School as a Professional LEARNING Community: A Comparison of the Primary and Lower Secondary Levels of Czech Basic Schools

Abstract

This article deals with two subjects which form an inevitable part of the discussion on Czech basic schools. First, there is school development from the inside, individual and group learning and organizational development in schools. Second, there is the double task of Czech basic schools to provide pupils with primary and, subsequently, lower secondary education. The aim of the analysis is to compare evidence given by teachers at the primary and lower secondary levels of basic schools about processes which create the dimensions of a professional learning community. Analysis of the data obtained from this research, which was carried out in Czech basic schools, leads to the conclusion that despite a relatively large conformity in the adult actors’ perception of systematicity in handling the subjects of learning, this perception cannot be considered homogeneous.

Keywords: school improvement, professional learning communities, organizational learning, supportive factors

Introduction

Based on research into organizational learning in schools, the authors of the presented paper strive to contribute to the debate on whether Czech basic schools are homogeneous units despite the incorporation of two levels of schooling, or whether they represent two different cultures. The study is of benefit in that it finds out how primary and lower secondary levels of Czech basic schools differ in terms