

Kakšno znanje hočemo?

Šola in pojmovanja znanja v sodobnem času

(Uvodnik)

Letošnji letnik revije »Sodobna pedagogika« začenjamo s tematskim sklopom, namenjenim obravnavi vprašanja, *kakšno znanje* naj bi učenkam in učencem zagotovili v različnih izobraževalnih programih, od predšolske vzgoje do osnovnošolskega in srednješolskega izobraževanja. Kompleksnost vprašanja, ki tako na konceptualni kot tudi na empirični ravni prinaša raznolike odgovore, se odraža v prispevkih, ki jih objavljamo v tej in naslednji številki revije – obe bosta bralke in bralce dosegli še pred letošnjo mednarodno znanstveno konferenco Zveze društev pedagoških delavcev Slovenije, ki bo maja v Žalcu in na kateri bo prav tako potekala razprava o šoli in konceptih znanja v današnjem času. V uredništvo smo prejeli veliko kakovostnih besedil, ki jih zaradi omejenega obsega revije ni mogoče objaviti naenkrat, kljub temu pa bralk in bralcev zanje nismo želeli prikrajšati. Zato bo izboru besedil, ki je sedaj pred vami, že čez dober mesec, tj. v prvi polovici maja, sledil podobno obsežen izbor prispevkov z isto tematiko.

Na naše vabilo k sodelovanju so se odzvali avtorji in avtorice, ki dejavno sooblikujejo področje vzgoje in izobraževanja v našem prostoru, kar kaže na to, da smo odprli relevantna vprašanja za širši krog strokovne in druge zainteresirane javnosti. To ne preseneča: *znanje* je namreč tisto osrednje sredstvo in cilj izobraževanja, ki vodi, kot bi zapisal Ozvald, h *culturi animi* ali izoblikovanosti posameznikovega duha. Zato prav razmisleki o znanju pomembno določajo kakovost vzgojno-izobraževalnega sistema, s tem pa tudi kakovost vzgoje in izobraževanja kot procesa ter ne nazadnje kakovost splošne in poklicne izobrazbe vsakega posameznika oziroma posameznice.

Uredniški uvodnik nastaja v dneh, ko v javnosti odmeva razprava o priporočilih OECD-ja (Organizacije za gospodarsko sodelovanje in razvoj), in sicer predvsem tistih, ki govorijo o tem, da bi bilo treba skržiti obseg javnih sredstev, namenjenih osnovnemu in srednjemu šolstvu, saj naj bi bila le-ta porabljena premalo učinkovito; da bi morali združevati oziroma zapirati podružnične osnovne šole, zmanjševati število učiteljic in učiteljev ter vzgojiteljic in vzgojiteljev, v povezavi s tem pa povečati število otrok v oddelkih vrtcev in šol.

Ko je 18. februarja 2011 William White, predsednik odbora za ekonomske in razvojne poglede pri OECD-ju, na Brdu pri Kranju odgovarjal na vprašanja v zvezi s priporočili OECD-ja, Mehmet Eris, izvedenec OECD-ja za Slovenijo, pa predstavil ugotovitve študije za področje šolstva, se je šolski minister dr. Igor Lukšič zelo kritično odzval na nekatere nesprejemljive predloge, kar od resornega ministra tudi pričakujemo. Povedal je, kot smo lahko v »Dnevniku« prebrali dan pozneje, da doživlja strokovnjake OECD-ja, ki se v ožjem smislu ukvarjajo z izobraževanjem, kot »šololjubne«, tiste, ki jih bolj zanima ekonomska učinkovitost izobraževanja,

pa kot »šolomrzne«. Iz ministrovega odziva na predstavljena priporočila je mogoče razumeti, da so imeli pri oblikovanju le-teh tako rekoč zadnjo besedo »šolomrzneži«, torej tisti, ki zagovarjajo za šolstvo nesprejemljivo, celo škodljivo logiko, nekateri podatki pa so po mnenju ministra v poročilu celo napačno uporabljeni (Ivelja in Svenšek 2011, str. 2). Seveda izvedenci OECD-ja v razpravi najbrž niso poudarjali, da v Sloveniji že zaostajamo za povprečnim deležem BDP-ja, ki ga za formalno izobraževanje namenjajo države članice OECD-ja. Ta delež je v preteklosti pri nas že presegal šest odstotkov BDP-ja, zadnjih pet let pa samo še pada. Kar nas lahko dodatno skrbi, je odziv tistih ministrov, ki imajo pri delitvi proračunske pogače v rokah »škarje in platno« ter večjo težo, ko gre za sprejemanje odločitev o delitvi finančnih sredstev: pritrjevali so namreč, da so ugotovitve OECD-ja glede šolstva točne, priporočila pa povsem na mestu.

Za problematiko, ki se obravnava v tej in prihodnji številki »Sodobne pedagogike«, so še posebej zanimive lahkotne ocene, ki jih je bilo po poročilu novinark slišati med udeleženci razprave na Brdu pri Kranju: da se javni denar v vrtcih, osnovnem in srednjem šolstvu porablja premalo učinkovito, saj naj bi na Češkem, Madžarskem in v drugih primerljivih državah dosegali podobne rezultate v znanju kot v Sloveniji, a s precej manj denarja (prav tam). Če odmislimo poenostavljene interpretacije o povezavah med finančnimi vložki in rezultati v znanju, ki si jih tisti, ki svetujejo ali odločajo o denarju (če jim gre za strokovnost), nikakor ne bi smeli privoščiti, je treba pri povezovanju dosežkov učencev v mednarodnih raziskavah PISA z vloženimi finančnimi sredstvi, o čemer je najbrž tekla beseda, upoštevati vsaj to, da te raziskave matematične, naravoslovne in jezikovne pismenosti ne preverjajo doseganja v učnih načrtih zapisanih učnih ciljev in standardov znanja, ampak je njihov cilj predvsem ovrednotiti, v kolikšni meri so mladi pri petnajstih letih »opremljeni« z naborom znanja in spretnosti, ki naj bi jih potrebovali, da se bodo lahko uspešno soočali s pričakovanji in izzivi v vsakdanjih življenjskih situacijah, zlasti na trgu dela. Tovrstna učinkovitost sistema je sicer pomembna, a je ni mogoče preprosto izenačiti s *kakovostjo splošnega izobraževanja* in splošnoizobraževalnega znanja, ki ga učenci pridobijo v času osnovnega šolanja. Sklepati o dejanski kakovosti (splošne) izobrazbe zgolj na podlagi posameznih kazalcev učinkovitosti, ki jih prikazuje PISA, je ne le metodološko neustrezno, ampak tudi nevarno zavajajoče ob potrebnih razmislekih o ukrepih in rešitvah, ki jih želimo v sistem vzgoje in izobraževanja vpeljati v prihodnje. V Sloveniji bi morali, ne glede na ekonomsko motivirana priporočila, vzpostavljati mehanizme, s pomočjo katerih bomo državljanke in državljanom zagotavljali ne le učinkovito, ampak tudi *kakovostno splošno izobrazbo in znanje kot javno dobro*.

