



Global Conference on Contemporary Issues in Education, GLOBE-EDU 2014, 12-14 July 2014,
Las Vegas, USA

A Comparison in the Performance of an International and Slovenian Primary School

Franc Cankar^{a*}, Tomi Deutsch^a, Ada Holcar Brunauer^a, Stanka Setnikar-Cankar^b

^aNational Education Institute, Poljanska 28, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

^bFaculty of Administration, Gosarjeva 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Abstract

This paper draws comparisons between the performance of an international (IBO) and a Slovenian primary school, taking as its case-study a school in Slovenia which runs the two programmes side by side. The purpose of the research was to examine a number of selected factors defining the effectiveness of the schooling and education process in the international school. There are statistically significant differences between the two sets of pupils' views on the quality of lessons, the teaching staff and relations with their peers, with both groups identifying a lack of contact and cooperation with pupils from the other programme. There are also several more noticeable differences in the level of knowledge between the two groups, although these differences could not be established as statistically significant. A comparative analysis of the teaching showed that greater emphasis is given in the international programme to teaching that encourages personal growth, while in the Slovenian programme teaching is defined as 'formation'.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of the Scientific Committee of GLOBE-EDU 2014.

Keywords: International primary school; Slovenian primary school; effectiveness of schooling; quality of education.

1. Introduction

Slovenia's independence and international recognition brought an increase in the number of foreign diplomatic, business, press and other representatives in Ljubljana; along with other professionals and their families, they remained in Slovenia for longer periods of time. This gave rise, naturally, to the issue of the education of their

* Franc Cankar. Tel.: +38613005127; fax: +3863005199.
E-mail address: franc.cankar@zrss.si.

children, for some of whom it was necessary to provide pre-school and school programmes in the English language. To this end, an international primary school (IBO) was established in 1993. Pupils have been able to continue their education in one of the grammar schools, with the process being completed by an international baccalaureate examination. The schools have acquired official international authorisation for all programmes, giving pupils the opportunity to follow similar programmes in other countries. This paper outlines the features of the primary school, which runs two programmes: the international primary school programme (Primary Years Programme, Years 1 to 5, and Middle Years Programme, Years 6 to 8) and the Slovenian primary school programme (Years 1 to 9). The basic characteristic of the eight-year international primary school is that the two programmes which it runs are integrated. High academic achievements are not the only important aspect of the programmes; there is also and above all an understanding of general concepts and the development of interdisciplinary skills and abilities. Pupils learn to acquire information and knowledge with the help of a variety of sources, and to use that information and knowledge in a real-life context. Emphasis is placed on international and inter-cultural understanding, joint responsibility, a sensitivity towards one's fellow human beings and the environment, and active participation in the local community and beyond. The teaching approaches focus on methods of work that encourage the methodical, critical and creative acquisition of new knowledge and skills. A research- and problem-based method of learning is given emphasis, with pupils being encouraged to actively formulate new knowledge and teachers guiding their development. The nine-year Slovenian primary school is organisationally divided into three periods of three years each. A centralised curriculum (prescribed subjects, number of hours and components) is in place, alongside a guided programme containing a comparatively large number of compulsory and optional subjects. The external examination of knowledge, which is conducted on two occasions, additionally intensifies the need to achieve a relatively high level of knowledge. Despite this, the reading literacy of the Slovenian pupils lags behind that of their peers from developed countries (OECD, 2013); they also have serious problems in the field of critical thinking (Marentič Požarnik, 2008). The programme is characterised by the weak systemic integration of cross-curricular topics and skills, although schools have, in recent years, developed numerous instances of good practice in this area. The teaching approaches remain traditional, with the transmission approaches that are disappearing from more modern teaching methods still to the fore. In the comparative study, we looked at a number of factors that define the effectiveness of the schooling and education process in the international and Slovenian primary school programmes. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- to become familiar with the opinions of pupils in the international programme on their lessons, comparing them with the opinions of pupils in the nine-year primary school programme;
- to test the knowledge attained by pupils in the international programme and compare it with the knowledge attained by pupils in the nine-year primary school programme at the same school;
- to examine how the teaching of selected areas within the international programme differs from the teaching of the same areas in the Slovenian programme, and what the components of difference might be.

2. Methods

For the first objective, we collected the opinions of pupils in the international programme regarding their lessons, and compared them with the opinions of pupils in the Slovenian programme; we did this using questionnaires in the English and Slovenian languages (March 2011). We surveyed pupils from Years 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the international programme and pupils from Years 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the Slovenian programme. The pupils ranged their opinions on five-point scales. For the second objective, we tested the knowledge of pupils from both programmes across three age-groups; we did this by means of written tests in the Slovenian and English languages (May 2011). The tests were taken by pupils from Years 2, 5 and 8 of the international programme and from Years 3, 6, 8 and 9 of the Slovenian programme. The tests were prepared on the basis of a comparative analysis of the syllabuses of the two programmes. The third objective was tested by means of the indirect observation of lessons. The observation tools were predicated on the theoretical assumption that a teacher's conduct, and therefore everyday decision-making in teaching situations, is to a large extent determined by subjective perceptions (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Two areas were identified: teaching as 'formation' and teaching as the encouragement of 'personal growth'. In April 2013 ten class teaching hours were recorded (five hours each in the international and Slovenian programmes). Nine experts assessed the recordings with the help of three-point scales. The data collected was statistically processed. The arithmetical means were calculated and the appropriate t-tests conducted to allow us to examine the differences in the averages between the two programmes. In constructing the variables, the indicators were checked using the

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1110631>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1110631>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)