaluation).

At conclusion, we can claim that perceived teachers' self-efficacy (TS) is connected significantly with all selected terms, apart from the conceptual indicator of *segregation*. We discover at the same time that perceived teachers' self-efficacy at selected primary schools is connected very significantly with assessment of the conceptual indicator *inclusion*, where it is obvious that the higher perceived teachers' self-efficacy is (in the area GTE and PTE), the more positive the assessment of the conceptual indicator *inclusion* is. When we investigate individual areas of perceived self-efficacy in more details, we find out that this connection is present differently in each area (GTE and PTE). The term of *socially disadvantaged pupil* is connected significantly with up to what extent teachers at selected primary schools have beliefs about their possibilities to overcome unfavourable effects laying outside them (GTE), for example poor abilities of a pupil or unfavourable family environment of a pupil, while the term of *pupil from culturally different environment* is connected significantly with teachers' beliefs about their own qualities (PTE). The more teachers from selected primary schools are convinced of their own qualities to affect learning and behaviour of pupils (PTE), the more they assess positively the terms *pupil from culturally different environment, inclusion, our school* and the conceptual indicator *me*. There is a probability that positive conviction of self-abilities will reflect into positive perception of the term of inclusion, but also into positive assessment of school or himself/herself. On the other side, we can expect positive perception of the term *socially disadvantaged pupil* at teachers, who are more convinced of possibilities to overcome adverse environment effects (GTE).

We can deduce indirectly from results that teacher's beliefs about himself/herself can be reflected into perception of others in this case pupils, with whom a teacher works, where it is important whether perception of his/her own qualities (PTE) or of possibilities to overcome adverse environment effects (GTE) is concerned. It is obvious from our research that experience in education of socially disadvantaged pupils is not too reflected into perceived teachers' self-efficacy at selected primary schools, nevertheless it cannot be excluded that this experience is reflected into assessment of terms relating to education of socially disadvantaged pupils (at the factor of evaluation), which is closely connected with perceived teachers' self-efficacy. If a teacher is convinced of his/her self-efficacy, then he/she assesses selected conceptual indicators associated with education of socially disadvantaged pupils more positively. According to discovered results and in conformity with Rogers (Kirschenbaum & Henderson, 1989, p. 225) we believe that besides other things positive acceptance

and teacher's beliefs about his/her qualities and possibilities to overcome adverse environment effects, which in case of socially disadvantaged pupils can affect their education significantly, are important for successful education of socially disadvantaged pupils.

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# Proactive Coping Behavior in Sample of University Students in Helping Professions

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the present study is twofold. First is to carry out item and scale analysis of the Czech version of the Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI) on a selected sample of university students in helping professions (n = 176). Second is to identify the use of proactive coping strategies by gender, age, specialization and year of study. The PCI scales reached satisfactory item-total correlations, besides the items presented (8, 39 and 48). Internal consistency of the PCI scales ranged from .71 to .8, except low  $\alpha$  for Strategic Planning. Students reached the highest use of emotional and instrumental support seeking with no overall socio-demographic differences. Further, interrelationships among the PCI scales and correlations within a subjective well-being, depression and social support are presented.

**Keywords:** proactive coping, PCI, student in helping professions

## Proaktivní zvládání u vysokoškolských studentů pomáhajících profesí

**Abstrakt:** Cíl předložené studie je dvojitý. Prvním cílem je položková a škálová analýza české verze Dotazníku proaktivního zvládání životních nároků (PCI) na souboru vysokoškolských studentů pomáhajících profesí (n = 176). Druhým cílem je zjištění používání proaktivních strategií dle pohlaví, věku, specializace a ročníku studia. Korelace položek s odpovídajícími škálami jsou uspokojivé, kromě uvedených položek (8, 39 a 48). Vnitřní konzistence škál se pohybovala od 0,17 do 0,8, kromě nízké hodnoty  $\alpha$  u škály Strategického plánování. Studenti v největší míře využívali emoční a instrumentální podporu bez celkových sociodemografických rozdílů. Vzájemné korelace PCI škál a jejich vztah s prožíváním vnitřní pohody, deprese a využíváním sociální podpory jsou dále prezentovány.

**Klíčová slova:** proaktivní zvládání, PCI, student pomáhajících profesí

## 1 Introduction

A wide range of research on social cognition, social interaction, stress and coping aims to analyze the processes through which people anticipate or detect potential stressors and act in advance to prevent them or to mitigate their consequences. Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) first used the term for such a behavior called *proactive coping* and opened a vast area of new research in the stress and

coping literature. As such, proactive coping differs from coping with stressful events and from anticipatory coping on three main grounds.

First, proactive coping forms and occurs temporally prior to both coping and anticipatory coping. In this case, utilizing internal resources and specific skills to overcome particular stressors is not activated; instead, forearmed preparation for similar situations in the future occurs. Second, different skills are important during proactive coping than in coping with external stress. These are mainly related skills to estimate potential stressors before they actually appear. Third, as compared with coping with existing stressors, proactive coping is virtually always active, pre-addressing nonexistent stressors; thus, different skills and activities are likely to be successful. For example, emotional support may be less important or unhelpful when focusing on nonspecific factors.

Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) divide proactive coping into five time-related stages: (1) resource accumulation in advance of any specific anticipated stressor; (2) attention-recognition (ability to see a potential stressful event); (3) initial appraisal; (4) preliminary coping; and (5) elicitation and use of feedback. However, Schwarzer and Taubert (2002), building upon Lazarus's (1991) cognitive appraisal approach, added a temporal dimension.<sup>23</sup> This perspective stems from a time-related classification of coping models and proposes distinctions between reactive coping, anticipatory coping, preventive coping and proactive coping. They believe that coping, among other factors, depends on the time perspective of the demands and the subjective certainty of the events. In this sense, proactive coping is oriented on certain future rewards and challenges not appraised as threats. Proactive individuals are motivated to meet challenges and are *not reactive, but proactive* in the sense that they initiate a constructive path of action and create opportunities for their growth.

Although Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) have described proactive coping very similarly, what they call proactive coping is mainly covered by the term "preventive coping" in the aforementioned Schwarzer and Taubert approach (2002). In preventive coping, individuals consider a critical event that may or may not occur in the distant future. Examples of such events are illness, disaster, job loss, forced retirement, crime and poverty. There can be a vague wariness that "something might happen," which motivates one to prepare for "everything." Conversely, proactive behavior does not prevent negative appraisals, such as harm, loss or threat.

While in the past coping was seen as a reactive strategy used after stress is experienced, coping is more recently being viewed as *something one can do prior to when stress occurs*. According to Greenglass (2002), proactive coping is multifunctional, multidimensional and forward-looking. It combines the processes aimed at maintaining or improving the quality of life with processes aimed at achieving personal goals. Greenglass highlights three main areas in which proactive coping differs from traditional conceptions of reactive coping: (1) proactive coping is more future-oriented and consists efforts to build up general resources that facilitate promotion of challenging goals and personal growth; (2) proactive coping is regarded as goal management instead of risk management; and (3) the motivation for proactive coping is more positive perceptions of situations as challenging.

To measure different aspects of coping used by individuals during stressful times as well as in anticipation of stress and difficult situations, a multidimensional research instrument, the *Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI)*, was developed by Greenglass, Schwarzer and Taubert (1999). The PCI integrates affective, cognitive, social and intentional factors into a set of coping strategies. This 55-item instrument identifies seven dimensions of coping, which are: proactive (i.e., "I like challenges and beating the odds"); reflective (i.e., "I tackle a problem by thinking about realistic alternatives"); preventive (i.e., "I prepare for adverse events"); strategic (i.e., "I break down a problem into smaller parts and do one part at a time"); instrumental support seeking (i.e., "When solving my own problems, other people's advice can be helpful"); emotional support seeking (i.e., "If I am depressed, I know who I can call to help me feel better"); and avoidance (i.e., "When I have a problem I like to

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<sup>23</sup> Proactive coping is primarily defined as long-term behavior with no necessary concrete stressor, and is seen as self-regulatory goal management instead of risk management.

sleep on it"). A four-point scale with 1 indicating "not at all true," 2 "barely true," 3 "somewhat true," and 4 "completely true" was used. Reverse scoring is done only for 3 items (2, 9 and 14) from the Proactive Coping Scale. Higher scores indicate that the individual concerned is more inclined towards this particular coping style and indicates better proactive coping ability.

It may seem that the PCI and its subscales offers many possibilities for testing hypotheses relevant to increasing our understanding of the process of coping. However, proactive coping may go largely unrecognized as it can be difficult to detect. Relatively nothing happens when people act to minimize or prevent the onset and development of potential stressors. Instead, our attention is focused on cases when people are not able to handle certain situations and stressors – and their consequences – are visibly manifested. Proactive coping, by contrast, improves quality of life and in so doing includes elements of positive psychology and extends into a wide area of related disciplines, such as social cognition and self-regulation, stress management, health, psychology on coping and self-regulatory goal attainment (see also Schwarzer & Renner, 2000). For instance, closely-related self-regulation is often described as the ability to develop, implement and maintain planned behavior in order to achieve personal goals (Brown, Miller, & Lawendowski, 1999). These self-regulatory skills reveal a great deal about how people anticipate stressful events and manage to avoid them or minimize their impact.

Our presented review of the resources and group differences is focused on a specific sample of university students in helping professions. Such professions often represent the fields of medicine, nursing, psychotherapy, psychological counseling, social work, social education, life coaching and religious ministry. Unsurprisingly, there is a very close link to the socio-educational field of practices since these professionals go on to work in various different institutional contexts, social networks or networks in the community. Therefore, this kind of work includes individuals able to carry out socio-educational activities in the domain of formal and non-formal education, in community and social services and even in real-life practices in other emerging areas such as hospital, retirement, prison or juvenile justice institutions. No doubt proactive management should be a part of the personality skills of these students/professionals working in helping professions. Further, the development of proactive coping is not only a necessary condition for effective preparation for such future professions, but, ultimately, represents personality development of the students, especially important for those working in helping professions.

Additionally, there are several reasons to believe that positive beliefs contribute to the promotion of subjective *well-being*. For example, individuals with a sense of self-worth may practice conscientious health habits more, thus, promoting their well-being (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009). Also those who employ coping strategies based on proactivity more often perceive that their lives are going well. On this basis, positive relationships from proactive coping behavior is expected. Moreover, the conceptualization of *social support* as coping broadens the concept of coping (as it has traditionally been defined) to include interpersonal and relational skills (Greenglass, 2002). This approach recognizes the importance of others' resources that can be adapted into the individual's coping repertoire and improve emotional well-being (e.g. Dunkel-Schetter, 1984; Holland & Holahan, 2003). Social support, well-being and coping should be seen as positively correlated (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009). On the other hand, proactive coping is often associated with lower negative behaviors, such as *depression* (Almássy et al., 2014). In order to provide additional evidence for the construct validity of the PCI scales, these relationships are analyzed in the present study.

## 2 Aims of the Investigation

The purpose of the present study is twofold. First is to check the item and scale characteristics covering descriptive statistics, item-total correlations and internal consistency tests. Further, interrelationships among the PCI scales in available samples and clarifications of the correlation within a subjective well-being, social support and feelings of depression are explored. Second is to

identify the use of proactive coping strategies by socio-demographic characteristics, i.e., gender, age, specialization and learning experience (year of study) of the university students in helping professions including, inter alia, future social educators and preschool teachers.

It is assumed that proactive coping is generally beneficial to a person and improves many life domains, including the quality of professional work and personal life. In this sense, proactive copers anticipate stressful events before the events occur and take appropriate steps to avoid or at least minimize them. Young and middle-aged adults seem to be a suitable population for proactive coping examination, since this age group faces the task of adapting to real-life day-to-day conditions. Also, given that working with others requires undertaking attempts to prevent future stressors, the research sample was narrowed to university students in helping professions. As of yet, only a few empirical studies have been realized in the Czech educational environment.

### 3 Method

#### 3.1 Participants

Participants were 176 university students from a medium-sized public university in the Czech Republic.<sup>24</sup> Convenience sampling was conducted on a voluntary basis and data was collected using a paper-pencil questionnaire in a regular classroom settings. The mean age of the sample was 22 years (ranging from 19 to 26 years).<sup>25</sup> 8 (4.5%) males with an average age of 22.4 years (age ranged from 20 to 25 years, SD = 1.90) and 168 (95.5%) females with an average age of 21.5 years (age ranged from 19 to 26, SD = 1.49). The female distribution was positively skewed (.67), and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test indicated deviations from normality (K-S  $p < .001$ ; S-W  $p < .001$ ). There was no significant age difference between females and males.

121 (68.8%) of students surveyed had chosen Social Education for their future profession and 55 (31.2%) of students attended Preschool Teachers' Training in full-time study settings. The second year of bachelor's degree study represented numerically the largest group of Social Education specialization and the first-year students of bachelor's degree study predominated in the Preschool Teachers' Training study program. The distribution of gender, age, year and field of study is shown in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Demographic details of the samples*

Frequency	Gender		Age		Year of Study					Specialization	
	male	female	19-20	21-26	1st year Bc	2nd year Bc	3rd year Bc	1st year Mgr	2nd year Mgr	Social Education	Preschool Teachers' Training
N	8	168	95	77	59	55	32	21	9	121	55
%	4.5	95.5	53.9	43.8	33.5	31.3	18.2	11.9	5.1	68.8	31.2

Notes. N = Number of respondents. % = Relative frequency. Bc = Bachelor's study. Mgr = Master's study.

#### 3.2 Measures

The aim of the original Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI; Greenglass, Schwarzer, & Taubert, 1999) scales was to capture the multidimensionality contained in various aspects of coping used by

<sup>24</sup> The basic research sample (N = 1.183) consisted of full-time university students majoring in humanities studies.

<sup>25</sup> Age of the respondents was, for statistical purposes, further divided into two categories according to the developmental stage of adolescence and young adulthood.

individuals during stressful events as well as in anticipation of stress and difficult situations ahead. In the first stage of the PCI development, students and psychologists assisted in generating 137 items pool concerning coping behaviors. The proposed questions were categorized according to the Schwarzer's Proactive Coping Theory<sup>26</sup> and subjected to psychometric analysis. There were six new scales consisting of a total 52 items constituting 6 subscales. At this stage, a three-item scale measuring Avoidance Coping was included and the original PCI scales were developed on a Canadian student sample (Greenglass, 2002) and validated using a Polish-Canadian adult and student sample (Pasikowski, Sek, Greenglass, & Taubert, 2002). Respondents answered according to a four-point scale with 1 representing "not at all true" to 4 "completely true."

The PCI shows reasonably good psychometric properties including internal consistency for each subscale with  $\alpha$ 's ranging from .61 to .85 (Greenglass, Schwarzer, & Taubert, 1999). In general, each of the subscales showed good item-total correlations. Measures from related constructs such as self-efficacy, life satisfaction, fair treatment, active coping, planning, or emotional exhaustion, cynicism, anger or depression, were included to provide additional evidence for the construct validity of the scales. In addition, principal component analyses confirmed their factorial structure and homogeneity (ibid).