V tem smislu je težnjo uredništva ob snovanju tematskega sklopa in znanstvene konference povsem ujela Barica Marentič Požarnik, ki je v uvodu svojega prispevka – objavljen bo v naslednji številki revije – zapisala, da je tokratna tema z osnovnim vprašanjem »Kakšno znanje hočemo?« osrednjega pomena za načrtovanje, izvajanje in vrednotenje vsakršne izobraževalne dejavnosti. »Pobuda spominja na znano potezo Finske, ki je kot uvod v korenito reformo svojega izobraževalnega sistema najprej izdala knjižico o pojmovanjih znanja. Ta naj bi spodbudila poglobljeno razmišljanje in dialog zlasti med učitelji, šolskimi politiki in sestavljavci učnih

načrtov o tem, kako različna pojmovanja znanja vplivajo tako na zastavljene cilje kot tudi na njihovo opredmetenje (na primer v učbenikih) in uresničevanje, učence in starše pa naj bi ozaveštila o tem, kakšno znanje pričakujejo od šole in kaj le-ta pričakuje od njih.« (Marentič Požarnik 2011) Avtorica dodaja, da dano izhodišče obravnava z izrazom »koncepti znanja« predvideva, da je več možnih konceptov, torej kompleksnih pojmov znanja oziroma »konceptij« ali pojmovanj, ki jih je treba ozaveščati in primerjati, hkrati pa je treba analizirati, kako je znanje pojmovano v učnih načrtih, kako različne koncepcije razumejo in udejanjajo učitelji ter kako njihove intervencije vplivajo tudi na pojmovanja kakovostnega znanja pri učencih z različnimi zmožnostmi in interesi, na njihove pristope k učenju in posledično na doseganje ciljev pouka; zlasti ker na vsaki »postaji« prihaja do določenih neskladij med zaželenim in doseženim znanjem (prim. prav tam).

Zdi se, da je strokovni in znanstveni prostor glede teh vprašanj izrazito heterogen, saj se lahko v njem soočimo s pojmovanji znanja, ki se opirajo na različna epistemološka, pedagoška, sociološka, psihološka in druga ozadja, pri čemer vsako zase pogosto verjame, da je celovitejša in bolj koherentna od drugih. Znotraj okvira, ki ga zamejuje, to pogosto drži. Da pa bi lahko presodili, kakšna so razmerja med pojmovanji oziroma koncepcijami, moramo v vsakem od različnih teoretičnih in paradigmatičnih pogledov na znanje, pa tudi med njimi, vzpostaviti kolikor je mogoče jasna pojmovna in terminološka razlikovanja. To nas postavlja pred nalogo, da poskušamo razlike med njimi interpretirati na podlagi argumentov, ki se morajo izogniti kodiranju vrednostnih presežkov, posamezni strokovni izrazi in opredelitve pa morajo biti enopomenski, tako da se njihov pomen ne vzpostavlja v vrednotnem razmerju do drugih paradig, ki jih zaznamujemo kot dobre ali slabe, zelene ali neželene, dopustne ali prepovedane (prim. Kunst Gnamuš 1988, str. 84). Pri tem ne smemo pozabiti na zahtevo po natančnem navajanju in povzemanju argumentacije avtorjev (ne glede na to, ali se z njimi strinjamo ali ne). Povzemati in navajati jih ne kaže iztrgano iz konteksta. S tem je sicer mogoče ustvariti vtis, da smo svoje razmisleke podkrepili, a ostane zamolčano, da je v celoti gledano sporočilo avtorja, na katerega se sklicujemo, lahko povsem drugačno kot tisto, ki mu ga pripisujemo. Nevednost pri tem ni opravičilo.

Strokovno produktivno je tudi, da poiščemo mesta, na katerih se različna pojmovanja prekrivajo in ob katerih je mogoče doseči širše strokovno strinjanje in to ne glede na okvir, ki ga posamezne teoretske pozicije zagovarjajo. Prispevki, ki jih objavljamo v tej, pa tudi v prihodnji številki revije, kažejo, da takih točk ni malo: ena od »rdečih niti« pravzaprav vseh objavljenih besedil opozarja, da znanja ni mogoče razumeti le kot zbirke absolutnih resnic ali med seboj in z izkušnjami učencev nepovezanih podatkov in dejstev, ki bi si jih morali le-ti zapomniti in jih pred učiteljem zgolj reproducirati za oceno. Avtorji in avtorice utemeljujejo, da je treba znanje razumeti veliko kompleksneje: kot koncept, ki ga vzpostavljajo vsebinska, procesna, metakognitivna, strateška in ne nazadnje vrednotna dimenzija. Ta poudarek je pomemben tudi zato, ker pokaže, da zgolj z domnevo o konceptualni (pre)ozkosti pojma znanje ni mogoče brez dodatnega tehtnega razmisleka utemeljiti prizadevanj po nadomeščanju znanja s koncepti, ki naj bi bili v tem pogledu pomensko bistveno širši: denimo s ključnimi kompetencami, za katere

naj bi bilo značilno, da poleg znanja vsebujejo tudi zmožnosti za njegovo dejavno uporabo (tj. funkcionalno razsežnost), zmožnost izražanja stališč (angl. *attitudes*) in vrednotenja v različnih okoliščinah. V nekaterih od objavljenih besedil boste tako lahko sledili argumentaciji, zakaj znanja nikakor ni mogoče razumeti le kot eno od dimenzij kompetence, ampak je prav znanje tisto, ki skozi svojo kompleksnost šele proizvaja kompetenčne učinke.

Kot pomembno skupno točko različnih pogledov je mogoče prepoznati tudi tezo, da znanje ni nekaj, kar bi učenec lahko zgolj pasivno sprejel od zunaj brez lastne učne aktivnosti: ta poudarek je eden ključnih, tudi v objavljenih besedilih, saj med drugim sporoča, da do znanja ni mogoče priti brez resnega učnega navora, ki ga mora vsak učenec vložiti v lastno učenje.

Ob tem pa se postavlja temeljno vprašanje, ki ga v svojem uvodoma omenjenem prispevku tematizira B. Marentič Požarnik: Katero znanje bo mladim omogočilo kakovostno (osebno) življenje, sožitje in preživetje, hkrati pa učinkovito znajdenje v družbenih odnosih, poklicnem svetu, vse bolj nejasnih in težko predvidljivih razmerah prihodnosti? V najboljšem primeru naj bi pridobili, zapiše avtorica, tako zmožnost prilagajanja spremembam kot tudi kritično distanco, trdno osebnostno jedro ter zmožnost in pripravljenost soustvarjanja novih, boljših rešitev naraščajočih socialnih, ekonomskih, ekoloških problemov (Marentič Požarnik 2011). Zlasti v programih splošnega izobraževanja bi morali mladi pridobiti splošnoizobraževalno znanje, ki daje široko razgledanost in omiko, torej svobodno izobrazbo, ki širi, kot zapiše Kodelja, »človekova duhovna obzorja in ga s tem osvobaja od omejitev, ki jih prinaša neki partikularen način mišljenja, ujet v ozke strokovne ali doktrinarne meje.« (Kodelja 2005, str. 317) V tem smislu, poudarja avtor, je splošna izobrazba razumljena kot vrednota sama po sebi in ni v funkciji zunanjih, utilitarnih ciljev, čeprav lahko prispeva k njihovem doseganju (prav tam).

Pri tem je mogoče imeti različna stališča o tem, kako temeljito poznavanje dejstev, definicij, konceptov itd. naj bi učenci usvojili pri posameznem predmetu, pa tudi koliko deklarativnega, proceduralnega, strateškega in metakognitivnega znanja naj bi usvojili in kakšno naj bi to znanje bilo – znotraj vsake stroke se je o tem treba resno dogovarjati. Najbrž pa že v tem hipu velja konsenz o tem, da se učitelj, ki učenca vodi h kakovostnemu znanju in izobrazbi, ne more zadovoljiti zgolj z verbalizmom, tj. z učenčevo dobesedno reprodukcijo, kolikor slednji ob tem ne izkaže nikakršnega razumevanja naučenega. Ali kot opozarja B. Marentič Požarnik, razlika je med »povsem mehaničnim učenjem na pamet in učenjem podatkov, dejstev, zlasti pa definicij in zakonitosti, ki jih moraš že v osnovi razumeti in so gradniki višjih oblik učenja.« (Marentič Požarnik 2011) Še več, najbrž bi se lahko hitro sporazumeli, da mora učitelj poučevati tako, da učenci dosežejo cilje na ravni deklarativnega znanja, na ravni občutenja in v ravnanjih ter da so (oziroma morajo biti) v vsako od teh ravni vpisane razsežnosti razumevanja, zmožnosti in vrednotenja. Z drugimi besedami to pomeni, da je pomen deklarativnega znanja mogoče presojati samo prek pomena, ki ga ima le-to za reševanje problemov, za kritično mišljenje in z njim skladno ravnanje (Kovač Šebart in Krek 2009; Kovač Šebart 2011).

