

Original paper

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Programmes of professional development of teachers: estimated usefulness and educational effects

Extended summary

System of professional development in Serbia represents a key mechanism for improving professional competencies of teachers. Special place in this system belongs to the programmes of professional development. Estimation of their effects is mainly based on studying perceptions of teachers and their satisfaction with the programmes of professional development, so there are thorough data about other significant factors of the programme missing (knowledge and skills of teachers, change of plans in praxis, students' achievements, etc.).

In this paper, we have presented a part of the thorough research of educational effectiveness Komenius IEEPS realised in 2014/2015 school year, in which 125 primary schools of Serbia participated, 5537 students from 240 classes, their parents and 2500 teachers. The aim of the research represented in this text is determining connection of perception of teachers about the usefulness of the programme of professional development and achievements of students. This is why we have formed three sub samples of teachers who attended at least one programme of professional development and who taught eight graders, as well as the sub sample of the class in which these teachers teach. In this way we have selected: (1) mathematical sample represented by the Mathematics teachers (N=173) and classes they teach (N=203); (2) language sample represented by the teachers of Serbian language (N=174) and classes they teach (N=194) and (3) combined sample, consisting of teachers of Biology, History, Geography, Physics and Chemistry (N=678) and classes they teach (N=221). Teacher's estimations of the usefulness of certain programme of professional development have been gained by the application of the questionnaire for teachers constructed for the needs of Komenius IEEPS research, and

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achievements of students they teach have been represented by the results the students have achieved at the mock final exam, which included Mathematics, Serbian and Combined tests.

Given data were presented within four units: attending the course of professional development, estimation of usefulness of the programme of professional development, achievements of students at the Mock and Final tests and connection of estimation of usefulness of the programme of professional development, achievements of students at the Mock and Final tests. Results have shown that Mathematics teachers in eight from eleven examined fields of professional development in significantly lesser extent attend the courses of professional development in comparison to teachers of Serbian and the combined sample. It has been determined that teachers have estimated programmes of professional development as “mainly useful” for their work in teaching. Given results show that students had the weakest result in the Mathematics Mock Test, then Serbian Test and that the best results were in the combined test. Nevertheless, it has been determined that there is no connection between the quality of the programme of professional development measured by teachers’ perceptions and students’ achievements measured by the results at the Mock and Final Exam.

The authors interpret the given results in the context of the existing systematic solutions and different organisational and conceptual boundaries, which follow the existing system of the professional development of Serbia. The authors have a review on the choice of the way of choosing the programme of professional development of teachers, problematic teacher’s relation towards valuing usefulness of the programme they have attended, particularly discuss reasons for disaccord between these estimations of teachers and achievements of students at the Mock and Final test. In the concluding part of the paper, the authors state two categories of problems – characteristics of the system of professional development and the context within which this system functions. Stressing the significance of the following of the application of the learned materials, the authors point at the necessity of doing additional research, which would widen the scope of the research topic that knowledge in this field should be fulfilled?

Key words: programmes of professional development of teachers, students’ achievements, mock and final tests, suggestions for educational policy.

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