

Non-subject based education – methods of developing competences

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Experiences of in-services teacher training courses

The latest versions of the 2008 legislation on public education and the 2007 National Core Curriculum called for non-subject based education for 25-50 pc of the classes in grades five and six (pupils aged 10-12). In the course of these classes emphasis needs to be placed on the elaboration of interdisciplinary topics encompassing several cultural domains employing constructivist theory and co-operative methods. According to the ministerial decree, only those pedagogues may conduct in these non-subject based classes who have completed a special, 120-hour accredited in-service teacher training course. The Ministry of Education has prepared an on-line, alternative, sample frame curriculum suited for non-subject based classes and textbook publishers have also provided methodology guidelines and corresponding workbooks. Our association (www.isze.hu) as one of the organizers of the preparatory courses, has published a manual too, containing relevant key information and practical suggestions.



Figure: Mirror project – Photos from our in-service teacher training courses

Initially, most pedagogues greeted the new educational policies and the 120-hour mandatory in-service teacher training with aversion. Many of them failed to grasp the need for having to obtain a new "degree" to teach the very same students whom they have hitherto taught mathematics, biology or history. During the training we employed the same co-operative methods aimed at acquiring new knowledge as expected of them in regard to their pupils. This involved a great deal of group effort, pair work and playful activities. On the basis of the questionnaires, we may conclude that our courses were a success, the teachers enjoyed participating and received much practical assistance from the lecturers.

In the course of the first academic year (2008-2009), the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development (www.ofi.hu) conducted an on-line survey concerning the methods used in non-subject based classes. It turned out that co-operative techniques dominated over the whole class methods. ICT is an excellent opportunity for the interdisciplinary elaboration of curriculum topics. Computers and other digital means support the teaching of all subjects.

Keywords

non-subject based education, co-operative methods, Logo pedagogy, in-service teacher training