Ko smo piscem pripravljali vabilo za sodelovanje pri tokratnem tematskem sklopu, smo želeli dobiti odgovor še na eno od vprašanj, in sicer, kako se priza-

devanja, da bi učenke in učenci usvojili čim bolj kakovostno znanje in izobrazbo, udeležajo se implementacije različnih didaktičnih strategij, ki jih učitelji načrtujejo in izvajajo pri pouku. Bilo bi produktivno, če bi v Sloveniji dosegli soglasje, da h kakovostnemu znanju in izobrazbi lahko vodijo različne poti ter da nobena ne sme in ne more biti vnaprej izključena kot manj vredna ali manj zaželena. »Stremeti bi morali k čim boljši strokovni in didaktični usposobljenosti učiteljev, da bodo lahko na podlagi učnih ciljev suvereno določali učne vsebine, ki bodo predmet obravnave pri pouku, ob tem pa izbirali med širokim naborom didaktičnih strategij, ki jih bodo kakovostno izvajali. Pri svetovanju praksi bo treba sprejeti vključevalno logiko: ko gre za vsebino pouka, to pomeni, da morajo učenci usvojiti potrebno deklarativno znanje, ga znati uporabljati in o njem kritično razmišljati. Ko gre za didaktične strategije (učne metode, oblike, sredstva), pa mora učitelj presoditi, na kakšen način in kdaj bo vsakega učenca najbolj optimalno pripeljal do učnih ciljev, standardov znanja in kakovostne izobrazbe v najširšem pomenu besede.« (Kovač Šebart 2011, str. 3) Dva prispevka, ki ju objavljamo v tej številki revije, sta prav v tem smislu nedvomno primera dobre prakse, in sicer pri pouku glasbene in športne vzgoje.

Na kakovost znanja, ki ga lahko zagotavljajo različni izobraževalni programi, pomembno vplivajo tudi systemske in kurikularne rešitve, ki se vzpostavljajo v prostoru: ob tem se odpira široka paleta vprašanj, povezanih zlasti z zasnovo učnih načrtov kot temeljnih kurikularnih dokumentov, ki določajo cilje izobraževalnih programov (posredno pa prav s tem vplivajo tudi na izvajanje in učinke vzgojno-izobraževalnega procesa), in systemskimi rešitvami, ki omogočajo in vzpostavljajo nadzor nad kakovostjo znanja in izobrazbe – tu bi lahko posebej poudarili zlasti rešitve, ki določajo ocenjevanje znanja, zunanje preverjanje, možnosti izvajanja učne diferenciacije in individualizacije, fleksibilne organizacije pouka (urnika, predmetnika) ipd. Učinke nekaterih od teh systemskih rešitev obravnavajo tudi avtorji v objavljenih prispevkih.

Predstavitev objavljenih besedil začnemo s prispevkom »**Šola in pojmovanja znanja med pragmatizmom in konstruktivizmom**«, v katerem Tadej Vidmar zapiše, da je organizacija dela v šoli bila in je še vedno odvisna od tega, kako je razumljeno znanje in njegovo nastajanje, ter da sta v tem smislu poučevanje in učenje tesno povezana z razumevanjem znanja.

Avtor ugotavlja, da se v zadnjih desetletjih v našem prostoru krepijo razmišljanja in težnje po rekonceptualizaciji primarne vloge šole, ki gradijo na konstruktivističnem razumevanju znanja: zlasti v teorijah radikalnega konstruktivizma je znanje pojmovano kot individualni konstrukt posameznika, zaradi česar je tudi nesmiselno govoriti o njegovem »prenašanju« ali »posredovanju«. To pojmovanje je pomembno vplivalo tudi na pojmovanja učenja ter na pedagoške razmisleke o vlogi učitelja in učencev pri pouku.

Ob tem avtor utemeljuje, da so mnogi pogledi in teoretizacije, ki jih danes pogosto povezujemo s konstruktivizmom kot novo epistemološko paradigmo v pedagogiki – kot primer izpostavi nekatere ideje, ki jih je v svojih besedilih razvijal Dewey –, v pedagoškem prostoru v izraženi obliki prisotni že vsaj od konca 19. in začetka 20. stoletja. V tem kontekstu – je prepričan avtor – nam lahko pogled v

zgodovino pedagogike pokaže, da pripisovanje zavzemanja za nekatera pedagoška ali didaktična načela (na primer načelo aktivnosti učencev, zahteva po upoštevanju učenčevih izkušenj, načelo postopnosti, problemskosti ipd.) zgolj posameznim sodobnim pedagoškim paradigmam zgodovinsko ni utemeljeno, in zato, kot zapiše, tudi ne more biti prepričljivo.

Drugačen razmislek o pomenu antirealističnih epistemoloških teorij za poučevanje in učenje predstavlja Janez Bečaj v prispevku z naslovom »**Mislim in se pogovarjam – torej znam**«. Avtorjeva izhodiščna teza – opira jo predvsem na podatke nekaterih mednarodnih raziskav (PISA, TIMSS) in na analize rezultatov nacionalnega preverjanja znanja – je, da so naši učenci in dijaki razmeroma uspešni pri reševanju manj zahtevnih nalog in nalog, ki zahtevajo rutinsko izvajanje postopkov, izrazitejše težave pa imajo z doseganjem učnih ciljev na višjih taksonomskih stopnjah. To naj bi med drugim nakazovalo, da v našem prostoru prevladujejo didaktični pristopi, ki težko vodijo k ciljem kurikularne prenove, po katerih naj bi naši učenci postali bolj aktivni, samostojni, kritični in ustvarjalni. Če naj bi dosegli tudi te cilje, bi se morala uveljaviti »nova paradigma« učenja in poučevanja, o kateri pa ni mogoče govoriti, trdi avtor, če v okviru tega ne razumemo preloma s pozitivizmom, saj prav to prinaša bistveno spremembo in vprašanje »Kakšno znanje potrebujemo?« spreminja v vprašanje »Kakšno je ustrezno učenje in poučevanje?«. S prispodobo nadalje pojasnjuje, da pozitivizem vidi znanje kot mozaik, ki obstaja sam po sebi, njegova bistvena predpostavka pa je, da so vsi kamenčki že na svojih mestih. Kot nasprotno paradigmatško logiko avtor predstavlja *konstrukcionizem*: ta ne verjame oziroma dvomi v končno sliko, ki bi obstajala sama po sebi in bi jo bilo mogoče preprosto spoznati. Avtor ob tem posebej poudari, da konstrukcionizem v razumevanje znanja sicer vnaša relativizem, vendar to ne pomeni, da si vsak lahko izbere svojo različico resnice in znanja – zdi se, da prav na tej točki prepozna tudi eno od temeljnih konceptualnih razlik med konstrukcionizmom in konstruktivizmom. Kot zapiše, bi lahko bila socialno ustvarjena resničnost vedno tudi drugačna, vendar pa je za učinkovito delovanje družbe nujno, da so njeni pomembni podsistemi in institucije usklajeni na osnovi ene od možnih različic. Ta zato v socializaciji posameznikov postane bolj ali manj obvezna, saj vključevanje v družbo sicer ne bi bilo mogoče. V okviru tega ima v razmerju do vsakega učenca pomembno vlogo tudi »objektivno« znanje, ki ga mora zagotoviti vzgojno-izobraževalni sistem in je določeno z učnimi načrti kot temeljnimi kurikularnimi dokumenti. Ob tem opozarja, da je zelo pomembno, kateri družbeni podsistemi imajo dostop do vzvodov moči, s katerimi je to »objektivnost« mogoče določiti in vzdrževati. Posredno je namreč z obvladovanjem »objektivnega« znanja mogoče pomembno vplivati na spreminjanje in/ali ohranjanje določenih družbenih razmerij.