Within the last decade PCI has been translated into many language contexts, such as Hungarian (Almássy et al., 2014), Hindi (Bhusham, Gautam, & Greenglass, 2010), Macedonian (Ristovska et al., 2014) and Czech (Šolcová, Lukavsky, & Greenglass, 2006), and used in a large multiethnic sample (Roesch et al. (2009). Since the PCI was previously translated and tested in the Czech educational environment, the Czech version of the PCI (Šolcová, Lukavsky, & Greenglass, 2006) was used in the present study. Authors tested an alternative three-factor model on a medium-size university student sample favoring the original 7-factor structure of the PCI.<sup>27</sup>

To clarify the interrelation of proactive coping with a subjective social support, well-being and depression, the subjects also completed Czech versions<sup>28</sup> of the Medical Outcomes Study (MOS; Kožený & Tišanská, 2003; original scale: Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991) measuring social support; Schwartz Outcomes Scale (SOS-10; Dragomirecká et al., 2006; original scale: Blais et al., 1999) measuring well-being; and the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II; Preiss & Vacíř, 1999, original scale: Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996). In these additional measures, respondents answered according to a four-point scale with 1 representing "none of the time" and 4 "all of the time." Positive correlations between avoidance coping and depression, social support and well-being were theoretically expected. Finally, demographic items stating gender, age, specialization and year of study were presented.

### 3.3 Procedure

Data analysis was divided into three parts. First, descriptive characteristics at the *item level* are presented covered by calculating mean, standard deviation and item-total correlation between each item and the total subscale score, excluding the particular item<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> The focus of the theory is moved away from mere responses to negative events toward a broader range of risk and goal management that includes the active creation of opportunities and the positive experience of stress (Schwarzer & Taubert, 2002).

<sup>27</sup> The original English and Czech versions of the PCI are identical, enabling international comparisons.

<sup>28</sup> Due to the recommended length of the article of the presented journal and also due to the fact that presented measures do not fulfill the main purpose of the paper, further details of the measures are not included. More readings can be made under the quotations cited for each measurement.

<sup>29</sup> In both original samples (Greenglass, Schwarzer, & Taubert, 1999), authors used a different method of calculating the item-total correlation. More specifically, the particular item was not excluded from the total subscale score, which complicates comparisons and generates errors in the interpretation of the items.

Second, the descriptive statistics of the use of proactive coping strategies are described at the *scale level*. Internal consistency of the PCI scales and its comparison with existing  $\alpha$  coefficients<sup>30</sup> as well as the PCI subscales correlations with a subjective well-being, social support and depression are presented. Third, possible *differences between groups* of students according to gender, age, specialization and year of study (socio-demographic characteristics) were tested at a level of  $\alpha = .05$  for all statistical tests.<sup>31</sup> Calculations were performed using IBM SPSS 22.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Item Analysis

An itemized analysis brought detailed descriptive comparison of the obtained item scores (see Table 2-8). Prior to describing the scales that represent the construct, an item-total correlation tests was performed to check if any item is inconsistent with the averaged behavior of the others; that is, whether it fits the meaning of the averaged measure. A small item-correlation provides empirical evidence that the item is not measuring the same construct measured by the other items included.<sup>32</sup>

First, within the **Proactive Coping Scale** (see Table 2) combining inherent goal setting with self-regulatory goal attainment behavior, the sample scored the highest on Item 48 (“When I apply for a position, I imagine myself filling it”), and Item 37 (“I try to pinpoint what I need to succeed”). Unsurprisingly, the same items were scored the highest by the medium-sized Czech young adult sample (Šolcová, Lukavský, & Greenglass, 2006). Although Item 48 is of average strength, its correlation with the scale is weak (.18). Together with Item 8 (.10), this seems conceptually problematic, showing unrelated connection with the individual items making up the scale. The remaining item-total correlations ranged between .25 and .59.

Table 2  
*Proactive Coping Subscale*

No.	Item*	M (SD)	r <sub>it-t</sub>
1	I am a "take charge" person.	2.69 (.63)	.49
8	I try to let things work out on their own. (-)	2.53 (.83)	.10
15	After attaining a goal, I look for another, more challenging one.	2.18 (.84)	.46
22	I like challenges and beating the odds.	2.85 (.78)	.47
28	I visualize my dreams and try to achieve them.	2.95 (.77)	.49
33	Despite numerous setbacks, I usually succeed in getting what I want.	2.91 (.64)	.52
37	I try to pinpoint what I need to succeed.	3.12 (.64)	.25
41	I always try to find a way to work around obstacles; nothing really stops me.	2.81 (.72)	.52
45	I often see myself failing so I don't get my hopes up too high. (-)	2.81 (.87)	.42
48	When I apply for a position, I imagine myself filling it.	3.17 (.87)	.18
51	I turn obstacles into positive experiences.	2.66 (.82)	.45
53	If someone tells me I can't do something, you can be sure I will do it.	2.78 (.80)	.57
54	When I experience a problem, I take the initiative in resolving it.	2.59 (.72)	.59
55	When I have a problem, I usually see myself in a no-win situation. (-)	2.46 (.91)	.53

Notes. \*= The items were provided to respondents in the Czech language. Original English version is used for illustration purposes. - = Reversed items. M = Mean. SD = Standard deviation. r<sub>it-t</sub> = Item-total correlation.

**Reflective Coping Scale** combines reflection about a variety of possible behavioral alternatives, analyzing their effectiveness, resources and creating hypothetical plans of further action. The sample

<sup>30</sup> The results revealing the current factor structure of the PCI for the Czech sample are presented otherwise.

<sup>31</sup> Possibly confounding results were corrected by the Bonferroni method.

<sup>32</sup> A correlation value less than .2 or .3 indicates that the appropriate item does not correlate very well with the scale overall and, thus, it may be dropped while building the final factor structure (Field, 2005).

performed the highest on Item 23 (“I tackle a problem by thinking about realistic alternatives”). Standard deviation (.60) shows that the prevailing opinion is quite stable across the data set. The same highest result was achieved by the Czech young adult sample (Šolcová, Lukavský, & Greenglass, 2006). Item-total correlations ranged from .27 to .62 (see Table 3).

Table 3  
*Reflective Coping Subscale*

No.	Item	M (SD)	r <sub>it-t</sub>
2	I imagine myself solving difficult problems.	2.60 (.86)	.27
9	Rather than acting impulsively, I usually think of various ways to solve a problem.	2.85 (.74)	.34
16	In my mind I go through many different scenarios in order to prepare myself for different outcomes.	2.96 (.83)	.40
23	I tackle a problem by thinking about realistic alternatives.	3.04 (.60)	.51
29	When I have a problem with my co-workers, friends, or family, I imagine beforehand how I will deal with them successfully.	2.93 (.78)	.43
34	Before tackling a difficult task I imagine success scenarios.	2.79 (.81)	.54
38	I take action only after thinking carefully about a problem.	2.59 (.74)	.40
42	I imagine myself solving a difficult problem before I actually have to face it.	2.59 (.82)	.62
46	I address a problem from various angles until I find the appropriate action.	2.77 (.74)	.45
49	When there are serious misunderstandings with co-workers, family members or friends, I practice before how I will deal with them.	2.56 (.89)	.47
52	I think about every possible outcome to a problem before tackling it.	2.78 (.81)	.52

The sample seems to be very practically careful when it comes to financial and family security in the future. **Preventive Coping Subscale** deals with a potential threat in the future by considering experience or knowledge before these stressors develop fully. By contrast, proactive coping does not refer to the threat but is instead driven by goal striving. The highest score was reached on Item 39 (“I make sure my family is well taken care of to protect them from adversity in the future”), followed by Item 50 (“I try to manage my money well in order to avoid being destitute in old age”).

However, Item 39, related to the protection of the family in the future, does not correlate with the scale well (.04). This may be due to its very specific meaning. The other items are more content general while describing potential stressors. The remaining item-total correlations ranged between .31 and .52 (see Table 4).

Table 4  
*Preventive Coping Subscale*

No.	Item	M (SD)	r <sub>it-t</sub>
4	I plan for future eventualities.	2.78 (.69)	.36
11	Rather than spending every cent I make, I like to save for a rainy day.	2.85 (.94)	.44
18	I prepare for adverse events.	2.59 (.77)	.50
25	Before disaster strikes I am well-prepared for its consequences.	2.28 (.74)	.35
30	I plan my strategies to change a situation before I act.	2.56 (.76)	.44
35	I develop my job skills to protect myself against unemployment.	2.81 (.79)	.31
39	I make sure my family is well taken care of to protect them from adversity in the future.	3.62 (.54)	.04
43	I think ahead to avoid dangerous situations.	2.87 (.73)	.52
47	I plan strategies for what I hope will be the best possible outcome.	2.84 (.78)	.47
50	I try to manage my money well in order to avoid being destitute in old age.	2.89 (.96)	.44

**Strategic Planning Subscale** focuses on creating a set of actions needed to achieve the goals in which extensive task are broken down into manageable components (see Table 5). The average scores of the items are very evenly matched, lying just below point 3 on the scale. However, Item 3 (“I often find ways to break down difficult problems into manageable components”) reached the highest value

in the presented sample as well as in the Czech young adult sample. Overall, items correlate with the scale on a satisfactory level (ranging from .29 to .39).

Table 5  
*Strategic Planning Subscale*

No.	Item	M (SD)	r <sub>it-t</sub>
3	I often find ways to break down difficult problems into manageable components.	2.67 (.67)	.39
10	I make a plan and follow it.	2.48 (.79)	.29
17	I break down a problem into smaller parts and do one part at a time.	2.59 (.67)	.34
24	I make lists and try to focus on the most important things first.	2.61 (.95)	.39

The **Instrumental Support Seeking Subscale** focuses on obtaining information, feedback or advice from other people when dealing with stressors. This support is used by the sample widely, especially in the case of Item 36 (“Talking to others can be really useful because it provides another perspective on the problem”), and Item 5 (“When solving my own problems other people’s advice can be helpful”). The same results were achieved by the Czech young adults. The item-total correlations ranged from .26 to as high as .61 (see Table 6).

Table 6  
*Instrumental Support Seeking Subscale*

No.	Item	M (SD)	r <sub>it-t</sub>
5	When solving my own problems other people’s advice can be helpful.	3.30 (.65)	.38
12	I try to talk and explain my stress in order to get feedback from my friends.	2.85 (.86)	.59
19	Information I get from others has often helped me deal with my problems.	3.13 (.64)	.45
26	I can usually identify people who can help me develop my own solutions to problems.	3.17 (.66)	.26
31	I ask others what they would do in my situation.	2.99 (.85)	.54
36	Talking to others can be really useful because it provides another perspective on the problem.	3.32 (.66)	.50
40	Before getting messed up with a problem I’ll call a friend to talk about it.	2.69 (.85)	.56
44	When I am in trouble I can usually work out something with the help of others.	3.01 (.67)	.61

The average results on **Emotional Support Seeking Scale** items were in order identical to the results of the Czech young adults. Out of the item pool, Item 20 scored the highest (“I know who can be counted on when the chips are down”). Basically, emotional support seeking refers to emotional self-regulation with the assistance of a significant other. The item-total correlations ranged from .40 to .52 as shown in Table 7.

Table 7  
*Emotional Support Seeking Subscale*

No.	Item	M (SD)	r <sub>it-t</sub>
6	If I am depressed I know who I can call to help me feel better.	3.42 (.80)	.48
13	Others help me feel cared for.	3.10 (.77)	.50
20	I know who can be counted on when the chips are down.	3.52 (.68)	.40
27	When I’m depressed I get out and talk to others.	2.65 (.99)	.46
32	I confide my feelings in others to build up and maintain close relationships.	2.93 (.85)	.52

The last, the **Avoidance Coping Scale**, deals with the situation resolution delay. Item 14 (“If I find a problem too difficult sometimes I put it aside until I’m ready to deal with it”) reached the highest value. Although the length of the scale is quite short (5 items), the item-total correlations ranged between .54 and .57, forming a compact scale (see Table 8).

Table 8  
*Avoidance Coping Subscale*

No.	Item	M (SD)	r <sub>it-t</sub>
7	When I have a problem I like to sleep on it.	2.31 (.95)	.55
14	If I find a problem too difficult sometimes I put it aside until I'm ready to deal with it.	2.72 (.80)	.54
21	When I have a problem I usually let it simmer on the back burner for a while.	2.20 (.81)	.57

## 4.2 Scale Analysis

The descriptive statistics of the PCI subscales are presented in Table 9. Means and standard deviations at the scale level ranged from an approximate low of M = 2.41 (SD = .68) for avoidance coping, followed by strategic planning (M = 2.59, SD = .52) to an approximate high of M = 3.12 (SD = .56) for emotional support seeking and instrumental support seeking (M = 3.06; SD = .47). These results differ significantly,  $\chi^2(6, n = 176) = 202.31, p < .001$ . Standard deviations ranged from .41 to .68. The Czech sample was generally high on each subscale of the PCI. This resulted in a negative skew for each scale at the univariate level (skewness values ranged from -1.43 to .42).

Table 9  
*The descriptive statistics of PCI*

PCI subscales	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	SD
Proactive Coping	2.75	2.79	1.71	3.79	.41
Reflective Coping	2.77	2.73	1.36	4.00	.45
Preventive Coping	2.81	2.80	1.60	3.80	.42
Strategic Planning	2.59	2.50	1.00	4.00	.52
Instrumental Support Seeking	3.06	3.00	1.63	4.00	.47
Emotional Support Seeking	3.12	3.20	1.40	4.00	.56
Avoidance Coping	2.41	2.33	1.00	4.00	.68

It merits mention that the original PCI scale was developed on a Canadian student sample and validated on Polish-Canadian students and adults who had immigrated to Canada (Greenglass, Schwarzer, & Taubert, 1999). These students represent an older and more heterogeneous sample than the present data set of the university students in helping professions. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficients reported for both the original scale (Polish-Canadian sample) as well as this Czech sample show a low  $\alpha$  coefficient of reliability (or consistency) for the Strategic Planning Scale ( $\alpha = .55$ ). This test says how closely related a set of items are as a group (scale) or a factor.<sup>33</sup> Researchers argue that an acceptable  $\alpha$  coefficient is the value .7 or above (Muijs, 2011). However, there are no straightforward definitions of what it should be.<sup>34</sup>

The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficients of the PCI scales of the Canadian student sample (Greenglass, 2002), Polish-Canadian adult and student sample (Pasikowski, Sek, Greenglass, & Taubert, 2002), Hungarian sample (Almássy et al., 2014), Czech young adult sample (Šolcová, Lukavský, & Greenglass, 2006), and presented Czech sample with number of items are summarized in Table 10. Overall,  $\alpha$  coefficients ranged in acceptable values between .71 and .8. The  $\alpha$  coefficients for the Proactive Coping Scale (.80) and Reflective Coping Scale (.80) seem comparable to that of the items pertaining to Polish-Canadian sample. The PCI scales of the Czech sample are more reliable compared to Czech

<sup>33</sup> It should be also borne in mind that reliability is the characteristic of the test scores, not the tests themselves. As the same test has different reliability for various populations, the scores can depend on the characteristics of the research sample, which are subjected to testing (Blahuš, 1985).

<sup>34</sup> Values for reliability are also affected by the number of people in the sample on which the reliability estimate is based. The larger the sample, the smaller the error surrounding the reliability estimate will be. Moreover, the reliability is also sensitive to the number of items. As the length increases then so too should the reliability.

young adults, besides the above-mentioned Strategic Planning Scale. Thus, though the Czech sample shows psychometrically slightly more diverse properties than the original scale to a certain extent, it demonstrates sufficient consistency.

