

The effects of educational methods on pupils' results and socio-emotional abilities: classic vs. modern methods¹

NOVEMBER 2017
VÁCLAV KORBEL A MICHAL PAULUS

Summary

- Empirical studies have repeatedly revealed the importance of children's socio-emotional abilities for their success at school, in further study, in their future work and in their life more generally. Socio-emotional abilities include among other things self-confidence, internal motivation and self-control. However, those studies only provide sketchy information about how different educational methods in schools contribute to the development of these abilities. In this study we investigate whether and to what extent using certain educational methods more intensively can result in better development of these socio-emotional abilities and improvements in testable study outcomes.
- In international comparisons, the Czech Republic is one of the countries with a high usage of classic educational methods, such as lecture style instruction and an emphasis on memorizing facts, and a low usage of more modern methods such as interactive work in small groups and explanation using real examples.
- Our findings, using data from 8th grade pupils in the Czech Republic, show that modern teaching methods contribute to the development of socio-emotional abilities and do not have any negative influence on pupils' results in tested subjects. Classic teaching methods do not develop socio-emotional abilities.
- Different teaching methods have different effects on boys and girls. While modern methods develop socio-emotional abilities in both boys and girls, classic methods have a negative effect on boys' internal motivation and self-confidence. Classic teaching methods thus increase differences between girls and boys.
- This study's findings thus speak in favour of using modern teaching methods more intensively in Czech schools that currently use them rather little. The results also suggest that a partial change in teachers' chosen approaches (towards greater use of modern rather than classic methods) could have a significant positive impact on their pupils' socio-emotional abilities.

¹ Many thanks are due to Daniel Münich of IDEA for his comments on the working version of this study. We would also like to thank Aline Bütkofer, Štepánovi Jurajda, Barbara Pertold-Gebická, Katrine Vellesen Løken and the participants of conferences in Lisbon (Workshop on Economics, Statistics and Econometrics of Education), Leuven (Workshop on Educations Economics) and Prague (9th Biennial ČSE Conference) for providing us with useful feedback. Any ambiguities or errors in the text, including in the views expressed, are solely the authors'. The study was made as part of the Czech Academy of Sciences' AV21 Strategy and with its support, and is based among other things on research done as part of Czech Science Foundation project GA ČR P402/12/G130.