Soroden razmislek, čeprav ob obravnavi povsem drugega vidika tematike, srečamo v prispevku »**Poučevanje za razumevanje**« avtorice Zore Rutar Ilc, ki išče odgovor na vprašanje, na kakšne načine lahko poučevanje prispeva k učenju za razumevanje. Avtorica poudarja, da se razumevanje vzpostavlja in izkazuje skozi različne načine, kako učenci procesirajo vsebine oziroma koncepte: tako, da jih primerjajo, ugotavljajo razlike in podobnosti ter abstrahirajo skupne značilnosti,

ustvarjajo klasifikacije ter definirajo pojme, raziskujejo in preiskujejo, nato pa sklepajo z indukcijo in dedukcijo ter uvrščajo in podajajo primere, izpeljejo principe, zakonitosti in teorije ter jih uporabijo v novih problemskih situacijah in nazadnje reflektirajo. Kot opozarja avtorica, ni mogoče posredovati preprostih receptov, ki bi učiteljem sporočali, s katerimi didaktičnimi pristopi bodo učence lahko vodili h konceptualnemu razumevanju, gotovo pa je, da za to ne zadostuje niti samo nizanje specifičnih učnih vsebin na eni niti trening zgolj miselnih spretnosti in strategij na drugi strani. Ob tem posebej poudari, da ni moč zoperstavljanje vsebin in procesiranja: da bi učenci lahko na določenem področju razvili kompetence, morajo imeti trdne osnove deklarativnega znanja, razumeti dejstva in ideje v kontekstu njihovega konceptualnega okvira in ne nazadnje organizirati znanje na načine, ki spodbujajo priključitev in uporabo.

Z. Rutar Ilc v tem kontekstu, opirajoč se na številne relevantne avtorje, predstavi nekatere implikacije svojih ugotovitev za poučevanje: med drugim poudari, da je treba upoštevati že obstoječe ideje in razlage učencev ter z njimi delati, tj. soočati jih, presegati in sprožati kognitivni konflikt. Pri posameznem predmetu je treba poučevati ob konkretnih primerih oziroma v kontekstih, pri katerih je »koncepte mogoče videti na delu«, hkrati pa tako, da so umeščeni v močno »dejstveno« osnovo. Ne gre za to, piše avtorica, da bi se odpovedali obravnavi učnih vsebin, ampak je treba omogočiti zadostno število primerov poglobljenega študija, ki bo učencem omogočil dojeti temeljne koncepte specifičnih področij posamezne discipline, pri čemer je to pomembno tudi za vključevanje metakognitivnih veščin. Kot poudari avtorica v sklepnem delu svoje razprave, je za razvijanje znanja, s katerim bo moč misliti raznovrstne probleme, potrebna dobro organizirana zaloga znanja, pridobljenega v primernih kontekstih in ob primerni podpori ter posplošenega na abstraktno raven in organiziranega okrog ključnih konceptov.

Še eksplicitneje se obravnava razmerja med različnimi razsežnostmi znanja v besedilu z naslovom **»Pojmovanja znanja v pedagoškem diskurzu: nekateri problemi«** loteva Damijan Štefanc, ki med drugim razvija tezo, da ima vsako znanje tako svojo deklarativno (propozicijsko) kot tudi proceduralno (dispozicijsko), kondicionalno in ne nazadnje vrednotno razsežnost, hkrati pa je – kot znanje – vselej nujno vsebinsko. V tem pogledu, trdi avtor, ne more biti znanja, ki ne bi imelo deklarativne razsežnosti, prav ta pa ima že procesni in strateški potencial. V tem pogledu avtor opozarja, da so prizadevanja v izobraževanju, ki temeljijo na verjetju, da je učence mogoče naučiti procesnosti in strateškosti, tako da se jima daje *večji pomen* ali *poudarek* kot domnevno manj pomembnemu deklarativnemu znanju, kontraproduktivna. Kot pokaže, vodi neposredno (po)učē(va)nje »procesnih« in »strateških« spretnosti, ne da bi bilo to vselej del prizadevanj po usvajanju povsem deklarativnega, vsebinskega znanja, natanko tja, kamor ne želimo priti: v situacijo, ko bosta »procesnost« in »strateškost« le »deklarativni« v dejansko najbolj pejorativnem pomenu te besede in čemur potemtako tudi težko rečemo – znanje. To med drugim pomeni, zapiše avtor, da tudi razmerja med posameznimi didaktičnimi strategijami in učinki na ravni usvajanja znanja ni mogoče poenostavljeno interpretirati, tako da bi verjeli, da po eni strani deklarativno znanje posredujemo prek »tradicionalnih« didaktičnih strategij (na primer prek frontalne razlage), medtem

ko naj bi bile te strategije manj ali celo neprimerne za usvajanje proceduralnega in strateškega znanja. Pri pouku je seveda treba aktivnost učencev zagotoviti tudi tako, da učitelj dosega učne cilje s pomočjo raznolikih didaktičnih strategij, ki vključujejo vse učne oblike, različna učna sredstva in metodične pristope, toda ob tem ne gre spregledati, da je lahko pouk »aktiven« zgolj toliko, kolikor učitelj kakovostno opravlja svojo posredovalno vlogo, torej prav toliko, kolikor kot svojo dolžnost razume, da »daje«, in toliko, kolikor učenci kot svojo dolžnost razumejo, da »sprejemajo« znanje.

Zelo podobno je mogoče razumeti tudi temeljno sporočilo Barbare Horvat v prispevku z naslovom »**O refleksiji učenca pri pouku**«. Avtorica na podlagi opredelitev refleksije, kot jih je mogoče zaslediti v didaktični teoriji in teorijah izkustvenega učenja (med temi posebej obravnava Kolbovo), odgovarja na vprašanje, kako razumeti koncept refleksije učenca pri pouku. V izhodišču razprave se sprašuje, ali je refleksija učenca pri pouku res samoumevna posledica izvajanja stopenj izkustvenega učenja. Ob tem utemeljuje, da je za to, da lahko učenec reflektira problem kot učno vsebino pri pouku, nujno potrebno *poučevanje*, s katerim učitelj *jasno opredeljuje in razvija problem*. Z drugimi besedami, za refleksijo je potrebna eksaktnost problema, zato je izvajanje pouka po načelih »izkustvenosti« z vpeljavo splošnih vprašanj, kot sta, denimo, »Kaj se je zgodilo?« in »Kaj so bile tvoje reakcije?«, lahko problematično: namesto da bi učenec izrazil svoje mišljenje, lahko ostane zmeden, kolikor se v stopnji »konkretne izkušnje« ni mogel osredotočiti na določen predmet, in tako ne ve, kaj oziroma kako bi odgovoril. Avtorica na primeru sokratskega dialoga pokaže, da je pouk, v katerem želimo, da bi učenec reflektiral, kompleksna miselna dejavnost za učitelja in učenca, ki ni že vnaprej določena; zanj je treba učenca sproti povpraševati, kaj misli, saj je šele to pogoj, ki omogoča uvid v refleksijo pri njem in zagotavlja, da bo z mišljenjem implicitnega lastnega mišljenja postopoma prispel do rešitve problema oziroma znanja. V tem pogledu je za pozornost učenca na določen problem *vloga učitelja ključnega pomena*. Na tej podlagi avtorica refleksijo definira kot *kontinuiran proces spoznavanja*, ki se začne s posameznikovim zaznavanjem problema in nadaljuje proti razumevanju le-tega. Nato nastopi prihajanje do rešitve problema na podlagi učenčevega mišljenja tega, kar je mislil, to pa je ne nazadnje bistvo refleksije: znati operirati z lastnim mišljenjem ne le za to, da bi v iskanju rešitve problema le-to našli in prišli do (spo)znanja, marveč da bi iz dobljenih rešitev znali prihajati tudi do novih rešitev in (spo)znanj.