Table 10  
Internal reliability of the PCI scales and number of items

PCI subscales	Cronbach's $\alpha$ coefficients					Number of items
	Canadian student sample	Polish-Canadian sample	Hungarian sample	Czech young adult sample	Czech sample	
Proactive Coping	.85	.80	.82	.76	.80	14
Reflective Coping	.79	.80	.85	.80	.80	11
Preventive Coping	.71	.79	.80	.75	.74	10
Strategic Planning	.83	.71	.71	.65	.55	4
Instrumental Support Seeking	.85	.84	.86	.73	.78	8
Emotional Support Seeking	.73	.64	.78	.60	.71	5
Avoidance Coping	.61	.74	.73	.62	.73	3

As stated by Greenglass (2002, pp. 16-17), since proactive coping involves purposive accessing of information for selecting and constructing courses of action, reflective coping should be associated positively with proactive coping. At the same time, the proactive coper integrates planning, preventive strategies and social resources with self-regulatory goal setting. This means that proactive coping should be associated as well with planning, prevention strategies and identifying and seeking support resources. The interrelationships among the PCI scales were calculated using Spearman rank order correlations ( $r_{rho}$ )<sup>35</sup> and compared with existing data, shown in Table 11.

As expected, the correlations point to the existence of strong relationships among subscales, which confirms that the scales measure certain aspects of proactive coping. Observed relationships are consistent with the findings of the Canadian student and Czech young adult sample, and the most similar results were identified by Polish-Canadian sample (line 2 in Table 11).

Proactive coping scores correlated positively<sup>36</sup> with some of the other PCI scales, including reflective coping ( $r_{rho} = .47, p < .001, r^2 = 22\%$ )<sup>37</sup>, preventive coping ( $r_{rho} = .44, p < .001, r^2 = 19\%$ ) and strategic planning ( $r_{rho} = .33, p < .001, r^2 = 11\%$ ), but negatively correlated with avoidance coping ( $r_{rho} = -.37, p < .001, r^2 = 14\%$ ). These findings support multidimensionality of the construct (Greenglass, 2002). In all four samples, positive correlations between the Proactive Coping Subscale and the other PCI subscales are identified, but with clear evidence of clusters marking several distinct dimensions. The two support seeking scales were highly correlated with each other in all samples (ranged from  $r_{rho} = .52$  to  $.77, p < .001, r^2 = 27\%$  to  $59\%$ ), which requires consideration whether or not they are separate factors. The small correlation ( $r_{rho} = .27, p < .001, r^2 = 7\%$ ) between reflective coping and instrumental support seeking in the Czech sample is surprising. It could indicate that obtaining advice, information or feedback from people in one's social network may be a part of reflection. This relationship is captured only in the Czech sample.

<sup>35</sup> There are a number of assumptions when performing correlations tests. Preliminary analysis showed violation of the assumption of normality using the Shapiro–Wilk test of normality. Since the scores on each variable are not always normally distributed, using Pearson's product moment correlations ( $r$ ) would not be appropriate in the presented data set.

<sup>36</sup> Cohen (1988, pp. 79-81) suggests interpreting the strength of the relationship between the two variables as follows:  $r = .10$  to  $.29$  (small);  $.30$  to  $.49$  (medium);  $.50$  to  $1.0$  (large).

<sup>37</sup> The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) is a number that indicates the proportion of the variance in the one variable that is predictable from the other variable tested.  $R^2$  expressed in percentage (i.e., percentage of the shared variance) can be calculated from the relationship  $\sqrt{r} * 100$ .

There was a large correlation with a large overlap between reflective coping and preventive coping ( $r_{rho} = .60, p < .001, r^2 = 36\%$ ) and positive correlation with strategic planning ( $r_{rho} = .42, p < .001, r^2 = 18\%$ ), indicating similar coping operations. Preventive coping was associated with strategic planning ( $r_{rho} = .53, p < .001, r^2 = 28\%$ ) and negatively correlated with avoidance coping ( $r_{rho} = -.37, p < .001, r^2 = 14\%$ ). Furthermore, once the strategic planning is used, the avoidance coping is reduced ( $r_{rho} = -.34, p < .001, r^2 = 12\%$ ). Other significant correlations (in range of  $p = .01$  to  $.05$ ) were low, indicating weak correspondence ( $r_{rho} = -.15$  to  $.19, r^2 = 2\%$  to  $4\%$ ).

Table 11  
*Intercorrelations between Subscales of the PCI in diverse samples*

PCI subscales	Proactive Coping	Reflective Coping	Preventive Coping	Strategic Planning	Instrum. Support Seeking	Emotion. Support Seeking	Avoidance Coping <sup>a</sup>
Proactive Coping	1.00	.37 .42 .34 .47**	.43 .43 .27 .44**	.38 .29 .26 .33**	.24 .14 .19 .17*	.30 .29 .26 .19*	-.25 -.37**
Reflective Coping		1.00	.66 .62 .63 .60**	.53 .55 .49 .42**	.10 .18 .13 .27**	.08 .21 .00 .14	-.22 -.15*
Preventive Coping			1.00	.46 .51 .48 .53**	.10 .06 .23 .18*	.09 .11 .02 .04	-.18 -.37**
Strategic Planning				1.00	.16 .13 -.01 .16*	.10 .07 .01 .11	-.23 -.34**
Instrumental Support Seeking					1.00	.76 .77 .52 .71**	.02 .00
Emotional Support Seeking						1.00	.02 -.06
Avoidance Coping							1.00

Notes. \*\*= Correlation is significant at the .01 level. \*= Correlation is significant at the .05 level. a = A 3-item scale measuring avoidance coping was included after the item pool was analyzed and reduced in order to develop a set of proactive coping scales with good psychometric properties.

- Line 1 in each data cell is from Canadian student sample (N = 252)
- Line 2 in each data cell is from Polish-Canadian sample (N = 144)
- Line 3 in each data cell is from Czech young adult sample (N = 176)
- Line 4 in each data cell is from presented Czech sample (N = 176)

In order to shed further light on the content of the PCI subscales of the presented Czech data set, relationships between the related outcome measures and PCI subscales were examined. The results are set out in Table 12. The outcomes that were included are subjective well-being (measured by the SOS-10), depression (measured by the BDI-II) and a manifested degree of social support (measured by the MOS). It was expected that the sample would experience less distress (lower depression) when they used higher proactive coping (Uskul & Greenglass, 2005). On the other hand, it was also

assumed that proactive coping would lead to a greater perception of well-being and higher level of social support. Thus, employing coping strategies based on proactivity is more likely to be associated with an increase in well-being, as assessed by a variety of different psychological measures (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009). In effect, since copers are prepared to deal with stress, they can make a good use of drawing on others' resources in coping with difficult situations. Further, social support and coping synergistically can contribute to a positive effect and the motivation to move ahead with life.

Table 12  
Correlations between PCI scales and outcome measures

PCI subscales	Outcome measures		
	Well-being (SOS-10)	Social support (MOS)	Depression (DBI-II)
Proactive Coping	<b>.43**</b>	<b>.19*</b>	<b>-.36**</b>
Reflective Coping	<b>.24**</b>	.12	-.14
Preventive Coping	.15	.11	<b>-.16*</b>
Strategic Planning	<b>.15*</b>	.11	<b>-.18*</b>
Instrumental Support Seeking	<b>.19*</b>	<b>.28**</b>	.05
Emotional Support Seeking	<b>.32**</b>	<b>.32**</b>	-.04
Avoidance Coping	-.12	-.06	<b>.21**</b>

Notes. \*\*= Correlation is significant at the .01 level. \*= Correlation is significant at the .05 level.

Results show that proactive coping correlated positively with well-being ( $r_{rho} = .43, p < .001, r^2 = 18\%$ ), with high levels of proactive coping associated with high levels of well-being. A negative correlation was found between proactive coping and feelings of depression ( $r_{rho} = -.36, p < .001, r^2 = 13\%$ ). Thus, to the extent that individuals confront stressors by setting goals with self-regulatory goal attainment cognitions and behavior, they are less likely to experience depression. A small correlation is associated with proactive coping and social support ( $r_{rho} = .19, p = .010, r^2 = 4\%$ ). As expected, depression is also negatively correlated with preventive coping ( $r_{rho} = -.16, p = .033, r^2 = 3\%$ ) and strategic planning ( $r_{rho} = -.18, p = .020, r^2 = 3\%$ ), but positively associated with avoidance ( $r_{rho} = .21, p = .005, r^2 = 4\%$ ).

Higher well-being scores were related to higher scores on proactive coping (mentioned above), reflective coping ( $r_{rho} = .24, p < .001, r^2 = 6\%$ ), strategic planning ( $r_{rho} = .15, p = .041, r^2 = 2\%$ ), instrumental support seeking ( $r_{rho} = .19, p = .013, r^2 = 4\%$ ), and emotional support seeking ( $r_{rho} = .32, p < .001, r^2 = 10\%$ ). In other words, score of this positive measure increased with stated coping scores. Thus, to the extent that individuals employ strategies that include goal setting, reflection of the situation, mental simulation and seeking emotional support, they are more likely to experience satisfaction with life in term of well-being. Additionally, few significant correlations were observed between social support and instrumental support seeking ( $r_{rho} = .28, p < .001, r^2 = 8\%$ ) and emotional support seeking ( $r_{rho} = .32, p < .001, r^2 = 10\%$ ). However, the values were lower than expected.

### 4.3 Group differences

Males and females were contrasted on each of the seven subscales as well as different groups by age, year of study and study specialization. Females were higher than males on Proactive coping ( $Md_{females} = 2.79, Md_{males} = 2.64; U = 624, z = -.35, p = .730, r = .03$ ), Preventive coping ( $Md_{females} = 2.8, Md_{males} = 2.6; U = 456, z = -1.54, p = .124, r = .12$ ), and Instrumental Support Seeking scale ( $Md_{females} = 3, Md_{males} = 2.94; U = 616, z = -.4, p = .690, r = .03$ ), but the differences did not reach statistical significance.<sup>38</sup> Conversely, males ( $Md = 2.67$ ) tend to use avoidance to a greater extent than females ( $Md = 2.33$ ) while coping. If they find problem too difficult, they might more likely put it

<sup>38</sup> A Mann-Whitney U test (M-W U test) using grouping variable with the two categories was employed.

aside until they feel ready to deal with it. To our surprise, males (Md = 3.18) scored higher on Emotional Support Seeking Scale than females (Md = 3.12) in our data set. However, both differences were not significant.

Other findings suggest that females are able to utilize social support from others to develop instrumental and preventive coping strategies more effectively than males (Greenglass, 1993). According to Etzion and Pines from their research in 1981 (in Greenglass, 1993), because females tend to talk more with others as a way of coping with stress, they are more often able to make more effective use of their support networks than males. However, presented differences did not reach statistical significance on any of the PCI subscales, as mentioned earlier. Though, naturally, careful interpretation of the results must be taken into account due to the gender imbalance in the presented data set (4.5% vs. 95.5%); however females do tend to dominate humanities-oriented professions.

Usage of proactive coping increases with time spent at university, and the highest values are achieved in the last year of study (see Figure 1), although with no significant increases,  $\chi^2(4, n = 176) = 4.91, p = .297$ .<sup>39</sup> Basically, all positive proactive copings increased over time except avoidance coping. Avoidance coping decreases during the students' stay at university,  $\chi^2(4, n = 176) = 1.12, p = .890$ , meaning that students use more effort to deal with a stressor at the end of their studies. Nevertheless, the differences were not significant.

The same results were reached after dividing the sample into the two age categories (Group 1: 19-21 years old, 54%; Group 2: 22-26 years old, 44%; 4 missing values), reflecting trends occurring according to students' learning experience (i.e., year of study). The largest but non-significant differences were reported in proactive coping behaviour (Md<sub>19-21</sub> = 2.71, Md<sub>22-26</sub> = 2.86;  $U = 3339, z = -.98, p = .330, r = .07$ ).

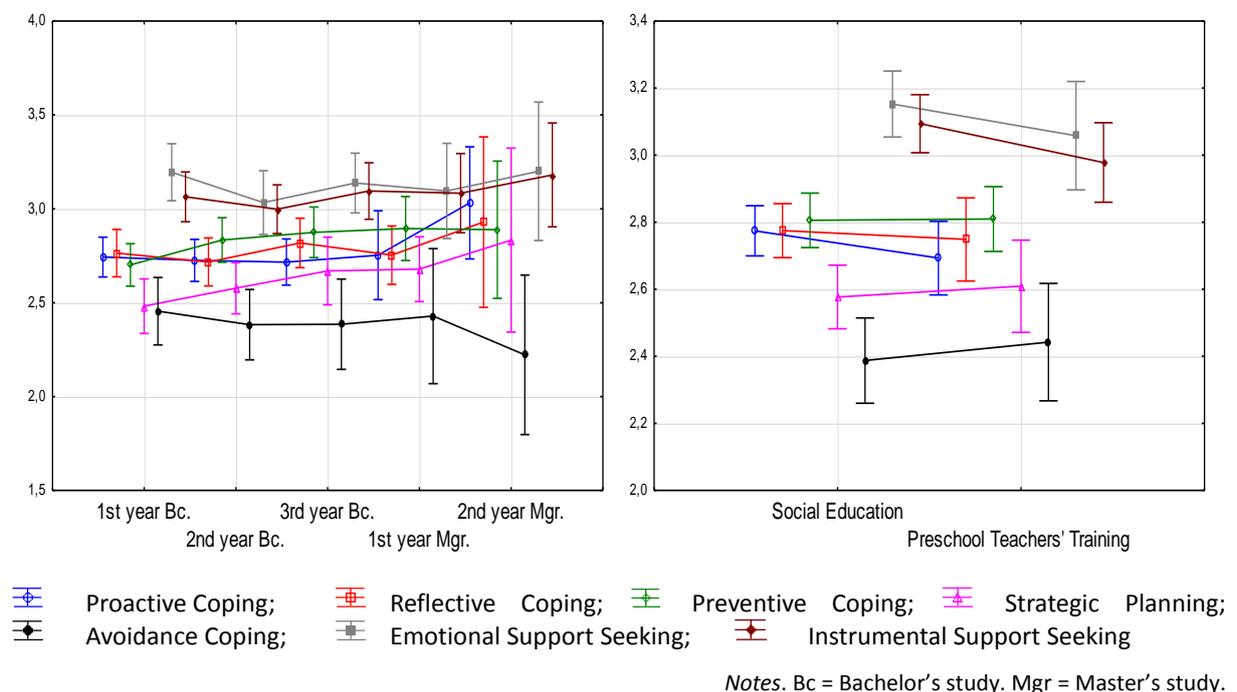


Figure 1 PCI subscales differences by year of study      Figure 2 PCI subscales differences by study specialization

In addition, there were no significant differences regarding study specialization among Czech students in helping professions (see Figure 2). However, the closest outcome to represent a

<sup>39</sup> A Kruskal-Wallis test (K-W test) with Bonferroni correction was used in multiple comparisons.

significant difference was obtained in Instrumental Support Seeking Scale scores (see Table 13). Social educators (Md = 3.13) were higher on the Instrumental Support Seeking Scale than preschool teachers (Md = 3). Presumably due to the very narrowly profiled fields of study in the sample, these differences are not significant ( $U = 2815, z = -1.64, p = .088, r = .06$ ). According to recent research from the Czech educational environment (Šolcová, Lukavský, & Greenglass, 2006), students of economics reached a higher score on the Proactive Coping Scale and Strategic Planning Scale, and were lower on Avoidance Coping Scale when compared to students of other disciplines (i.e., psychology, engineering and humanities).

