



School managements and teachers themselves obviously consider reading literacy to be important and strive to work through the topic (there are plans for the participation of teachers in events and projects focusing on reading literacy) and to help children attain reading literacy with all their might. In some cases, however, the subjective statements of teachers and representatives of school management diverge from observations of what is going on in schools, especially due to the fact that respondents do not have in depth understanding of the term “reading literacy” and related terms. On the one hand there is a tendency to designate essentially anything as the development of reading literacy, on the other hand, teachers have only a very vague awareness of what they should do so that none of the important elements of reading literacy are omitted.

The real strategy should also contain tools for measuring progress and the effectiveness of adopted measures. Schools think that they have internal tools for evaluating the reading literacy of their pupils (65 % of schools say so) while stating simultaneously that they do not have any criteria for such evaluations. Here is an obvious contradiction and an apparent gap in understanding the term “evaluating tools” or the whole “strategy for developing reading literacy” itself.

Indicated external tools demonstrate a misunderstanding of what reading literacy is: CERMAT⁴ tests did not measure it at all and the focus of SCIO⁵ tests on reading literacy must also be considered as questionable. Reading literacy, besides components which can be found by means of multiple-choice tests, requires pupils to become familiar with other aspects which are not so easy to test.

Teachers themselves can set goals only at a very general level. In many cases a goal is limited to reading and understanding the text but this is only the very basic level of reading literacy, i.e. the level of word for word understanding. More complicated aims, such as the ability to reflect on the text and the intent of the author, to retrieve the core of the text and evaluate it, to find links between different texts and deduce conclusions, and critical reading – these individual goals are not included among educational aims although even little children attending the elementary level of BS are able to use and assess texts from the above points of view.

The CSI based its inspection evaluations on the results of PISA international studies and concentrated on selected features and areas where Czech pupils failed or their achievement worsened.

Comparisons of inspection evaluation results made after three years of monitoring show that the development of the support for reading literacy is not favourable.

Table 15

Evaluation of indicators of reading skills in BSs (the proportion of occurrence in %)

Evaluation of indicator of reading skills in basic education	2006/2007	2009/2010	Trend
General understanding of texts	81.3	78.2	-
Retrieving information from texts	81.0	85.4	+
Developing an interpretation	83.5	76.7	-
Reflecting on and evaluating the content of a text	75.0	69.3	-
Reflecting on and evaluating the form of a text	60.7	62.5	+
Appropriateness of text selection by teachers (type, sources, diversity)	80.4	80.3	-
Support for specific skills of pupils with SEN (dyslexia)	76.9	72.3	-

⁴ CERMAT (Centre for Evaluation of Education) is an agency managed by the MEYS. It was established on 1st January 2006 under section 80 (2) of the Education Act.

⁵ SCIO is a Czech commercial educational assessment centre.