S tem prispevkom je zaključen sklop izrazito teoretskih razmislekov avtorjev in avtoric o pojmovanjih znanja in z njimi povezanih strokovnih problemih. Zadnja tri besedila bralcem prinašajo najprej razpravo o znanju slepih in slabovidnih otrok, nato pa vpogled v dva primera dobre pedagoške prakse.

Darja Kobal Grum v prispevku z naslovom »**Znanje slepih in slabovidnih otrok ob vstopu v redne oddelke osnovne šole**« natančno in konkretno – z izčrpnim naborom operativno izraženih ciljev – predstavlja problematiko znanja slepih in slabovidnih otrok, ki so usmerjeni v programe s prilagojenim izvajanjem in dodatno strokovno pomočjo ter vstopajo v redne oddelke osnovnih šol. Njena izhodiščna predpostavka je, da slepi in slabovidni otroci za vključevanje v redne

oddelke osnovnih šol potrebujejo zahtevnejša in kompleksnejša znanja, kot so jih potrebovali njihovi predhodniki, ki so se izobraževali v segregiranem okolju. Avtorica ugotavlja, da se temeljna znanja in spretnosti, ki naj bi jih slepi in slabovidni otroci usvojili za vstop v redne oddelke javne osnovne šole, nanašajo na naslednja področja: praktična kognitivna znanja, kognitivna orientacija, področje opismenjevanja, govora, socialnih znanj in spretnosti, fina in groba motorika, področje samourejanja ter znanja in spretnosti na področju uporabe preostankov vida. Avtorica ob tem poudarja, da je za optimalen psihosocialni razvoj slepih in slabovidnih otrok pomembno učenje socialnih spretnosti in kompetentnosti, razvijanje ustreznih spodbud iz okolja za učenje teh socialnih spretnosti ter samo prilagajanje okolja.

V strokovnem prispevku z naslovom »**Ustvarjanje ob Mozartovi glasbi**« avtorica Ksenja Marolin Kuzma odgovarja na vprašanje, kako učenkam in učencem v prvem vzgojno-izobraževalnem obdobju osnovne šole uspešno predstaviti bogastvo klasične glasbe. Pri tem zapiše, da je treba za prva zблиževanja s klasično glasbo v šoli izbrati predvsem kratka dela z nezahtevno vsebino, ki so učencem blizu, saj lahko prezahtevna dela v njih vzbudijo odpor. Hkrati ugotavlja, da je pomembno, da učenci glasbenega dela ne poslušajo samo enkrat, ampak večkrat, saj lahko le tako podoživijo in razumejo njegovo kakovost. Ključno vlogo pri tem ima tudi učiteljev didaktični pristop oziroma način obravnave klasične glasbe, saj je doživetje glasbenega pouka pri učencih v veliki meri odvisno od učiteljev in tega, ali lahko učence za to glasbo navdušijo. Posebna odlika tega strokovnega prispevka je avtoričina izčrpna predstavitev poteka nekaterih učnih dejavnosti pri pouku glasbene vzgoje, ki jih opisuje tako, da bodo lahko tudi praktično vodilo drugim zainteresiranim učiteljem, ki bi predstavljene dejavnosti želeli načrtovati in izvajati pri svojem pouku. Avtorica tako pokaže, da je v svoji pedagoški praksi izoblikovala dejavnosti, s katerimi lahko učencem približa in omogoči razumevanje klasične glasbe, in prispevek zaključuje z ugotovitvijo, da so učenci pri pouku glasbene vzgoje pokazali zelo velik interes in veselje. Pri tem jo je še posebej presenetilo njihovo veliko zanimanje za Mozartov življenjepis, ki so ga lahko spoznali ob igri s kartami, ki so jih izdelali sami. Zdi se, da navedeni zapis potrjuje Herbartovo tezo, da predvsem znanje in pouk porajata (mnogostranski) interes (prim. Protner 2001; tudi Javornik in Šebart 1991).

Tokratno številko revije zaključujemo z besedilom »**Didaktični pristop k organizaciji in poučevanju športne vzgoje v gimnaziji**«, v katerem Klemen Gutman pokaže, kako je mogoče pri pouku športne vzgoje udeležati načelo učne individualizacije ter dijake po tej poti voditi h kakovostnemu znanju in drugim učnim ciljem na področju športa v gimnazijskem programu. Z domišljeno uporabo individualne učne oblike so pri pouku športne vzgoje na Gimnaziji Šiška povečali raven povezanosti med poukom športne vzgoje in specialnim treningom dijakov športnikov, osmislili pomen, ki ga ima za boljši športni rezultat razvijanje osnovnih motoričnih sposobnosti na višji ravni, povečali motivacijo dijakov za sodelovanje pri pouku, ob tem pa dijakom še kakovostneje približali pomembnost aktivnega preživljanja prostega časa in povečali njihovo samoiniciativnost.

Avtor ugotavlja, da bi bilo tudi v prihodnje smiselno nameniti pozornost

izboljšavam opisanega pristopa k organizaciji in izvedbi pouka: obravnavano učno vsebino bi bilo mogoče postaviti v širši kontekst in dijake spodbujati k povezovanju športnega znanja z drugimi tematikami in predmeti ter k iskanju uporabne vrednosti izvajanih dejavnosti. Kot poudari v sklepnem delu prispevka, mora biti skupni cilj večja kakovost znanja, razumevanje družbenih dimenzij le-tega ter obvladovanje njegovih različnih ravni in vrst.

Objavljeni prispevki v tej in naslednji številki sporočajo, kot kaže odziv avtoric in avtorjev, da nam je uspelo – in verjamemo, da boste temu pritrdili tudi bralci in bralke – zbrati tehtne razprave s poglobljenimi razmisleki, ki (in to je nemara najbolj pomembno) odpirajo prostor za dialog. Le-ta je praviloma produktiven in dobro bi bilo, če bi se z njegovo pomočjo učili vsi: tako tisti, ki se raziskovalno ukvarjamo z obravnavano problematiko, svetovalci z različnih podpornih institucij, pa tudi učitelji, ki si prizadevajo kakovostno poučevati in učence spodbujati k učenju. Le upamo pa lahko, da bodo objavljeni razmisleki vplivali tudi na šolsko politiko, snovalce sistemskih in kurikularnih rešitev ter politiko in politike, ki o vzgoji in izobraževanju razmišljajo predvsem skozi ozko optiko ekonomskih kategorij in neposredne učinkovitosti na trgu dela.

Za tematske urednike Mojca Kovač Šebart,
tematska sourednica ter glavna in odgovorna urednica*

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* Tematski uredniki prve in druge letošnje številke »Sodobne pedagogike« so Andreja Hočevnar, Jasna Mažgon, Mojca Kovač Šebart, Damijan Štefanc in Tadej Vidmar.

What kind of knowledge do we want? School and contemporary conceptions of knowledge

(Editorial)

This year's volume (62/2011) of the "Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies" starts with two thematic issues that address the question of *what kind of knowledge* should be transmitted to pupils in various educational programs, ranging from preschool education to secondary education. The complexity of the question leads to a number of different answers at both the conceptual and empirical levels, and is reflected in the contributions that will be published in this issue and the following issue. Both issues will have reached readers by the time of the 2011 international scientific conference organized by the Association of Slovenian Educationalists in Žalec, Slovenia, where debates on school and the contemporary conceptions of knowledge will also be held. The editorial board has received many high-quality articles that cannot be published all at once due to the limited space available in a single issue. However, we do not wish to deny these articles to our readers. The selection of the papers in the present issue will, therefore, be followed by another selection of about the same length and variety in about a month, that is, in the first half of May.