Table 13  
*PCI subscales significance by field of study*

PCI subscale	Social Education	Preschool Teachers' Training	SE-PTT Difference
	M (SD)	M (SD)	Sig.
Proactive Coping	2.78 (.41)	2.69 (.41)	.131
Reflective Coping	2.78 (.44)	2.75 (.46)	.853
Preventive Coping	2.81 (.45)	2.81 (.36)	.820
Strategic Planning	2.58 (.52)	2.61 (.51)	.678
Instrumental Support Seeking	3.09 (.48)	2.98 (.44)	.088
Emotional Support Seeking	3.15 (.54)	3.06 (.60)	.409
Avoidance Coping	2.39 (.70)	2.44 (.65)	.677

Notes. SE = Social Education. PTT = Preschool Teachers' Training. M = Mean. SD = Standard deviation. Sig. = Significance.

## 5 Discussion

Proactive coping refers to the behavioural strategy focused on the assessment of potential stressors, preparedness, prevention of undesirable situations (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997) and the accumulation of resources in order to facilitate dealing with future life challenges (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009). Proactive copers perceive problems and stressful events as opportunities and a chance to test their strength. Such a point of view is in opposition to the traditional perception of proactive coping as dealing with a threat or failure. The change of the perspective brings an active construction of opportunities and the positive experience of stress.

When considering professions in terms of the existence of stress and psychological intensity of daily duties, workers in helping professions belong to so-called "exposed work professions." These professionals are more exposed to negative stress, burnout, psychic fatigue and depression. Therefore, proactive coping is especially important for these students/professionals due to its future stress minimization. When a stressful event is a possibility rather than an actuality, its full impact may be lessened or averted (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). Also when a stressful event is about to appear, a student or professional may possess a wide range of options to handle it and chronic stress may be kept to a low level.

The purpose of the present study is twofold. First, by checking item and scale characteristics of the Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI) including item-total correlations and internal consistency tests, the presented study provides an evidence of its practicality and reliability. The PCI (Greenglass, Schwarzer, & Taubert, 1999) represents a multidimensional research instrument integrating affective, cognitive, social and intentional factors into a set of coping strategies. The 55 items cover proactive, reflective, preventive, strategic, instrumental support seeking, emotional support seeking and avoidance coping. Based on the existence of the Czech adaptation of the PCI scales (Šolcová, Lukavský, & Greenglass, 2006), the Czech language version was administered. Using homogeneous but in terms of profession background of heterogeneous sample, this study identifies the use of proactive coping strategies and clarifies the interrelation of proactive coping with subjective well-being, social support and depression.

The second purpose of the study is to analyze the differences by gender, age, specialization and year of study of students in helping professions including, inter alia, future social educators and preschool teachers. Further, it is assumed that the development of the proactive coping is not only a necessary condition for effective preparation for the future profession, but, ultimately, represents personality growth of the students. As such, insights gained by identification of prevailing aspects of proactive coping behavior in sample of university students in helping professions provide an extension to complementary perspective to existing literature on proactive coping and related constructs, such as presented well-being, social support and depression.

To summarize, the present study opens an area of proactive coping in the field of helping professions. More precisely, students reached the highest scores on social support scales, i.e., they presented the highest use of emotional and instrumental support seeking. Thus, students recognize the importance of resources in others, share concerns and receive advice that is needed to cope with the stressor. This finding is consistent with a blossoming of interest in the role of interpersonal relationships in protecting people from the possibly pathogenic effects of stressful events. On the other hand, the lowest score was achieved by avoidance coping, followed by strategic planning. The results represent students' abilities to confront stressors, albeit with a lower ability to plan this action.

The descriptive characteristics of the items provided scores on a single item and item-total correlations. It turns out that Items 48 and 8 from the Proactive Coping Subscale and Item 39 from the Preventive Coping Subscale seem to be conceptually problematic, and on that ground could be dropped. Overall, remaining item-total correlations ranged from an approximate low .25 to an approximate high of .62, forming compact scales.

The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient ranged in acceptable values of .71 and .8, except moderately-low  $\alpha$  for Strategic Planning Subscale (.55). As expected, the correlations among PCI subscales point to the existence of strong relationships confirming that the scales measure certain aspects of proactive coping. Observed relationships are consistent with the findings of the Canadian student (Greenglass, 2002) and Czech young adult sample (Šolcová, Lukavský, & Greenglass, 2006), with the closest correlation results identified by Polish-Canadian sample (Pasikowski, Sek, Greenglass, & Taubert, 2002).

It was expected that students would experience less distress including lower depression when they used higher proactive coping (Uskul & Greenglass, 2005). Conversely, it was assumed that proactive coping would lead to a greater perception of well-being and higher level of social support. Results showed moderate-negative correlations between proactive coping and depression, and moderate-positive correlations between proactive coping and well-being. The Depression Scale is also negatively correlated with reflective coping, preventive coping, and strategic planning. Furthermore, avoidance coping is, as expected, positively associated with depression. Achieving higher values on the well-being scale were related to higher scores on Proactive Coping, Reflective Coping and Emotional Support Seeking Subscales.

In addition, differences by gender, age, specialization and year of study were analyzed. Observed trends detecting differences by individual groups are presented; they did not, however, reach significance. Moreover, in all samples, positive correlations between the Proactive Coping Subscale and the other PCI subscales were identified, but with clear evidence of clusters marking several distinct dimensions. The two support seeking scales were highly correlated with each other in all samples, which demands an answer whether or not they are separate factors. The small correlation between reflective coping and instrumental support seeking in the presented Czech sample is surprising. It may indicate that obtaining advice, information or feedback from people in one's social network may be a part of reflection.

The ability to cope with stressful changes has several potential benefits, but also drawbacks. One is that, if a stressful situation has not appeared so far, then it is possible that it may not appear at all. In

such a case, proactive activities, plans and strategies would have been unnecessary. Another disadvantage is when a stressful situation has not yet appeared all the activities can result in the inherent ambiguity of potential stressors. Initial coping efforts, then, may be ineffective, or they may actually broaden the problem. Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) regard avoiding the future possible obstacles as an effective strategy if an individual disengages from a potential threat.

There are a number of methodological limitations to the current study. Three primary limitations are now discussed. First, as stated by Roesch et al. (2009), the PCI is a dispositional measure of coping. Thus, responses to nonspecific external stressors may result in a different action. It is difficult, however, to conceptualize how proactive coping could be meaningfully assessed because of the temporal orientation of this measure, where stressors are anticipated but not necessarily known (Roesch et al., 2009). Second, these results are generalizable only to this presented research sample of students in helping profession. Therefore, inferring from the presented findings the proactive coping behavior of the entire population would be inappropriate. The third limitation is related to the medium-size sample represented by 272 university students. Given that a sincere effort was made to minimize influence of the results by forcing students to participate in the research, voluntary anonymous participation was conducted. Nevertheless, non-forced participation seemed to be appropriate, even though it posed the risk of a small-sized sample.

For future research, it would be interesting to determine to what extent individual differences in proactive coping can be explained by personality traits. Such research has been conducted on a sample of older adults (aged 50–70) regarding proactive coping strategies, and five trait variables, namely future temporal orientation, goal orientation, dispositional optimism, self-efficacy, and aging anxiety (Ouweland, de Ridder, & Bensing, 2008). On this basis, comparative results could reveal the development of proactive coping and influence of personality traits among students and older adults.

Lastly, there are several reasons for believing that positive beliefs and positive emotional states are related to promotion on well-being, good social relationships and health. Those people are more likely to cope proactively with stressful situations and can function in promoting well-being. Further, temporal aspects of coping has often been neglected. One can cope before a stressful event takes place, while it is happening or after the event happened (Schwarzer & Taubert, 2002). Assessment and findings of these situations creating a particular temporal context could bring interesting results. Basically, research focused on extending coping strategies offers a more comprehensive picture of humans' struggle with life.

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# Selected Aspects of Social and Legal Protection of Children: Expert Approach versus Public Opinion

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**Abstract:** Social and legal protection of children can be approached from two general positions. The first is expert discourse in the form of various scientific schools or epistemic communities and the other is the position of public opinion. The purpose of this study is to show both the coexistence and potential contradictory nature of these two approaches on selected current issues of social and legal protection of children (boundary of criminal liability, institutional or protective care and replacement care of parentless children). While mapping the expert discourse is based on scientific knowledge of the issue, mapping the public opinion uses data of a representative inquiry aimed at the study of opinions of the Czech population in 2015 (n = 1.050). The study concludes that though public opinion and expert discourse regarding the replacement care of parentless children are to some extent in agreement, there is a difference of opinion on the boundary of criminal liability and institutional or protective care of children and youth with problematic behaviour.

**Keywords:** social and legal protection of children, boundary of criminal liability, institutional care, replacement care of parentless children, social policy, public opinion, expert discourse

## Vybrané otázky sociálně-právní ochrany dětí: Odborný přístup versus veřejné mínění

**Abstrakt:** K otázkám sociálně-právní ochrany dětí lze přistupovat na základě dvou obecných pozic vědění. První je přístup odborného diskursu v podobě různých vědeckých škol či tzv. epistemických komunit, zatímco druhou je pozice veřejného mínění. Cílem této studie je na vybraných aktuálních problémech sociálně-právní ochrany dětí (hranice trestní odpovědnosti, ústavní či ochranné výchovy a náhradní péče) ukázat koexistenci a potenciální kontradikčnost těchto dvou přístupů. Pro mapování odborného diskursu vycházíme z vědeckých poznatků o problematice, zatímco pro mapování veřejného mínění používáme data z reprezentativního šetření názorů české populace z roku 2015 (n = 1,050). Studie dochází k závěru, že veřejné mínění zastává jiné stanovisko vzhledem k hranici trestní odpovědnosti a ústavní či ochranné výchovy než odborný diskurs, zatímco v případě náhradní péče se s ním v některých bodech shoduje.

**Klíčová slova:** sociálně-právní ochrana dětí, trestní odpovědnost, ústavní výchova, náhradní péče, sociální politika, veřejné mínění, odborný diskurs

## 1 Introduction

Social and legal protection of children is laid down in Czech law in the 1998 legislative Act No. 359/1999 Coll. (2016). It can be approached from two general knowledge positions.<sup>40</sup> **The first** is the **approach of expert discourse**, to which different groups of scientists or epistemic communities contribute (Grundman & Stehr, 2012; Knorr-Cetina, 1999; Stehr, 2001; Stehr & Grundman, 2011). This defines the notions of social and legal protection of children and social and social pedagogical work by expert language, and is involved in the formation of social policy through recommendations to the state apparatus. **The second** is the public opinion, the **popular discourse**, produced by various social groups defined by heterogeneous socio-demographic features, such as social status, education or age, and which may take individual standpoints to the issues of social and legal protection of children. Public opinion is equally important for social policy formation as it exerts pressure on political representation through media and various interest groups by which the political agenda of the social state is affected. In this way, problems are approached and resolved – or not (see, for example, Best, 2008; Dearing & Everett, 1996; McCombs, 2009; Škodová & Nečas, 2009). Thanks to its power and intensity, the public opinion opens current issues related to social and legal protection of minors in waves (often in connection with media cases), thus contributing to implementation of or, alternatively, prevention of particular changes.

The purpose of this study is to address selected current issues of social and legal protection of children: **(1) Boundary of criminal liability**, **(2) Institutional or protective care** and **(3) Replacement care of parentless children**, and then to show the coexistence of these two approaches and their frequent contradictory nature, which may create obstacles to addressing and resolving the issues. This is especially true where the public opinion opposes the professional discourse and its recommendations.

The present contribution focuses on **social and legal protection**, which is part of **social** and **social pedagogical work**. Here social and pedagogical work overlap and their representatives and approaches contribute to the establishment of professional practice and formation of a media image of the social reality. Teachers and social workers actively contribute to formation of social policy not only by initiating the desired methodological and legislative changes but also by their actual implementation. Thus, they become important social players affecting both expert and public discourse and are not to be overlooked.

To study the issue of social and legal protection, we have selected the aforementioned three areas whose legislative background is undergoing multiple changes. This suggests that these are important issues, ideal to study and document whether the premise of overlaps between the two discursive positions is based on real facts or not. **The selection of the three issues** brings methodological advantages as well as disadvantages. The **advantage** is that the existence of two different knowledge positions will be studied based on three mutually independent cases. Were we to focus on a single theme only (even were we to subject it to profound analysis), we would still run the risk of selecting a case in which there is chance coexistence of the expert and the popular discourse.<sup>41</sup> On the other

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<sup>40</sup> In § 1, the socio-legal protection is defined as: Protection of the rights of a child to proper development and education, protection of legitimate interests of a child, including protection of its assets and activities leading to restoration of disturbed family functions and ensuring substitute family environment for a child who cannot be permanently or temporarily reared in their own family.

<sup>41</sup> The use of three deliberately selected cases based on a methodological approach using a small number of surveyed units – so-called "Small-N case based research" (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012; Ragin, 2000, 2009) – allows not only the formulation of questions that would otherwise be too general and outside adequate empirical terrain, but which also allows to compare cases among themselves. This is the main advantage compared with an approach that is based on the concept of individual case studies (Yin, 2002), which in Czech studies are most often used. Systematic comparison between theories in specifically selected cases

hand, the greatest **threat** to our selection is our necessary inability to describe in sufficient detail the individual issues. The limited scope of this study deprives the authors of the possibility to reconstruct all three discourses properly. Therefore, often just the key theses on which the discourses are based are selected with reference to works of the authors representing them.

The main aim of this study can therefore be redefined in terms of **three mutually interconnected objectives**. **First of all**, our analysis of the expert and the popular discourse in relation to the three aforementioned thematic areas will show expert and non-expert approach to these areas. **Second**, our analysis of the data of the special inquiry focused on the opinions of adult Czech population will reveal the main aspects of public opinion on these issues, including its inner segmentation by key socio-demographic features (gender, age, education, etc.). **And third**, our comparison of the obtained results will show key similarities and differences between the two approaches, as well as their implications for social and socio-pedagogical work in the area of social and legal protection of children.

The test structure will reflect the logic of these three objectives. Following a brief introduction of our theoretical assumptions, we will discuss the positions taken by the expert and the popular discourse towards social and legal protection of children. The next chapter will introduce the methodology and results of the representative public opinion inquiry. And finally, by way of conclusion, we will discuss the mutual relationship between the expert discourse and the public opinion, including their implications for social and social-pedagogical work.

## 2 Theoretical assumptions

Even though recently a whole range of aspects of social and socio-pedagogical work in the Czech Republic is systematically reflected by the expert discourse (see, for example, Bakošová, 2008; Gulová, 2012; Hrbáčková & Petr Šafránková 2015; Punová, 2015; Stanoev, 2014; Vávrová & Kroutilová Nováková, 2015), considerably less attention is paid to public opinion and current social and socio-pedagogical issues (see, for example, Horáková, 2016). That is despite the fact that this is the very public opinion that is one of the key agents driving construction of social problems (Best, 2008; Loseke, 1999; Spector & Kitsuse, 1977, Stone, 2011) – i.e., deciding how *relevant* they are, whether they *shall be addressed* and, if so, *how*.

This role of public opinion leads certain authors (see, for example, Dearing & Everett, 1996; McCombs, 2009; Škodová & Nečas, 2009) to the conclusion that public opinion, formed into a certain thematic agenda, represents an important force affecting political and state decision-making, which may result in the deduction that even the agendas of social policy and socio-pedagogical work are affected. The questions of social and socio-pedagogical work often become controversial social themes about which the public forms opinions and to which politicians must respond. What is equally important is that these standpoints may differ from professional practical opinion (of social workers/teachers) or scholarly opinion (research on the social and legal protection of children). Therefore, these may stand in opposition to the agenda of the "knowledge-driven" social policy.

