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Analysis of Textbook Use in 4th And 5th Grades of Primary School

Extended summary

The role of textbooks in the historical development of education has constantly been changing, depending on social developments and changes in general and subject-specific theory of learning and teaching (Skela, 2008). In terms of didactics, a textbook can be understood as a textual learning medium, with its main feature to properly structure, process, and simplify scientific contents using didactic transformation and contribute, as a learning aid and learning resource, to the effectiveness of teaching and independent learning (Kovač et al., 2005). In Article 2 of the Rules on the Approval of Textbooks (2015), a textbook is defined as a “basic teaching material aimed at achieving educational goals and knowledge standards defined in the curriculum or the catalogue of knowledge. It supports teaching and learning through the didactic and methodical organisation of the content and adapted art and visual equipment. Textbook content and structure enable participants in education to learn independently and acquire different levels and types of knowledge. A textbook is linked to a school subject or module and a certain educational level. A textbook is also a reading-book as a collection of texts chosen in line with the objectives of the curriculum.” It can be in printed or electronic form or both (Rules on the Approval of Textbooks, Article 2). A modern trend in quality textbooks is to stimulate different areas of student development – social, cognitive, moral and emotional, considering students’ learning specifics. Textbooks are adapted to students if they consider their developmental level, experience, and level of understanding; use appropriate language; encourage reading through comprehension; and include illustrations in the text (Marentič Požarnik, 2016). The quality of learning resources that students can also use to learn independently is es-

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sential. The project called For the Quality of Slovenian Textbooks (KaUč) is being implemented in Slovenia between 2017 and 2022. Textbooks are one of the less examined research areas in the school field in Slovenia and, as a result, there are many shortcomings observed in understanding the use of textbooks. The main goal of the KaUč Project is to develop textbook quality indicators for practical use in validation and evaluation processes. In this paper, we are presenting a part of the project in the context of textbook analysis. Empirical research was conducted on the research sample of 505 students, aiming to analyse the use of textbooks and workbooks in 4th and 5th grades of primary school. The research aimed to examine textbooks covering the following aspects - use of textbooks and perceived textbook characteristics. An online survey questionnaire comprising sets of survey questions and rating scales was used to collect data. The data were processed using descriptive statistics procedures (frequency distributions, basic descriptive statistics). Some measures of inferential statistics (t-test for dependent samples) were used to check the relationships between variables. Based on the performed analyses, we can determine that printed textbooks prevail in all educational subjects. Most students report using textbooks never or occasionally in all subjects, both in the classroom and at home. Both in the classroom and at home, students most frequently use textbooks for the first foreign language, science and technology, and social studies. Students also report using textbooks in all subjects more often in the classroom than at home. According to the students' preferences recorded in the survey, most students report that they prefer science and technology textbooks, while most often use social studies textbooks. Students most positively assess the characteristics of the first foreign language, social studies, and science and technology textbooks.

To sum up, printed textbooks are still very often used in lessons in 4th and 5th grades of primary school. Obtained results are an essential basis for investigating the use and role of textbooks in education. Furthermore, under the KaUč Project, the use and role of textbooks from teachers' viewpoints are also being examined. In further implementing the KaUč Project (For the Quality of Slovenian Textbooks), the indicators aimed at determining the quality of textbooks at several educational levels are being developed.

Keywords: Textbook, primary school, didactics, students

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