Our call for papers was responded to by authors actively participating in the area of education in Slovenia, which shows that we raised questions relevant to a wide circle of professional and other stakeholders. That is not surprising: *knowledge* is the central aim of education and the means through which, in the words of Ozvald, the *cultura animi* – the cultivation of the individual's soul – is attained. That is why considerations of knowledge importantly define the quality of the educational system, the quality of education as a process, and finally the quality of each individual's general or vocational education.

This editorial is being written in the days of the lively public debate on the OECD guidelines (the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), especially those on how public funds for elementary and secondary education should be cut; the guidelines claim that these funds are inefficiently used. The OECD also suggests merging or closing branch schools, reducing the number of teachers and preschool teachers, and in relation to that increasing the number of children in preschool and school classes.

At Brdo pri Kranju on 18 February 2011, William White, Chair of the OECD Economic and Development Review Committee, answered questions about the OECD guidelines and Mehmet Eris, the OECD expert on Slovenia, presented the findings of the education survey. After their presentations, the Slovenian Minister of Education, Dr. Igor Lukšič, reacted very critically, as would be expected, to some

of the unacceptable suggestions. According to the report published the following day in the “Dnevnik” newspaper, Lukšič said that he perceives the OECD experts that focus on education as “school-loving”, and those who are more interested in the economic efficiency of education as “school-hating”. The Minister’s response to the guidelines leaves little doubt that they were primarily drawn up by “school-haters”; that is, those who promote the unacceptable, even destructive, logic for schools and education. Furthermore, according to the minister some data were also misused (Ivelja and Svenšek 2011, p. 2). Needless to say, during the debate the OECD experts probably did not lay any special emphasis on the fact that Slovenia devotes less money to for education (calculated as a share of GDP) in comparison to the average for other OECD member countries. This share once exceeded 6% of GDP in Slovenia, but has been falling in the past years. The reaction of the more powerful and influential ministers when it comes to deciding how to divide the budget is also a concern: these ministers agreed that the OECD findings about Slovenian education are correct, and the guidelines entirely appropriate.

The issues discussed in this and the next issue of the “Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies” are specifically affected by the participants’ lightly considered judgment at the Brdo pri Kranju debate, as reported by journalists: namely, that public funds in preschools and elementary and secondary schools are not used efficiently enough as compared to the public funds in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and other comparable countries that supposedly achieve results similar to those in Slovenia, but with less money (ibid.). Leaving aside the simplified interpretations of the relationship between financial investment and results in terms of knowledge – which those who advise or decide on finances should definitely not allow themselves if they really want to call on their expertise – one has to be careful when linking pupils’ achievements in international OECD Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) surveys with invested financial means, which was likely the focus of the debates. It is important to account for the fact that such surveys of literacy in mathematics, science, and reading do not test goal attainment as it is set in syllabi and standards of knowledge. The chief aim of the OECD PISA surveys, rather, is to assess the degree to which 15-year-old pupils are “equipped” with the arsenal of knowledge and skills they need to successfully engage in the competition of the labor force and to face the expectations of everyday situations. Although it is important that the system is effective in these endeavors, it is not possible to simply equate this success with *the quality of general education* and the knowledge that pupils gain during their elementary education. Drawing conclusions about the actual quality of general education merely from individual effectiveness indicators is not only methodologically flawed but also dangerously misleading. Nevertheless, serious consideration is certainly needed of measures and solutions that will be introduced into the educational system in the future; Slovenia should, regardless of economically motivated guidelines, provide mechanisms that will guarantee its citizens not only effective, but also *high-quality general education and knowledge as a public good*.

In this context, the intent of the editorial board in conceiving these thematic issues, and of the scientific conference, is succinctly summarized by Barica Marentič

Požarnik. In the introduction to her articles (to be published in the next issue of the journal) she writes that the topic defined by the key question of “what kind of knowledge do we want” is central to planning, conducting, and evaluating any educational activity. “The initiative is reminiscent of the well-known move in Finland, where they preceded a major reform of their educational system by a booklet on the conceptions of knowledge. It was intended to encourage careful consideration as well as constructive dialogue among teachers, education politicians and curriculum planners about how various concepts of knowledge affect both the set goals as well as their articulation (e.g. in textbooks) and realization. It was also meant to make pupils and parents aware of what knowledge they can expect from school and what school expects from them.” (Marentič Požarnik 2011) The author adds that the expression “concepts of knowledge” as a given basis for discussion presupposes the existence of more possible concepts; that is, complex notions of knowledge or “conceptions” as ideas that need to be brought to light and compared. At the same time, the conception of knowledge in curricula has to be analyzed; particularly, how various conceptions are understood and acted on by teachers, and how their interventions shape the concepts of quality knowledge in pupils with different competencies, interests, approaches to learning and, consequently, how instructional goals are achieved – especially since certain imbalances appear between the desired and the acquired knowledge at every “stage” (cf. *ibid.*).

The professional and scientific environments seem quite heterogeneous with regard to these issues, and we can come across the concepts of knowledge based on a range of epistemological, pedagogical, sociological, psychological, and other backgrounds, with each of these backgrounds believing itself to be more complete and coherent than the others. This is often true within the framework that limits each individual concept. But to be able to determine the relationships between the notions or conceptions, we have to establish as clearly as possible the conceptual and terminological distinctions within each of the different theoretical and paradigmatic views of knowledge as well as among them. Our task then is to interpret the differences among them on the basis of arguments, which ought to avoid the coding of value surpluses. In addition, specific professional terms and definitions have to be unambiguous so that their meanings do not establish themselves in opposition to other paradigms, which we then label either good or bad, wanted or unwanted, acceptable or prohibited (cf. Kunst Gnamuš 1988, p. 84). Furthermore, we should not disregard the necessity for concise quotations, paraphrases, and summaries of other authors’ arguments (whether we agree with them or not). Other authors, sympathetic or not to our viewpoints, should never be quoted or summarized out of context; by doing so, we might create the impression of having substantiated our own considerations, when in reality we have withheld the fact that the argument of the author we quote or paraphrase is markedly different from our argument. Ignorance is no excuse for that.

It is also professionally productive to look for spots where different concepts overlap and professional consensus can be achieved, regardless of the frameworks that individual theoretical positions support. The contributions published in this and the following issue of the journal show that such points are not that few: one

of the common threads of practically all the texts emphasizes that knowledge cannot be understood only as a collection of absolute truths, data or facts, related neither among themselves nor to learners' experience, which pupils should memorize and reproduce in front of the teacher to get a grade. The authors argue that knowledge should be understood as a concept framed by contents, process, metacognitive, strategic, and value dimensions and therefore much more complex than a process of memorization and reproduction. This emphasis is important because it shows that a mere assumption about the conceptual narrowness of the notion of knowledge cannot in the absence of additional considerations serve as a foundation for the replacement of knowledge with other concepts that are supposedly wider in terms of their semantics. For instance, with the concept of key competencies, characterized by including, beside knowledge itself, also the abilities to use it actively (i.e. the functional dimension), the abilities to express attitudes and making judgments in various circumstances. Some of the articles will thus assert that knowledge cannot be understood as only one of the competency dimensions; on the contrary, knowledge is what makes competency possible through its very complexity.

It appears that another common denominator of the various views expressed in these two issues is the thesis that knowledge is not something pupils could receive passively as if it was coming from outside of them without any need for their learning activity. This emphasis is crucial – and is present in many of the articles published here – because it makes it clear that knowledge cannot be gained without hard learning effort that each pupil has to invest in his/her own learning.

Another fundamental question arises at this point, as considered by B. Marentič Požarnik in her aforementioned article: what knowledge will afford the young a quality (personal) life, coexistence and survival and, at the same time, effective resourcefulness in social relationships, in professional life, and in the increasingly uncertain and unpredictable circumstances of the future? In the best case, the author writes, the young should acquire the ability and readiness to adapt to changes and keep critical distance; to attain a solid personality core; and to co-create new, better solutions to the arising social, economic, and ecological problems (Marentič Požarnik 2011). In particular, general education programs should give the young general education knowledge, providing a high level of sophistication and education, that is, liberal education, that widens, as Kodelja writes, “man's spiritual horizons and liberates him from the limitations imposed by a particular way of thinking, caught within narrow professional or doctrinal limits.” (Kodelja 2005, p. 317) In that, the author underlines, general education is seen as a value in itself and is not in the service of any external, utilitarian aims, although it can help in the achievement of such aims (*ibid.*).