Thus, in reality, two general approaches to social and socio-pedagogical work coexist, representing different forms of knowledge and different approaches to (co)creation of social policy and addressing its issues. On the one hand, there is the expert approach typical of specialists from practice or academic spheres, the so-called "expert apparatus" (Giddens, 1998), while on the other there is the public opinion approach, which represents popular forms of knowledge in the form of opinions and positions, in turn informed by age, education or socio-economic status of individuals.

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can, in the long run, create prerequisites for formulating middle range theory, as highlighted, for example, in Glaeser (2006) and Vaughan (2014).

The present study tries to view both approaches not only in the context of their mutual relation but also with regard to their consequences for social and socio-pedagogical work. This presents a rather unexplored field. In this respect, we will not only discuss the nature of both approaches to the selected themes but also empirically analyse them. Examples of (1) boundary of criminal liability, (2) institutional or protective care and (3) replacement care of parentless children will be used to show what the position of the current professional approach is and what the public thinks about them – that is, what the public opinion is.

### 3 Expert vs. popular discourse in selected areas of social and legal protection of children

As is the case in most European countries, Czech society addresses certain controversial themes related to social and legal protection of children in waves. The target group – children, i.e. minors under 18 years of age – deserves special attention as one of the "vulnerable" target groups due to the younger ages.<sup>42</sup>

The role of professional discourse and public opinion (popular discourse) will be demonstrated in a couple of problematic issues surrounding social and legal protection of children and subjected to recent public discussion with legislative intervention. These issues are represented by the boundary of criminal liability and the related orders of institutional or protective care and subsequent replacement care.

#### 3.1 Boundary of criminal liability

In preparation for the enactment of the "new" legislative act, the New Civil Code (Act No. 89/2012 Coll., 2015; effective from 1 January, 2014) the boundary of criminal liability became the subject of wide public discussion. Pursuant to § 109 of the Criminal Code (Act No. 40/2009 Coll., 2016), the criminal liability of adolescents and sanctions imposed on them are stipulated by the act on judicature for youth (Act No. 218/2003 Coll., 2016). This classifies youth as children (up to 15 years of age) and adolescents (from 15 to 18 years of age).<sup>43</sup> Thus, the boundary of criminal liability ***as laid down by Czech law is 15 years of age.***

A discussion on the boundary of criminal liability is often started by a "shocking" case with wide media coverage, as for instance in England in 2010, when the public was surprised by the case of an eight-year-old girl raped by two ten-year-old boys (Arthur, 2012). Although the legislative boundary of criminal liability in England and Wales is 10 years ("States Lowering Age," 2016), this case posed the question whether minors committing this criminal act should be treated as adults who committed the same offence (Arthur, 2012). The main issue here is that the law and criminal liability system is based on the assumption that man is able to understand and foresee consequences of his acts and make decisions on the basis of his understanding and free will. The professional and the popular discussions are linked by the question of whether there is an age limit which, when reached, makes the individual capable of informed decisions based on free will.

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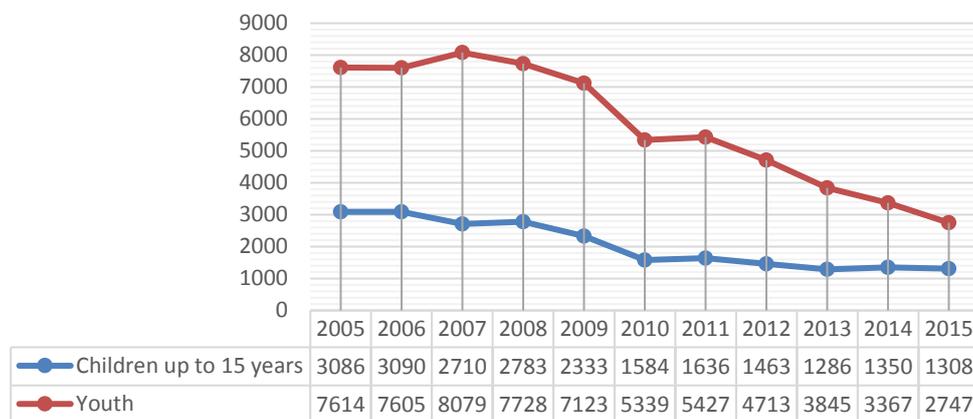
<sup>42</sup> According to § 30 paragraph 1 of the Act No. 89/2012 Coll. (2015), one becomes full and capable adult at the attainment of eighteen years of age. According to § 31, it is considered that any minor who has not yet acquired full legal capacity is eligible to legal appraisal regarding his mental and moral maturity given his age and status as a minor.

<sup>43</sup> See § 5 paragraph 1 of Act No. 218/2003 Coll. (2016), which defines the responsibilities of a juvenile as follows: a teenager who, at the time of the offense has neither reached the intellectual and moral maturity to be able to recognize its unlawfulness nor control his conduct, shall not be held criminally responsible. According to § 6 paragraph 1 and 2 of this Act, an offense committed by a juvenile is called an offense and unless the law otherwise indicates, applies to the assessment of the offense committed by the juvenile penal code.

Many authors (for example Cipriani, 2009; Elliott, 2011; Farmer, 2011; Bateman, 2014) hold that because children’s personal autonomy is limited (as is their ability to make decisions from free will), it is in principle incorrect to impose criminal liability on children. A similar statement can be found in Hollingsworth (2013), who adds that childhood is the period of growth into complete autonomy and thus children are not to be taken as fully autonomous. Arthur (2012) and McDiarmid (2013) extend this argument by saying that children making decisions are less competent to assess whether their decision and their subsequent action is clearly correct or incorrect. Their orientation in the moral and legal systems of society is not yet fully developed when compared to young adults (18-24 years of age). Grisso and others (2003) document with empirical data that the ability of children (11-13) to cope with litigation differs considerably from young adults (18-24). While the accused adults are able to resist the stress of litigation, the accused children tend to make a confession more quickly under that stress.

By contrast, as stated by the Child Rights International Network (“States Lowering Age,” 2016), many countries show an opposite trend: lowering the boundary of criminal liability, accompanied by public discussions on the theme. Similar trends can be observed in the domestic environment where, for example, a member of parliament, Mr. Tejc, stated in a TV discussion that he would like to submit a proposal for lowering the criminal liability boundary age from 15 to 13 for selected criminal acts (“Tejc navrhuje,” 2016). This proposal met with a negative response from both other members of parliament and members of the legal community (“Congress Legislative Space,” 2016).

The expert discourse supported their negative approach not only through the findings of the developmental psychology (see, for example, Erikson, 2015; Thorová, 2015; Řičan, 2014; Klusák, 2014), but also through statistical data documenting the overall reduction of criminality among children and youth. This was corroborated at the seminar on *Age boundary of criminal liability in the light of recent events* held by PSP CR (on 29 March 2016).<sup>44</sup> Identical arguments can also be encountered earlier, when in 2008 the server iDnes.cz reported that the opinion of certain experts was that the boundary of criminal liability does not need to be lowered.<sup>45</sup> This is further documented by Svatoš (2013), who also argues against lowering the age of criminal responsibility (see Figure 1).



Source: Statistical Data of the Police Presidency of the Czech Republic (In Hulmáková, 2016). Adapted by authors.

Figure 1 Criminality of children and youth in the years 2005 to 2015

The above allows a deduction of the existence of two approaches: *one argues for contesting criminal liability of children and denies the need for lowering the criminal liability age limit, while the other focuses on increasing it.*

<sup>44</sup> See the age responsibility (Hulmáková, 2016).

<sup>45</sup> See Válková and Hulmáková (2008).

### 3.2 Institutional or protective care and replacement care of parentless children

The boundary of criminal liability is closely connected with another area reflected in this study: institutional or protective care of children and youth with problematic behaviour (truancy, theft, use of addictive substances, criminal behaviour, etc.). Institutional care cannot be strictly separated from replacement care, which is often presented as its more appropriate alternative or counterpart. These two themes are analysed together in the context of the current stage of the discourse, which currently favours de-institutionalisation and stepwise replacement of institutional care with other more appropriate variants. Due to the given reality, we will discuss these two subjects together as well.

Institutional and protective care in the Czech Republic are part of institutional care, i.e. care provided by a certain type of resident facility, such as a diagnostic institute, children's home with school or penitentiary.

**Protective care**, pursuant to Act No. 218/2003 Coll. (2016), is classified together with protective therapies, detention and property confiscation as protective measures falling exclusively within the limits defined by the quoted act, and may only be imposed on the basis of the relevant provisions of the act. Protective care is imposed in cases (§ 22) when: (1) *the young individual's care has not been properly arranged for*, (2) *the young individual's care has been neglected* or (3) *the environment in which the young individual lives does not guarantee his or her proper care*, and when the situation cannot be resolved by imposition of disciplinary measures pursuant to the act on social and legal protection of children (Act No. 359/1999 Coll., 2016). The length of protective care is limited to 18, or exceptionally 19 years of age. The purpose of the protective measures, and thus of the protective care, is *positive impact on mental, moral and social development of the young individual and protection of the society against the criminality of the youth* (§ 21, *Ibid*).

**Institutional care** may come before or after protective care. The objectives of institutional care are more general in their essence and their role does not include protection of the society, which is emphasized in the case of protective care. One can therefore say that this type of care is used when *the child's care or physical, mental or intellectual condition or proper development are seriously threatened or disrupted to the extent that it damages interests of the child or when there are serious reasons why the parents cannot secure their child's care* (§ 971 (1) of Act No. 89/2012 Coll., 2015), where the court must always consider as the primary option entrusting the child to the case of another natural person, i.e. **replacement family care**.

According to data of 2014/2015 ("Tab. č. 65," 2015), there are in the Czech Republic 214 facilities for institutional and protective care, of which 144 are children's homes, 29 are children's homes with a school, 28 are penitentiaries and 13 are diagnostic institutes. These institutions take care of 6.495 children and young people, of whom 4.949 are under court order for institutional care and 130 are under court order for protective care.

**Replacement care** covers (1) custody by another natural person, (2) legal guardianship, (3) foster care and (4) child care (Act No. 89/2012 Coll., 2015). The following text will classify replacement care and care on the basis of the environment in which it is provided. To that end, replacement care differentiates between **natural social environment** (most resembling an ordinary family environment) and **institutional environment**. *A Child's placement outside his or her original family must always be decided by court ... with replacement family care preferred to institutional care placement* (Chrenková, Cilečková, & Hašková, 2015, p. 39).

There has been wide expert discussion in Czech society for decades concerning both the appropriateness and potential negative impact of institutional care on the future life of the child (see, for example, Matějček & Dytrych, 1994; Kovařík, 1998; Bittner et al., 2007; Kubíčková, 2011; Běhounková, 2012; Vávrová, Hrbáčková, & Hladík, 2015). Individual forms of replacement care with an emphasis on foster care are often seen as an alternative to institutional care (see, for example, Bauer, 1995; Matějček, 1998; Novák, 2008; Zezulová, 2012; Sobotková & Očenášková, 2013;

Chrenková, Cilečková, & Hašková, 2015). There are also studies investigating opinions of various stakeholder groups (see, for example, Vávrová, Musilová, & Polepilová, 2014; Vávrová & Kroutilová Nováková, 2015). The harmful effect of children's stays in big institutional care facilities is emphasized by the international organisation LUMOS (with offices in the Czech Republic) and documented by experts with more than 80 years of research pointing out retardation of cognitive, social and physical development of children raised in institutional care for most of their most important evolution stages.<sup>46</sup>

The mainstream expert discourse currently agrees that changes in the area of replacement care of threatened children are necessary and should be governed by the policy of *de-institutionalisation*, i.e., the policy of minimising the institutional or protective care placement in residential facilities of children and young people in need of replacement care.<sup>47</sup> However, the media often points out the pitfalls of this process (see, for example, Janský, 2009). Some discussions also bring arguments that most children living in children's homes show no interest in receiving foster parents (see, for example, Slavíková & Horáková, 2014). Still, in the broadest sense, the expert discourse seems to resonate with the popular discourse.

In conjunction with the development of care of threatened children and youth, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs ("Národní akční plan," 2009; "Návrh opatření," 2009) issued the *National Action Plan for Transformation and Unification of the System of Care of Threatened Children for the Period 2009–2011* and the *Proposed Measures for Transformation and Unification of the System of Care of Threatened Children – Basic Principles*. Subsequently, in 2012, the Ministry issued the *National Strategy of Child Rights Protection*, in which it defined its basic principles and the principles of care of threatened children.<sup>48</sup> In the same year, the *Action Plan for Implementation of the National Strategy of Child Rights Protection for 2012–2015* was issued. All of these strategic documents deal with children's rights, including the right to family care. Reforms to replacement care bring about fundamental changes responded to by professionals as well as the general public. Whether they are partial changes (for example, cancellation of the institute of baby homes, transformation of children's homes or introduction of temporary foster care institute) or overall transformation of the whole system of care, both discourses see the need for the change. They differ, however, on how to implement that change. Reflections surrounding the current issue of replacement care and care appear in many published articles (see, for example, Toman, 1994; Svobodová, 2003; Cilečková, 2014; Vávrová & Kroutilová Nováková, 2015). Thus, the de-institutionalisation process develops its legitimacy through both expert and popular discourse.

A little less attention is paid to institutional or protective care of children with problematic behaviour (see, for example, Pilař, 2005; Svoboda et al., 2012; Janský, 2014). This issue is generally discussed in waves, which are initiated from wide media coverage on a case where, for example, a young individual living in one of the institutional facilities commits a violent act against the facility staff or local residents. Then, the opinion of part of the Czech public radicalises (see, for example, Doubrava, 2004), which then receives its own media coverage. Unlike in public discourse, many experts perceive the criminality of children and youth as a consequence of their previous psychic deprivation (see, for example, Matějček, Bubleová, & Kovařík, 2004). There are also cases of violation of children's rights by the institution (see the recent case in Chrastava with wide media coverage).<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> See Lumos ("Pobyt dětí," 2015).

<sup>47</sup> As a result of this current trend, there has been a decrease in the number of children in institutional care in the Czech Republic between years 2008–2013 by almost 2.000 ("Péče o ohrožené děti," 2014, p. 6).

<sup>48</sup> Across the four sections, the priorities are: A. Participation of the child; B. Elimination of discrimination and unequal access for children; C. The right to family care and D. Ensuring the quality of life for children and families.

<sup>49</sup> See Public Defender of Rights: Ombudsman ("Zařízení v Chrastavě," 2016).

The Ombudsman is the institute responsible for dealing systematically with human rights in residential facilities.<sup>50</sup>

## 4 Methodology of public opinion inquiry

The research was motivated by the interest to study opinions on current issues in social and legal protection of children across a representative sample of Czech adult population. We wanted to reveal the extent to which public opinion on the selected areas agrees with the opinions held by the expert discourse, as disagreement might hinder reforms of social and socio-pedagogical work.

The purpose of the research was to find out the public opinion on: (1) age limits of criminal liability; (2) provision of institutional or protective upbringing of children and youth with problematic behaviour (truancy, theft, use of addictive substances, criminal behaviour, etc.); and (3) preferences in selection of the form of replacement care of children and youth, and how this opinion may be affected by various agents such as gender, age, place of residence or region in which the respondent is based.

