Causes and Consequences of Labelling Gifted Pupils at Selected Elementary Schools

Abstract

The article describes qualitative research analyzing causes and consequences of labelling gifted pupils. Causes and consequences were identified after an analysis of semi-structured interviews with gifted pupils, their classmates and teachers. Identified causes included certain pedagogical strategies such as excluding a gifted pupil from a group of their peers, using specific names for classes, excessive media coverage of specialized classes and pupils. Labelling was further promoted by a curriculum differing in its content, processes and materials offered to gifted pupils only. Consequences of labelling included ostracism and ridicule of gifted pupils by their classmates, rivalry and hostility. The article concludes with proposals which might help to reduce labelling.

Keywords: labelling, gifted pupil, causes and consequences of labelling.

Introduction and Present State of the Problem

The topic of our research is the category of labelling. The term itself is defined by a labelling theory. The labelling theory deals with labelling individuals according to their abilities and skills. After an individual is labelled, their attitude as well as the attitude of professionals and their environment towards them changes and the individual thus becomes stigmatized. As a label we understand, e.g., a psychiatric diagnosis, which may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Consequently, a diagnosed person begins to show behavioural deviations (Urban, Prošek, 2008).