It is possible, however, to adopt different positions concerning to what degree and in what depth pupils should acquire various facts, definitions, and concepts in each subject; how much declarative, procedural, strategic, and metacognitive knowledge pupils should gain; and what this knowledge should consist of. Every profession should encourage serious debate on this subject. Yet a consensus probably already exists that the teacher leading pupils towards quality knowledge

and education cannot be satisfied with mere verbalization; that is, pupils' literal reproduction of facts. Pupils must actually *show understanding* of what they have learned. Or, as B. Marentič Požarnik emphasizes, there is a difference between "purely mechanical memorization by heart and learning data, facts, and especially definitions and laws that need to be understood at the very beginning and are the foundations for higher forms of learning." (Marentič Požarnik 2011) Furthermore, we could probably quickly agree that the teacher must teach in such a manner that pupils reach goals at the level of declarative knowledge, and at the level of feeling and in their actions. Furthermore, the dimensions of understanding, competencies, and values should be part of each level. In other words, the importance of declarative knowledge can only be judged through the significance it has for solving problems, for critical thinking and acting in accordance with it (Kovač Šebart and Krek 2009; Kovač Šebart 2011).

One other question we wanted answered when putting together the call for papers was the question of how attempts to acquire high-quality knowledge and education manifest themselves through the implementation of didactic strategies that teachers use during instruction. It would be productive to reach an agreement that there can be different ways leading to quality knowledge and education, and that none should – nor could – be excluded in advance as being less worthy or less wished-for. "We should strive for teachers' being as professionally and didactically qualified as possible, so that on the basis of learning goals they can decide autonomously on the learning contents they will deal with during school classes, while choosing from a wide range of didactic strategies to be employed in a quality way. When advising practice, inclusive logic should be applied. As for the contents of instruction, this means that pupils have to acquire the required declarative knowledge, know how to use it and critically reflect on it. As for didactic strategies (learning methods, forms, means), the teacher has to be the judge of what way and when pupils can be guided, in the most optimal manner, to learning goals, knowledge standards and quality education in the broadest sense of the word." (Kovač Šebart 2011, p. 3) In that sense, two contributions published in this issue are unquestionably examples of good practice in musical and sports education classes.

The systemic and curriculum solutions established within a country can importantly influence the quality of knowledge provided by various educational programs. This raises a wide range of questions related to the design of syllabi and basic curriculum documents, which define the goals of educational programs (and have indirect influence on how the educational process is conducted, and what results it produces); and to the systemic solutions allowing for establishment of control over the quality of knowledge and education. The solutions to be emphasized in particular refer to knowledge assessment, external assessment, the possibilities for learning differentiation and individualization, the flexible organization of classes (timetables, syllabi), and so forth. The effects of some of these systemic solutions are discussed by the authors of the contributions in this journal.

We start introducing the articles with Tadej Vidmar's **"School and the understanding of knowledge between pragmatism and constructivism"**. Vidmar writes that the organization of work in school has always been dependent

on how knowledge and its formation are understood. In this sense, teaching and learning are closely connected with the understanding of knowledge.

The author finds that in the past considerations of and tendencies toward the reconceptualization of the primary role of school that build on a constructivist view of knowledge have been gaining ground in Slovenia. The theories of radical constructivism especially assert that knowledge is always an individual's construct, which makes it meaningless to talk about its "transmission" or "tradition". According to Vidmar, this view has significantly influenced various conceptions of learning and pedagogical considerations with respect to the role of the teacher and pupils during instruction.

The author argues that some views and theories that are nowadays frequently related to constructivism as a new epistemological paradigm in pedagogy (as an example, he quotes some of Dewey's ideas) have been confidently present in the field of pedagogy since at least the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Vidmar maintains that a look into the history of pedagogy reveals that the association of certain pedagogical or didactic principles (e.g. the principle of pupils' activity, the demand for taking pupils' experiences into account, the principle of successiveness, problem solving, etc.) solely to some of the modern pedagogical paradigms is not historically based and therefore unconvincing.

Another kind of consideration of the anti-realistic epistemological theories of teaching and learning is observed in the article **"Together we think and discuss – therefore we learn"** by Janez Bečaj. The author starts with the thesis, based primarily on data from some international surveys (PISA, TIMMS) and on an analysis of national knowledge assessment results, that our elementary and secondary school pupils are relatively successful in solving less demanding tasks and those requiring routine procedures, but have greater difficulty achieving goals on higher taxonomical levels. This supposedly shows that the dominant didactic approaches in Slovenia cannot successfully fulfill the aims of the curriculum reform, which should make pupils more active, independent, critical, and creative. Reaching these aims requires a "new paradigm" of learning and teaching that cannot be talked about, according to Bečaj, if it does not include a break with positivism. This break brings the crucial change of transforming the question of "what knowledge we need" to the question of "what is adequate learning and teaching". With the use of a metaphor, he explains how positivism perceives knowledge as a mosaic existing by itself, the fundamental assumption being that all the pieces are already in their places. The opposite paradigm is *constructionism*, which raises doubts about any such definitive picture existing by itself that could simply be learned. Bečaj strongly emphasizes that constructionism incorporates relativism in the understanding of knowledge, but does not mean that anyone can pick and choose their own version of truth and knowledge. This is the point where the author seems to recognize one of the basic conceptual differences between constructionism and constructivism. He writes that socially created reality could always be altered, but it is crucial for the subsystems and institutions of a society to be harmonized along the lines of one of the possible variants if society is to function effectively. This limitation to a set of possible variants, therefore,

becomes more or less obligatory in individuals' socialization, since participation in society would otherwise be impossible. In this context, "objective" knowledge – guaranteed by the educational system and defined by syllabi and basic curriculum documents – is especially important in relation to each individual pupil. Bečaj stresses that it is very important which social subsystems have access to power that can determine and maintain such "objectivity". Having control over "objective" knowledge can indirectly mean having influence on changing and/or preserving the existing social relationships.

Similar views, although related to a completely different aspect of the issue, are expressed by Zora Rutar Ilc in her article **"Teaching for understanding"**. She looks for ways in which teaching can contribute to learning for understanding. She emphasizes that understanding is established and represented in various ways, in which pupils process contents and concepts – by comparing them, looking for differences and similarities, abstracting common characteristics, compiling classifications and defining concepts, by researching and then making inductions and deductions; classifying and giving examples; formulating principles, laws and theories; and finally by using concepts to solve new problems and reflecting on them. The author stresses that it is impossible to give simple recipes to let teachers know what didactic approaches will lead pupils to conceptual understanding. It is, nonetheless, certain that neither a mere listing of specific learning contents nor a training of merely mental skills and strategies will suffice. It is particularly important, the author says, to not set contents against processes: for pupils to develop competencies in an area they need to have solid foundations of declarative knowledge, they have to understand facts and ideas in the context of their conceptual framework, and (last but not least) organize knowledge in ways that will encourage recall and use.

Z. Rutar Ilc, referring to a number of relevant authors, presents some implications of her findings for teaching. She stresses that pupils' existing ideas and explanations need to be taken into account and worked with; that is, these ideas must be confronted and overcome, and cognitive conflicts provoked. Individual subjects should be taught via concrete examples and contexts, which can reveal "concepts at work", while also situating them within a strong "factual" basis. We should not, the author writes, renounce teaching learning contents; rather, we should make available a sufficient number of examples for intensive studying that will enable pupils to grasp the key concepts of the specific areas of individual disciplines, which is also important for the introduction of metacognitive skills. In conclusion, Rutar Ilc emphasizes that the development of knowledge that will make it possible to think through a variety of problems requires a well-organized supply of knowledge, acquired in suitable contexts and with suitable support and generalized to an abstract level and organized around key concepts.