### 4.2 Research Questions

The research was based on the following research questions in order to formulate hypotheses to be confirmed or denied:

- What should be the age boundary of criminal liability?
- What is the public opinion on ordered institutional or protective upbringing of children and youth with problematic behaviour?
- What form of replacement care is generally considered most appropriate?
- Are there differences in answers to the above questions when considering different ages, education, places of residence or regionally based groups?
- Is the public acceptance of ordered institutional or protective upbringing different relative to the specified age limit of criminal liability? In other words, is the acceptance of ordered institutional or protective upbringing related to the selected age boundary of criminal liability?
- Is there any relationship between public acceptance of ordered institutional or protective upbringing of children and youth with problematic behaviour, their ages and acquired levels of education?

### 4.3 Research and data collection methods

The research was based on a quantitative methodological approach with use of the exploration inquiry method. The selected questions of social and socio-pedagogical work were part of a wider collection of items of the Omnibus data collection, implemented in Autumn 2015.

The questionnaire included socio-demographic items about gender and age (expressed in years and translated to the following age categories: 18-24 years; 25-34 years; 35-44 years; 45-54 years; 55-64 years; 65 up), education (basic; secondary without school-leaving examination (apprenticeship); secondary with school-leaving examination; university level education), place of residence (city centre; off city centre; city outskirts, suburbs and villages close to big cities; villages; settlements and

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<sup>50</sup> See Public Defender of Rights: Ombudsman ("Zpráva ze systematických návštěv," 2011).

wilderness)<sup>51</sup> and geographic region (Prague; Central Bohemia; South West; North West; North East; South East; Central Moravia; Moravian Silesia)<sup>52</sup>.

Specific items about public perception of the selected issues (i.e., the boundary of criminal liability, consent with use of institutional and protective care and the preferred form of replacement care of parentless children and youth) were of nominal, ordinal and interval nature.

Data collection was performed by CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing), on the basis of personal interviews by trained interviewers with assistance by electronic questionnaire. The interview took about 10 minutes. The filled-out questionnaires were checked visually and the data matrix was subject to both a formal and logical check of data completeness.

#### 4.4 Participants

The research cohort included a representative sample of Czech adult population ( $n = 1.050$ ). The selection of the sample was based on quotas for gender, age, education, place and region of residence (pursuant to the quotas of the Czech Statistical Office of 2012). Within the defined quotas the respondents were selected randomly by CAPI method<sup>53</sup> until the quota was met. Thus, the research included (see Table 1) 501 males (48%) and 549 females (52%), with a mean age of 46 years (span 18 to 89,  $SD = 16.82$  years). For statistical purposes, the respondents were divided into six age groups shown in the Table 1. Most respondents had acquired secondary education either without a school-leaving examination (36%) or with a school-leaving examination (35%). Elementary education was the highest education level achieved by 15% of the respondents and 14% were university graduates. Although half of the respondents lived in a city, most of them lived away from the city centre (51%), 25% were village residents, 13% lived in city outskirts, suburbs and townships close to big cities (within 5 km). The city centre was the place of residence of 11% of the respondents. The most heavily represented regions included South East (16%) and North East (14%). The other region representations fell between 11–12%.

Table 1  
*Structure of selected research cohort*

Socio-demographic characteristics		Representative sample of Czech population ( $n = 1.050$ )			
		N	%	$kn_i$	$kn_i(\%)$
Gender	Male	501	48	501	48
	Female	549	52	1050	100
Age	18-24 years	111	11	111	11
	25-34 years	194	18	305	29
	35-44 years	193	18	498	47
	45-54 years	173	16	671	64
	55-64 years	180	17	851	81
	65 up	199	19	1050	100

<sup>51</sup> Due to the low representation of respondents from settlements and the wilderness (2 respondents), no analysis for statistical significance for this category was conducted, as the total number of respondents were  $n = 1.048$ .

<sup>52</sup> In cases of non-compliance with the conditions of use of tests, there were fourteen original categories of nominal variables (administrative districts) combined to create eight geographic regions (these are listed in parentheses): Prague (Praha), Central Bohemia (Central Bohemia), South Bohemia and Pilsen (Southwest), Karlovy Vary Region and the Usti Region (Northwest), Liberec, Hradec Králové and Pardubice Region (Northeast), Vysocina and South Moravia (Southeast), Olomouc and Zlín Region (Central Moravia) and the Moravian Silesian Region (Moravian Silesia).

<sup>53</sup> The method of data collection CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) presents interviews conducted by trained interviewers face-to-face with the respondents, aided by the help of laptops or tablets.

Education	Elementary	161	15	161	15
	Secondary without school-leaving examination	375	36	536	51
	Secondary with school-leaving examination	368	35	904	86
	University	146	14	1050	100
Place of residence	City centre	112	11	112	11
	Off city centre	535	51	647	62
	Outskirts, suburbs and villages close to city (within 5 km)	135	13	782	74
	Village	266	25	1048	100
Region	Prague	130	12	130	12
	Central Bohemia	126	12	256	24
	South West	125	12	381	36
	North West	111	11	492	47
	North East	151	14	643	61
	South East	166	16	809	77
	Central Moravia	119	11	928	88
	Moravian Silesia	122	12	1050	100

Note:  $kn_i$  = cumulative frequency,  $kn_i(\%)$  = relative cumulative frequency.

#### 4.5 Data analysis and research results

The research results evaluation was based on the predefined research questions and hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested by non-parametric methods of statistical data analysis. For the purpose of applicability test of the selected statistical methods (in the case of metric variables). Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wils tests were used. The statistical test differences are significant on the significance level of .05.

##### (1) Boundary of criminal liability

Descriptive statistics shows that **14 years of age** most often (35%) represented the adequate age for **criminal liability limit**. The second most frequently limits were 15 years of age (31%) and 16 years of age (9%). 22% of the respondents believed that the boundary of criminal liability should be assessed case by case, and 2% were unable to assess this fact (see Table 2). These results differ significantly,  $\chi^2(4, n = 1.050) = 422.45, p < .001$ .

Table 2

##### Age boundary of criminal liability

Age limits for criminal liability	Representative sample of Czech population (n = 1.050)			
	N	%	$kn_i$	$kn_i(\%)$
14 years of age	372	35	372	35
15 years of age	328	31	700	67
16 years of age	91	9	791	75
Should be assessed individually	233	22	1024	98
Do not know, cannot assess	26	2	1050	100
Total	1050	100	1050	100

The descriptive statistics also suggest that the lowest age limit for criminal liability (14 years of age) was mostly preferred by respondents with secondary education, without a school-leaving examination (38%, 141) and with a school-leaving examination (35%, 130). The next most frequently mentioned limit was 15 years of age, most often suggested as the limit age for criminal liability by respondents who completed only elementary education (34%, 55). On the other hand, university graduates tended to prefer 14 years of age as the criminal liability limit (33%, 48) or individual

assessment (30%, 44). Although perception of the adequate age limit for criminal liability according to the **highest acquired education of the respondents** differed significantly,  $\chi^2(12, n = 1.050) = 21.32, p = .046$ , the correlation tightness was too low (Cramer's  $V = .08$ ). So, the discovered correlations, although statistically significant,<sup>54</sup> do not represent significant circumstances.

The preferences related to the boundary of criminal liability significantly differed by **region** of residence of the respondents,  $\chi^2(28, n = 1.050) = 55.6, p < .001$ , Cramer's  $V = .12$ . According to the respondents from all regions except Prague, the boundary of criminal liability should be 14 years of age. Rounding out the overall ranking of the frequency of the individual variants, the second rank belonged to 15 years of age and the third rank to individual assessment. The age limit of 16 years seemed too high to most respondents from all regions and was therefore the least frequently mentioned (see Figure 2).

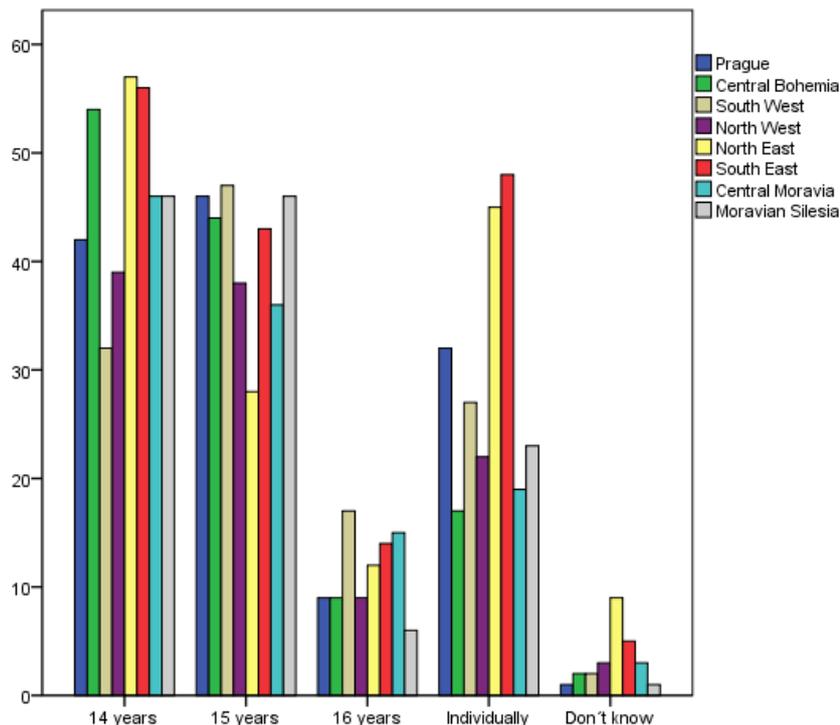


Figure 2 Boundary of criminal liability by region

## (2) Institutional or protective care

The dominant majority of the respondents (80%) agreed with ordering institutional or protective care to children and youth with problematic behaviour (such as truancy, theft, use of addictive substances, criminal behaviour, etc.). Nearly half of all respondents (45%) strongly agreed. On the other hand, "I rather disagree" was used in this context by 11% and 3% of respondents strongly disagreed. About 7% of the respondents were unable to assess this,  $\chi^2(4, n = 1.050) = 724.12, p < .001$ .

<sup>54</sup> Statistical significance is the likelihood that our sample comes from a set in which the null hypothesis is valid. At the same time, it makes the claim that a lower calculated level of significance would indicate higher statistical significance. But nothing more (Soukup, 2007).

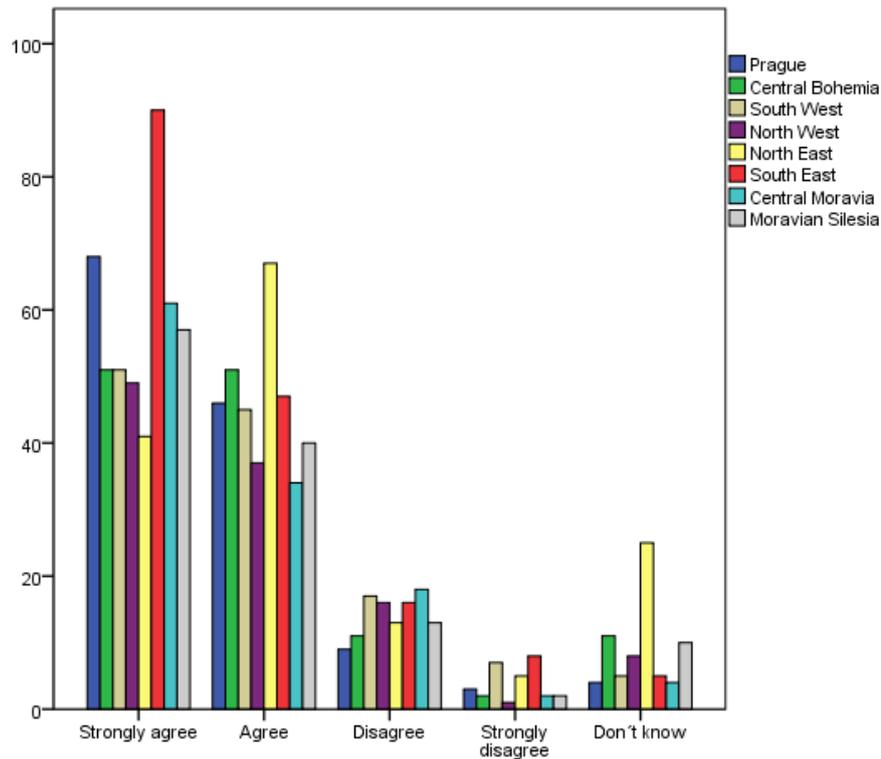


Figure 3 Acceptance of ordered institutional or protective care by region

Agreement with ordered institutional or protective care of children and youth with problematic behaviour differed by **region**,  $\chi^2(28, n = 1.050) = .267, p < .001$ , Cramer's  $V = .13$ . Respondents from all regions (except South East and North West) mostly strongly agreed with ordered institutional or protective care. The trend of agreement/disagreement with ordered institutional or protective care from strongly agree to strongly disagree was descending (see Figure 3).

An interesting finding was that respondents strongly agreeing with ordered institutional or protective care mostly selected the lowest limit of criminal liability (44%, 208). These respondents further recommended criminal liability from 15 years of age (30%, 139) and individual assessment (19%, 89). On the other hand, respondents not considering ordered institutional or protective care of children and youth with problematic behaviour an appropriate method of care mostly preferred higher limit of criminal liability of 15 years of age (9%, 10) and individual assessment (7%, 9). Nevertheless, no correlation was found between public acceptance of ordered institutional or protective care of children and youth with problematic behaviour, age and level of education achieved.

### (3) Replacement care

The respondents considered foster care (28%, 296) as the most appropriate **form of replacement care of parentless children and youth**. The following methods with insignificant differences in frequency were entrusting the child to care of another person (other than parents) (25%, 264) and adoption (24%, 254). Legal guardianship was considered the least appropriate form of replacement care of parentless children and youth (5%, 50). These results differ significantly,  $\chi^2(5, n = 1.050) = 332.65, p < .001$ .

Preferences in the form of replacement care of children and youth differed by place of residence of the respondent,  $\chi^2(15, n = 1.050) = 38.31, p < .001$ , Cramer's  $V = .11$ . Respondents living in a city centre most often preferred foster care (31%, 168) and adoption (27%, 143) and least frequently selected legal guardianship (4%, 19). Respondents living in villages found entrusting the child to care

of another person (other than parents) (32%, 84) to be the most appropriate form of replacement care of children and youth. This was followed by foster care (26%, 69) and adoption (21%, 55).

The structure of selection of form of replacement care of parentless children and youth by gender and age is shown in Figure 4. Middle-aged females (25-34 years) preferred foster care, identical to males of the same age group. The overall preference across age groups was foster care, followed by entrusting the child to care of another person (other than parents) and adoption. Although the differences are not statistically significant ( $p = .46$ ), they represent an interesting finding.

