

Copyright is retained by the first or sole author, who grants right of first publication to the IARTEM e-Journal. The IARTEM e-Journal is published by the International Association for Research on Textbooks and Educational Media.

## **The role of textbooks in lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic**

Citation: Sikarova, Zuzana(2011). The role of textbooks in lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic . IARTEM e-Journal 4 (2) 1 – 22

### **Abstract**

The paper presents research on textbook use conducted in lower secondary schools in Ostrava, in the Czech Republic. The main research aim was to identify the role the textbooks play in teaching and learning in lower secondary schools. The factors influencing the role of textbooks were also examined. The concept of the role of the textbook is discussed from several perspectives in this paper.

The role of textbooks was empirically investigated from four viewpoints: prevalence of textbook use, textbook-based activities, the role of textbooks in students' homework, and textbook control. The investigation was conducted in ten lower secondary schools. A total of 155 lessons across 20 classes were observed to elicit data on the prevalence of textbook use in various phases of the lessons, and the time and frequency of textbook-based activities. The observations were conducted during English, History, Mathematics and Civics lessons and supplemented with individual semi-structured interviews with teachers and pair interviews with students.

The research findings confirmed that textbooks were used extensively, particularly in the presentation of new content. Textbooks were mainly used for activities based on text perception. Simple activities prevailed, such as reading the text aloud, or students following the text with the teacher's explanation. As to the students' use of text materials, the research concluded that students largely ignored the textbooks for their homework; they did not "learn from textbooks". The teachers used the textbooks for various purposes: primarily as a resource for content and for assigning tasks and exercises. The research suggests that textbooks impact greatly on lesson content and to a certain degree on the methodology of the lesson.

**Keywords:** Textbook use, Role of textbooks, Textbook-based activities, Textbook control