"The conceptions of knowledge in educational discourse: some problems" by Damijan Štefanc discusses various dimensions of knowledge still more explicitly. The author advances the thesis that all knowledge has declarative (propositional), procedural (dispositional), conditional, and value dimensions, while simultaneously having the necessary contents. In view of this, Štefanc writes, there

can be no knowledge without a declarative dimension, which already possesses process and strategic potential. According to the author, this makes endeavors in education that are based on the belief that pupils can be taught the process and strategic dimensions by placing *greater importance* and *emphasis* on them, rather than on the supposedly less important declarative knowledge, counterproductive. He shows that the direct teaching/learning of “process” and “strategic” skills – without these skills always considered as part of the attempt to acquire purely declarative, content knowledge – leads exactly where we do not want to go: to a situation in which “process” and “strategic” skills will actually be “declarative” only in the most pejorative sense of the word. As such, it would be very difficult to call these process and strategic skills knowledge. Štefanc also asserts, building on this argument, that the relationship among various didactic strategies and effects at the level of knowledge acquisition cannot be interpreted in any simplified way leading us to believe that declarative knowledge is transmitted through “traditional” didactic strategies (such as frontal explanation), while these traditional strategies are supposedly less appropriate or inappropriate for the acquisition of procedural and strategic knowledge. It is undeniably important to ensure that pupils are active during classes, which includes reaching learning goals with the help of various didactic strategies that consist of all teaching forms, various educational means, and didactic approaches. However, it should not be overlooked that school instruction is “active” only to the extent that teachers perform their transmission role in a quality manner, that is, as much as they understand it is their duty to “give” and just as much as pupils understand it is their duty to “receive” knowledge.

The main idea that Barbara Horvat expresses in her article **“On pupils’ reflection in class”** is very similar. On the basis of definitions of reflection that exist in didactic theory and in experiential learning theories (special attention is paid to Kolb), the author answers the question of how to understand the concept of pupils’ reflection during instruction. First, she asks whether reflection in class really is a self-evident consequence of the implementation of experiential learning stages. She argues that for the pupil to be able to reflect on a given problem in class, *teaching* through which the teacher *clearly defines* and *develops the problem* is absolutely necessary. In other words, the exactness of the problem is necessary for reflection, which is why instruction following the principles of “experience” by introducing general questions such as “What happened?” and “How did you react?” can turn out to be problematic; instead of articulating his/her thoughts, the pupil remains puzzled because at the stage of “concrete experience,” he/she could not concentrate on the defined object and therefore does not know how to respond. The author uses the example of Socratic dialogue to demonstrate that instruction demanding reflection on the part of the pupil is a complex mental activity for teacher and pupil for which the result is not determined beforehand. The pupil must be asked constantly about his/her thoughts to enable insight into the pupil’s reflection and ensure that the problem is solved, or that the pupil will gain knowledge by reviewing his or her implicit thinking. This shows that for the pupil’s attention to a certain problem *the role of the teacher is of great significance*.

On that basis, B. Horvat defines reflection as a *continuous* process of *cognition*, which starts with the individual's perception of the problem and continues to the understanding of it. Then comes the process of finding the solution to the problem on the basis of the pupil's thinking about what he/she has been thinking, which in the end is the essence of reflection – to know how to manage one's own thinking, not only for the purpose of finding the solution to a problem and coming to cognition/knowledge, but also for the purpose of knowing how to reach new solutions and new cognition/knowledge from solutions that have already been found.

This article closes the more theoretical considerations of the conceptions of knowledge, and some professional problems related to them. Of the remaining three texts, one reviews the knowledge acquisition of a group of blind and visually impaired children in an elementary school, and the other two provide strong examples of good educational practice.

In **“Knowledge of visually impaired children at entrance to the regular departments of elementary school”** Darja Kobal Grum concisely and concretely – with a wide range of operatively expressed goals – examines the issue of the knowledge of blind and visually impaired children who are placed in regular elementary school programs with adapted organization and additional professional support. D. Kobal Grum suggests that in order to attend regular elementary school classes blind and visually impaired pupils need more demanding and complex knowledge than their predecessors, who were schooled in segregated environments. The author finds that the basic knowledge and skills blind and visually impaired children need to acquire to enter regular public elementary schools relate particularly to the following areas: practical cognitive knowledge, cognitive orientation, literacy, speech, social knowledge and skills, fine and gross motor functions, self-help, and the use of remaining vision. The author stresses that the optimal psycho-social development of blind and visually impaired children requires the children to learn social skills and competencies by developing appropriate stimuli from the environment in order to learn these skills and adapt to the environment itself.

Ksenja Marolin Kuzma's **“Creating by Mozart's music”** answers the question of how to successfully introduce the pupils of the first elementary-school educational period to the riches represented by classical music. The author states that children's first encounters with classical music at school should mostly consist of short works with undemanding content that pupils can easily relate to, because works that are too difficult can lead them to dislike the music. It is important, the author claims, that pupils listen to the selected music more than once, as this is the only way for them to relive and understand its quality. The teacher's didactic approach (that is, his or her method of dealing with classical music) is of key importance, since the experience of music education in school largely depends on teachers and on whether they can evoke enthusiasm for music in their pupils. This professional article excels in its exhaustive presentation of some of the learning activities during music lessons, described in such a way that they can serve as practical guideline for other interested teachers who might want to try planning and carrying out the activities presented here in their classes. The

author shows how she has put together activities that introduce classical music to her pupils and help them to understand it. She concludes her contribution by describing how children showed a great deal of interest and pleasure during these classes. She was particularly surprised by the children's interest in Mozart's life, which they learned about by creating and playing a card game. The article thus seems to confirm Herbart's thesis that it is knowledge and instruction that predominantly generate (widespread) interest (cf. Protner 2001; also Javornik and Šebart 1991).

This issue of the journal is concluded by the article **"Choice and individualization in sports education classes through an example of good practice"**. In it, Klemen Gutman shows how sports education classes can realize the principle of learning individualization and lead pupils towards quality knowledge and other learning goals in the area of sports in the *gimnazija* program. Gimnazija Šiška employed the individual learning form in a well-thought-out way in order to strengthen the relationship between sports education classes and pupil athletes' special training, to improve pupils' motivation to participate in classes, and to make sense of the importance of the development of basic motor skills at a higher level to achieve better sports results. In addition, pupils were shown the importance of spending their free time in an active manner, increasing their self-initiative.

Gutman also observes that it would be sensible to pay more attention to the improvement of the described approach to the organization and execution of sports education classes. The learning contents could be placed into a wider context, with pupils encouraged to relate sports knowledge to other topics and subjects and to look for the practical value of the activities. To conclude, the author emphasizes that the common goal should be the acquisition of a better quality of knowledge, understanding its social dimensions and mastering its different levels and kinds.

The contributions published in this and the following issue demonstrate (as the authors' encouraging response confirms) that we have succeeded – and our readers will hopefully agree – in collecting relevant texts, bringing forth serious considerations, and opening up a space for dialogue (which is probably the most important part of it all). As a rule, such dialog is productive, and it would be constructive if we were all to learn through it: those working as researchers, as advisers from various support institutions, and as teachers trying to teach in a quality way and encourage pupils to learn. We can only hope that the considerations published here will also affect educational policies, the creators of systemic and curriculum solutions as well as the politics and politicians thinking about education primarily from the narrow aspect of economic categories and the direct effectiveness in the labor market.

On behalf of the thematic editors Mojca Kovač Šebart,
thematic co-editor and editor-in-chief*

* The thematic editors of the first and the second issues of this year's "Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies" are Andreja Hočevar, Jasna Mažgon, Mojca Kovač Šebart, Damijan Štefanc, and Tadej Vidmar.

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