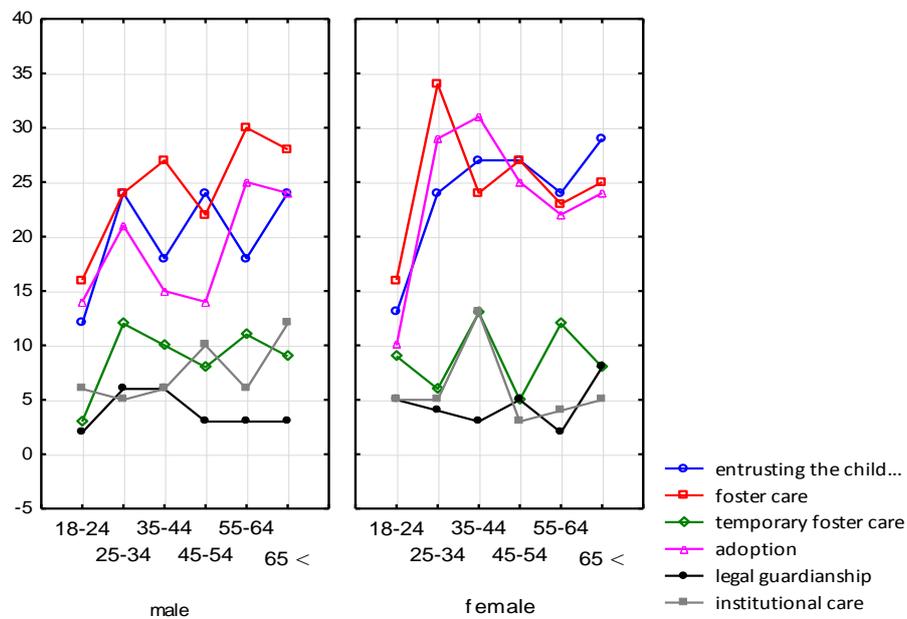


Figure 4 Form of replacement care of parentless children and youth by gender and age

University graduates showed a higher level of support for both variants of adoption compared to respondents with basic or secondary education. Another finding important to our conclusion was that only less than 8% considered institutional care as a suitable form of replacement upbringing.

## 5 Final reflection – Expert vs. popular discourse

The study shows that public opinion often addresses the same dilemmas as the expert discourse does, although using different argumentation platforms. While argumentation in expert discourse is based on scientific theories and obtained knowledge (about development of personality, child identity and effects of institutional environment on the child), the popular discourse is usually only supported by fragmentary media information and multiplied by the occasional media case, which then affects collective emotions, especially the feelings of worries and fear, as documented by Good and Ben-Yehuda (2009). By contrast, expert discourse is emotionally neutral, subject to control procedure within the research community and continuously critically assessed (Stehr & Grundmann, 2011; Grundman & Stehr, 2012).

What are the expert and popular discourse positions with respect to the three defined areas of social and legal protection of children: boundary of criminal liability, institutional or protective care and replacement care of parentless children? Our research allows for a conclusion that members of the general public are not unified in their opinions on the age limit of criminal liability and further, that those opinions do not agree with the main positions in the expert discourse. About one third of the respondents would prefer lowering the criminal liability age to 14 while another third agreed with the currently valid limit of 15 years. About one tenth would increase the limit even further to 16

years. About one fifth believe that the boundary of criminal liability should be assessed individually, case by case.

The expert discourse (for instance, Elliott, 2011; Farmer, 2011; Hollingsworth, 2013; Svatoš, 2013; Bateman, 2014) rather take a defensive approach. Thus, regarding the boundary of criminal liability in the Czech Republic, we found the assumed contradiction between the popular and the expert discourse. However, the contradiction is typical not only for the Czech Republic but also for other countries where similar discussions are in progress (Cipriani, 2009; Farmer, 2011; Hollingsworth, 2016). One of the reasons for the fact that one third of Czech adult population would like to see the boundary lower might be the deeply rooted collective belief in "innocent childhood." According to Julie Fionda (2005), the author of "Devils and Angels: Youth Policy and Crime," modern western societies adhere to a relatively widely rooted concept of good-natured children. In Fionda's metaphor, a child is an "angel." If, however, a child commits a substantial offence against law and order or moral rules, it is very quickly – much more quickly than an adult – labelled a "devil." This is why the approach of part of the general public to child criminality is much more stringent than their approach to adult criminality. Representatives of the professional public should therefore focus more on education in this area and increase their emphasis on the argument against lowering the boundary of criminal liability.

Concerning education, we cannot see any simple linearity in the case of the **boundary of criminal liability** according to which decreasing level of achieved education would increase the gap between the expert opinion and opinion of that part of the public. On the other hand, people opposing raised limits of criminal liability are represented at all education levels. So, the education obtained and any related cultural capital therefore cannot shed any light on public opinion.

Another non-surprising finding is the fact that the respondents who chose the lowest offered limit of criminal liability (14 years) *absolutely agreed* with the **ordered institutional or protective care of children and youth with problematic behaviour**. On the other hand, respondents not supporting ordered institutional or protective care of children and youth with problematic behaviour as an appropriate method of their support most often preferred the higher limit of criminal liability (15 years).

On the whole, the trend seen in the area of **preferred form of replacement care of parentless children and youth** across all age groups was as follows: (1) foster care, (2) entrusting the child to another natural person (other than parents) for care, (3) adoption, (4) care for a limited period of time and only then (5) institutional care (children's home). The above hierarchy shows that the discourse of non-institutionalisation of children and youth is deeply rooted in Czech society: only 8% of the respondents considered replacement care by an institution (children's home) the most appropriate method of child care. In this respect, there are in fact no contradictions between the expert approach to replacement family care and the public opinion (see, for example, Běhoučková, 2012; Chrenková, Cilečková, & Hašková, 2015; Vávrová, Hrbáčková, & Hladík, 2015). Unlike the case of the boundary of criminal liability, an important role in this context was probably played by an extensive educational campaign as well as the fact that media covered problems of institutional care rather than those of non-institutional care. Non-institutional care has never become a target of extensive moral panic or raised public opinion against it.

However, a contradiction between the popular and the expert discourse was observed in the third area of **preference of temporary foster care**. Temporary foster care, through the eyes of expert discourse, is a necessary element of non-institutional replacement care, without which the contemplated transformation could hardly be implemented (see, for example, Cilečková, 2014; Vávrová & Kroutilová Nováková, 2015). This is not reflected in the public opinion. This fact may be the result of extensive media discussions where some critics of de-institutionalisation in this area insisted that this is no longer care but rather a "sheer business."<sup>55</sup> If public opinion and expert

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Regional news („Roste počet,“ 2016).

discourse should get closer to each other in the case of this problem, then more attention will need to be paid to the educational agenda in order to broaden the awareness of the positive aspects of non-institutional replacement care.

The implemented research confirms our initially formulated theoretical assumption of the existence of two different approaches to issues of social and socio-pedagogical work. Public opinion on certain issues of social and legal protection of children is considerably different from positions recently defended and asserted by the expert discourse, and thus can stand in opposition against ongoing reforms in the area of social and legal protection of children.

Nevertheless, public opinion does not always oppose the opinions of experts. As shown in the example of institutional care of children and youth, the general public (like the expert discourse) disagrees with institutionalisation. This condition is probably the result of long and systematic education provided by experts, helping the idea of de-institutionalisation take root in Czech society across age groups and groups with different levels of education and socio-economic standing.

In the light of the broad concept of social pedagogy (see, for example, Kraus & Poláčková et al., 2001; Kraus, 2008; Bakošová, 2008), the results of our research are relevant for the discipline, showing that despite the extensive accumulation of scientific knowledge in the past decade, the Czech lay population still holds opinions completely different from the expert discourse. If social pedagogy aims to "focus on the population as a whole in the sense of creation of harmony between needs of the individual and the society and creation of the optimum way of life in the society" (Kraus, Poláčková et al., 2001, p. 12), then it must obviously also focus on: (1) Study of phenomena that are not in accord with the desires of part of the society and the expert public, especially if the expert public is represented by social and pedagogical workers whose knowledge and recommendations are to serve to improve the society's way of life, as insisted by Kraus, Poláčková and others (2001); (2) Attempts to overcome the disharmony through systematic educational activity; (3) Pointing out how extreme opinions (as opposed to expert knowledge) are misused to raise moral panic and create even greater disharmony between individuals and in the society, thus requiring recommendations for the solution of the issues in question.

In other words, social pedagogy should increasingly focus on: (1) Further study of harmonies and disharmonies between expert and popular discourse concerning phenomena within its area of action; (2) Reduction of the differences between the two discourses by acquiring empirical knowledge of the attitudes in public discourse, allowing identification of major social groups who oppose the expert discourse, in turn helping the better planning of targeted social, pedagogical and educational activities; (3) Social pedagogues should actively contribute to the ongoing discussions and engage in assertion of the desired positive changes not only in the area of social and legal protection of children among general public.

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*Guest of the Journal*

## Profile in Multicultural Education – Carl A. Grant



**Carl A. Grant** is a Hoefs-Bascom Professor of teacher education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. His work for more than thirty years has been with teachers and administrators who commit to improve students' achievement, enrich their knowledge and skill set in multicultural social justice, culturally responsive curriculum development, and teaching. He has written several books and many articles for teachers that address student achievement, curriculum development, teaching strategies, and parent-teacher engagement.

In addition to his scholarly work, Carl Grant is perhaps best known for being instrumental in his role as president of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) from 1993 to 1999. During his tenure, he helped NAME establish itself as a national and international presence, opening an office in Washington, D.C., hiring its first executive director, developing a professional journal, and nurturing an annual conference on multicultural education attended by the top scholars and multicultural educators from around the world.

Among his many honors, the Association of Teacher Educators selected Dr. Grant as one of 70 Leaders in Teacher Education in 1990. Also that year, he received the Distinguished Scholar Award from the American Educational Research Association (AERA). Also from AERA, he became a Distinguished Fellow in 2009, and received the Mentoring Award in 2011 and Social Justice in Education Award in 2010. Grant's outstanding achievements in multicultural education research are honored by NAME through the Carl A. Grant Research Award given at its annual conference. He has mentored many in the field today and continues to contribute his time and talents in the interest of educational equity and social justice. NAME and multicultural educators everywhere owe a debt to Carl Grant for his leadership in the field. Through his advocacy and stewardship, he has brought multicultural education to the forefront of modern education.

The most important contribution to the field of multicultural education is according to Carl Grant simply stated, “*in my eyes, service to the field is my biggest and most important contribution to multicultural education*”.

Carl A. Grant has given invited lectures for both national and international audiences, and written or edited more than 48 books and more than 175 articles and chapters. He is the author of *Multiculturalism in Education and Teaching: The selected works of Carl A. Grant* (2015); *Doing Multicultural Education for Achievement and Equity* (2011); *Intercultural and Multicultural Education: Enhancing Global Interconnectedness* (2010); *Making Choices for Multicultural Education: Five Approaches to Race, Class, and Gender*, 6th Ed. (2009); *Teach! Change! Empower! Solutions for Closing the Achievement Gaps* (2009); *Turning on Learning: Five Approaches for Multicultural Teaching Plans for Race, Class, Gender and Disability* (2009); *Learning to Teach Everyone’s Children: Equity, Empowerment, and Education That Is Multicultural* (2006) and many more (Carl A. Grant’s books can be found [here](#)).

Carl A. Grant is also the 2014 recipient of Loyola University Chicago's Damen Award from the School of Education (see [Youtube](#)).

## *Guests of the Journal*

### Interview with Carl A. Grant (March 2016)

#### **1 In what way is the multicultural society in the USA different nowadays than it was twenty or thirty years ago?**

Thirty years from the time you sent me the list of interview questions, would be 1985. Changes in the multicultural society since 1985 would include the “browning” of America. Immigrants from Asia and Latin America have added a large measure of cultural and phenotypic diversity to the country, and the boundaries between racial and ethnic group are continually blurring because of intermarriage. In addition, according to CNN (2012) white women are having fewer children. In 2000, nearly 13 percent of Americans (35.2 million) claimed Hispanic ancestry; the idea that America is a melting pot is no longer a popular perspective as attention to diversity increases. Economic contexts have been shown to define social relations; a poor economy in the US has brought on bitter competition between racial group over jobs. Since 2000, there has been a severe economic recession, unemployment past 10 percent for people of color. The poverty rate for whites, is 9%; Asians Americans, 12%; blacks, 25%; and Latinos 23%. The poverty rate for blacks and Latinos in many urban areas (e. g., Chicago) remains particularly high. Schooling for black and brown students, often in high-poverty areas, continues to be far behind, in every important factor (e.g., quality of teaching force, resources, relevance of curriculum).

The election of President Obama didn’t usher in a post-racial society, as some predicated. And, although he won his second term by more than five million votes, there is a hateful racial element in the US that continually contends that he cannot be an American and that a black man should not be president of the US. In addition, this is not only a US phenomena. Globalization (e.g., economic, movement of people, world wide communication, the rising up of poor and disenfranchised people, the awareness and demands of the “other”) is challenging and frightening the status quo and those who want things to return to the way they were decades ago, when they were often white, or “strong” men controlled all without respect, mercy and/or regard for others.

For, me the 1980s were the best of times and the worst of times. I was gratified to travel all over the country to lecture on university campuses and to conduct workshops in schools to help school districts across the nation who were asking for multicultural education and seeking to understand multiculturalism. Student demographic changes in the classroom, the browning of America and the movement of the country into a have and have-not society caused teachers to demand information (e.g., curriculum, teaching strategies, etc.) that would help them respond to these changes. This however was bittersweet, because as an educator, I was sad and disappointed that so many educators did not understand how to teach people who didn’t look like them or who were poorer than they were and that university-based teacher educators, teachers, and school administrators blamed the children and their families for most of the problems and were reluctant to see themselves as part of the problem and/or contributing to the problem. Finally, increasingly I have graduate students, whose research is taking them to locations outside of the US, not to study groups as anthropologists once did but to understand the people in a multicultural global context in order to speak to the world community about the peoples’ humanity.

#### **2 What are the main philosophical (ideological) foundations of contemporary multicultural education in the USA?**

The main philosophical foundation of contemporary multicultural education in the USA, from my perspective and the perspective of a number of multicultural scholars I know, is the acceptance and

appreciation of the humanity of each and every person/student – throughout the world – regardless of skin color or wealth or any other human/social characteristic and the desire for them to have a flourishing life. Implicit within having a flourishing life is the same regards for others throughout the world. Article 26 – the Right to an education – of the Declaration of Human Rights, and Article 12 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child are ideas that I champion. In addition, the philosophical foundation includes the acceptance and appreciation of each person’s culture, language, and identity and the equal acceptance of the humanity of ALL people. That said, much like democracy in many places, including the US, where democracy is a grand experiment, multicultural education is a work in progress; it is a notable experiment that I am pleased to be a part of. Arguably, the main philosophical foundation based upon democratic tents and taken from the first few words of the US Constitution “We the people...” are slowly, but surely coming to be as I look out at social and political advances in the country.

### **3 What do you consider as a core of successful multicultural education?**

The core of successful multicultural teaching are equity and equality and the appreciation and affirmation of the humanity and cultural background and knowledge of each and every person throughout the world. Included here is an acceptance, appreciation and recognition of their cultural identity and their group’s historical legacy. Years ago, I used the phrase, “Education that is multicultural education and social reconstructionist (MCE-SR).” By that, I meant that all of a student’s education should be multicultural: the staffing in the school, the curriculum and experiences, the school vision statement and the policies and practices that guide the school; within the context that society is changing (e.g., becoming more diverse but also more controlled and defined by neoliberal discourses and practices) therefore MCE-SR must remain fluid. Simply put MCE-SR refers to ALL of Students’ Education. When I think of a successful multicultural school, one that my granddaughter and her friends – and other kids though out the world – attends, I am thinking of a school where they are receiving an “education that is multicultural” that prepares them to have a flourishing life in a national and global context.

### **4 Has the role of the multicultural education teacher changed during last years? Can we still consider the teacher as a key factor of multicultural education?**

Indeed, teachers are a key factor of multicultural education and their knowledge of the significance of their role is growing in a positive way. In both my undergraduate and graduate classes, the students are much more aware and responsive to racial, economic and cultural diversity than students ten years ago, and close to a majority of the students warmly accept learning about their future as a teacher in a multiracial, socioeconomic challenged classroom. The role of the multicultural education teacher has changed over the past 10-15 years. Society’s awareness of diversity is an accepted, but resisted reality; therefore, the need to explain the reasons for multicultural education have shifted somewhat to one of helping schools and teachers to educate the diverse students body; taking agency against people who try to undercut multiculturalism, not being alone in the implementation of multicultural education, but instead having colleagues.

### **5 How much is the application of research findings in the area of multicultural education to school practice successful?**

Before directly answering your question let me say that multicultural education as a concept has received very little big research money. Some research money has been invested in the study of race; the study of gender, the study of socioeconomic status, the study of disability, etc.—in other words single category research. But, research money that seeks to examine the intersection of multiple categories and social identities (e.g., race, class, gender) in different education spaces and in regard to different education topics (e.g., education of second language learners, aspiration based on gender, race and socioeconomic) is small or non-existent. However, it is significant to say that results from scholarly investigations into the different areas multicultural education have richly influenced

the field, including the way teachers think about teaching and teach. In 2008, Professor Thandeka Chapman and I developed a 6 volume *History of Multicultural Education* published by Routledge that included both empirical studies and scholarly investigations on multicultural education. The Volumes included research on multicultural education in the following areas: V. 1 Conceptual Frameworks and Curricular Issues; V. 2 Foundations and Stratifications; V. 3 Instruction and Assessment; V. 4 Policy and Policy Initiatives; V. 5 Student and Student Learning; V. 6 Teacher and Teacher Education. My good friend and colleague, Gloria Ladson-Billing's book, *Dreamkeepers*, which addresses culturally relevant pedagogy has been influential in helping educators adopt cultural relevant pedagogy. *After the School Bell Rings*, by Professor Christine Sleeter and myself, a three-year ethnography of a middle school that included four difference ethnic groups, students who were physically challenged, students whose first language was not English and our tracking of the students through the completion of their high school received favorable attention by teachers and other educators (See the follow up study: "Race, Class Gender and Abandon Dreams" Grant & Sleeter, in *Teacher College Record*, 1988). In sum, the US, including the teaching force, is ready for a well-funded major study of multicultural education in order to help educators and policymakers apply results and thereby help students learn and help teachers learn about teaching students different than they are.

#### **6 What are the effective strategies of coping with socio-cultural diversity in the school environment?**

There is not a strong research base, because of the absence of research data in multicultural education. That said, some effective pedagogical strategies based upon anecdotal evidence, classroom observations, and small research studies include: the importance of parent – teacher engagements; culturally relevant curriculum and culturally response engagements; establishing a democratic learning community, having teachers of color and administrators ; having teachers who teach the students first and the curriculum second and having school leadership that strongly supports multiculturalism, inclusion, and multicultural education.

#### **7 What is a fundamental obstacle to achieving social justice (in a school environment, education or in the whole society)?**

Years ago, (2003) W. E. B. Du Bois wrote *The Souls of Black Folks* where he argued that the problem of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is the color line. Today racial injustice continues to take many forms (e.g., in curriculum, staffing, expectation of students) and remains a major challenge. In addition, gender equality remains elusive; the glass ceiling remains in place and women and girls continue to receive secondary treatment in many areas; women continue to make less than men for doing the same job. Women and girls of color face triple oppression, and they continue to be denied equal treatment and or not granted the same opportunities professionally and commercially and their male and/or white peers; nor are they appreciated and celebrated in ways equal to white women/girls.). In terms of socioeconomic class, we are seeing grown inequalities with 1% of Americans owning and controlling 99% of the wealth of the country; the US has become a have and have-not society. 2015 saw historically high homicide rates with the murder of 21 trans people, the majority of whom were trans women of color, and none of which were prosecuted as a hate crime. Trans people in the U.S. experience hate-based violence and homicide at extremely high rates; face legal and social barriers and resistance to the recognition and respect of their gender identities; and transphobia continues to pervade our schools. Trans people/students are faced with fear and violence, which are barriers to living a flourishing life. The disregard of each human having a flourishing life are obstacle to achieving social justice.

#### **8 What are the main challenges in the area of multicultural education and socio-cultural diversity in the future?**

The main challenges in the area of multicultural education and socio-cultural diversity in the future, pretty much, remain those that we continue face today: acquiring the capacity (knowledge, skills,

and disposition) to accept and celebrate the humanity of each individual; developing within people a willingness to actively engage in creating and affirming ideologies and practices based in democratic principles that push back against a “have and have not world,” eliminate the legacy of the disregard/disrespect for others because of a “me–first and only” ideology grounded in neoliberal philosophy and practice. Also, with religion, other than Christianity and the Jewish religion being questioned or causing concern in everyday society, learning how to include religion (writ large) within the context of multicultural education is necessary, and within that inclusion making certain that all religions are appreciated and affirmed. Further, believing that “common ground” can be found between groups of people where the meaning of multicultural education is shaped by the context.

#### **9 What is your personal vision of education in/for the 21st century?**

For there to be an education system that (1) completely recognizes the humanity, identity, culture and language of each and every child and educates children and youth to accept and appreciate the humanity of others; (2) educates students to work cooperatively with one another to solve the many natural and man-made problems that the world faces; (3) is given the human and material resources it needs to educate all of its children; (4) operates in the country/nation in ways that fully and completely value and celebrate all children; and (5) maintains an accountable system, with power and enforcement mechanisms to make certain that social justice takes place. Space, doesn’t allow to fully define what I mean, by social justice, a term that too often goes undefined or under-defined, beside referencing my lecture: “Cultivating Flourishing Lives: A Robust Social Justice Vision of Education” that I delivered when I received the American Education Research Award (AERA) and published in the American Educational Research Journal (AERJ) 2012, 49, 5, 911. In this paper I fully explore the ways I imagine social justice. However, I will close this interview, with a statement on social justice that I made at the close of my lecture:

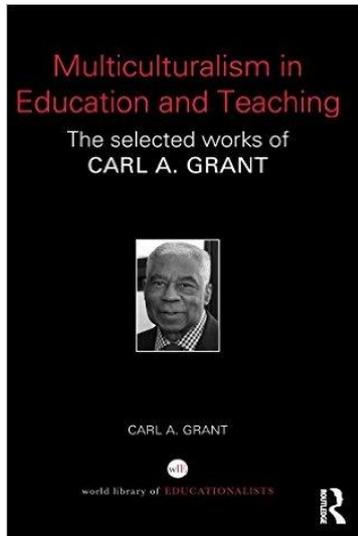
I have argued that to cultivate flourishing lives, a robust social justice education must include five core practices: (1) self-assessment, (2) critical questioning, (3) the practice of democracy, (4) social action, and (5) tools of adjudication. In sum, for each and every one of us, cultivating flourishing lives for our students in keeping with a robust social justice vision of education demands that we are clear (and have agency) about the meaning of “cultivating” and “flourishing”; that we acknowledge that our students are shaped by their histories; and that within this context the core values of self-assessment, critical questioning, practice (of) democracy, social action and (having) a criteria for adjudication must act in concert to ensure a robust social justice.

THANK YOU!

Carl A. Grant, Hoefs Bascom Professor  
University Wisconsin-Madison

## Review

Grant, C. A. (2015). *Multiculturalism in education and teaching. The selected works of Carl A. Grant*. New York: Routledge.



"I wanted to act against that oppression." This sentence appears on the very first page of the introduction to Grant's book. However, it is not only this book that it begins. This imperative was basically the start of Carl Grant's scientific and academic career, which spanned over forty years and which was devoted to social justice in the school system and multicultural education in the USA. Although this is a selection of Grant's texts from the end of the 1970s to the present day, it is neither a review nor an effort at a "Best of"-type publication. That is what makes the book so appealing. The texts which were selected are mainly a reflection of the sentence quoted above, and they can be construed as a "strong broth" of multicultural discourse in education in the USA.

The book contains a total of fourteen texts, which are divided into three parts: Race and Educational Equity, Theorizing Multicultural Education and Multicultural Teacher Education. Six texts were written by Grant as a co-author. Race and Educational Equity contains three chapters, in which the central concept is race and racism. "Race is a historical and contemporary determinant of life chances and opportunities," writes Grant. Grant always manages support this claim, just like all the others, with argumentation based on his own extensive research and study of many sources. The fight against racism, as a formalized institution determining social stratification, requires not only a change of laws towards a socially just approach to education, but also a change of curriculum, textbooks and the concept of the educational process on the part of teachers. The second part, which is called Theorizing Multicultural Education, captures the fundamental and essential thesis of the objectives and content of multicultural education, which can be an important guideline for the reader when (re)defining their own concept. Furthermore, for European readers, this part represents an opportunity to compare multicultural educational paradigms in the USA with those in Europe. In Grant's concept, multicultural education is not only an educational process but also a philosophical concept, one whose roots can be found in the Civil Rights Movement of the late 1960s.

While Grant bases the first two parts on knowledge of a large volume of literature from a number of fields (for example, sociology, anthropology and history), the last part of the book, called Multicultural Teacher Education, serves Grant as fundamental support for his many years of experience educating future teachers. These are five texts from the later 1980s and 1990s. In them, among others, Grant emphasizes the need to research teacher education in a racially, culturally and socially diversified society. This research should be the foundation for the creation of concepts and visions which are to be realized in a longer time horizon. According to Grant, the teacher is the primary carrier of equity and equality, which is why high demands are placed on him or her. Preparing teachers to perform their jobs in a pluralistic society requires a clear concept based on empirical research.

The book represents a temporal and thematic cross-section of Grant's many years of academic efforts. In short, the reader can follow the development of Grant's thinking and speculation on the themes of race, multicultural society and education. What's important is that Grant's texts are always based on a social context. Grant was always inspired by what was going on around him. That is why his texts are a mirror of American society over the period of the last forty years. The book

*Multiculturalism in Education and Teaching*. The selected works of Carl A. Grant can be an appropriate start to a study of Grant's work. It forces readers to familiarize themselves with other texts, and represents a gateway to a deeper understanding of his books and articles.

The review originated within the scope of addressing the project IGA/FHS/2015/003 – Social and Intrapersonal Context of the Multicultural Teaching of Secondary School Students.

Jakub Hladík  
*Faculty of Humanities, Tomas Bata University in Zlín*

## Review

Suchánková, E. (2014). *Hra a její využití v předškolním věku* [Play and its use in pre-school age]. Praha: Portál.



Children's play belongs to highly topical subjects in the area of pre-school education. Play and a child are inseparable as important activities, by means of which children develop, learn to assert themselves and solve problems, especially within a group of their peers. Play reflects development-conditioned changes related to the development of pro-social behaviour. Adults, especially educators (tutors) and teachers should understand children's play, create desirable conditions for it, use it as a tool for children's development and a tool of pedagogical diagnostics, etc. This requires an abundance of specialized knowledge.

The author of a publication called "*Hra a její využití v předškolním věku*" (*Play and Its Use in Pre-School Age*) has approached this area in a comprehensive manner. She has set a goal to theoretically address specific features of play and provide readers with practical information, procedures, and ideas how to use a play when meeting the pre-school education objectives with regard to age-related and individual special features of children. The text of the publication is divided into four main chapters within which the author addresses play from different points of view. The content of the book demonstrates that the individual chapters are elaborated and interconnected, which allows readers to gain information gradually and in a logical context.

In the first chapter called "*Hra pohledem současnosti*" (*Play in the Presence*) the author describes a play and its principal features as viewed by various authors. A major part of the chapter consists of a sub-chapter dealing with the relation between play, learning, work and motivation. In this context, the author focuses in detail on internal and external motivation. She highlights making use of positive motivation, but also the risk of negative motivation applied especially as part of incorrect educational styles. In this chapter readers can find a mention of pedagogical and social constructivism or a humanistic approach to education (Rogers, Maslow). I believe that readers would appreciate more information on the approach to children's education and development as viewed by these important individuals as their opinions are still highly topical and current pre-school education is based on them because they are representative of the humanistic approach to education which requires mutual understanding and respect of those engaged in the educational process.

Chapter two called "*Hra v období předškolního věku*" (*Play in Pre-School Age*) focuses on pre-school children's play. The author expresses the substance of play in this period quoting A. S. Neill: "*Childhood means play and children can never grow tired of play.*" The author deals with significance of play. She describes the specific features and classification of play in direct relation to the pre-school age as a specific development stage. Children's play goes through qualitative changes, which are directly related to development stages. Knowing these specific features allows teachers to approach children and their play in a competent manner and, thus, provide children with desirable space for their play. Teachers and also students often find it difficult to be well versed in the classification of play. The author did not omit this area and provides readers with information on the classification of play in terms of various approaches (the level of guidance, organisation, kind of activity, etc.), which allows readers to have a comprehensive knowledge of children's play. In the last sub-chapter of the second chapter the author focuses on toys, their importance and suitability for pre-school children's play. In this aspect, the author also provides references to important documents in which adults can find out what is necessary for buying toys that are harmless to health.

Chapter three called “*Hra v pojetí předškolního vzdělávání*” (*Play Approached by Pre-School Education*) is already elaborated in the context of current pre-school education. It is already situated into the specific conditions of a nursery school and its curriculum. The basis of this chapter is formed by a sub-chapter focusing on individualization in pre-school education, which represents the principal idea and basis of the current philosophy of pre-school education in Czech nursery schools. The author briefly summarizes the changes to the paradigms and approaches in historical context. The text continues with the current approach to play within the pre-school curriculum. It is suitably completed with examples from nursery school practice. It also describes the issue of spontaneous and controlled play activities. In this part, the author uses the term “day regime”, which the current curriculum does not use any longer. It is more suitable to use the term “*daily programme*” and follow the terms of the applicable pre-school curriculum. Knowing the substance of spontaneous and controlled activities and being able to plan them correctly and in a non-violent manner is certainly a feature of “mastering teaching,” which develops during the pedagogical practice in relation to professional knowledge. The chapter also deals with the area of pedagogical diagnostics, planning of play activities and preparation of an environment for children’s play. The author introduces and explains possible approaches when including play activities on usual days of a nursery school in accordance with the pre-school curriculum. It must be highlighted here that this part also includes the risks that the teacher should eliminate as much as possible. This area is usually not addressed much. I also appreciate the emphasis on the consistency of the pre-school curriculum on national – school and class level of the curriculum.

Chapter four called “*Hra jako prostředek individualizace v předškolním vzdělávání*” (*Play as a Tool for Individualization in Pre-School Education*) represents the theoretical bases resulting into a number of methodical procedures and recommendations for nursery school teachers concerning planning of play activities at the level of the school and class emphasizing individualization. In this part the text is completed with numerous charts allowing readers to understand the text better with regard to the particular conditions of education.

Reviewers are expected to have a critical opinion on a specialized text and thus to point out some weak points of the publication. If we take into account that the text is intended not only for pedagogues but also for teachers, it cannot be reproached at all. It is presented in a sophisticated, yet easy to understand language. It creates a comprehensive view of the pre-school play issue. The publication is certainly very good and both pedagogues working with pre-school children, and students preparing for this occupation should acquaint themselves with it.

It is a high-quality specialized publication, which readers can use not only to obtain theoretical findings but also numerous impulses for direct work with children.

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