

Support in Education and Personal Development Across Educational Levels: Between Individual Needs and Systemic Responsibility

Supporting individuals in education represents one of the key topics in contemporary pedagogical and psychological discourse, permeating all levels of the educational system as well as various domains of personal and academic development. Changes in the educational environment, increasing diversity of educational pathways, and the individualization of educational needs have strengthened the importance of support structures that enable pupils and students not only to cope with academic demands but also to develop their potential, competencies, and ability to navigate both personal and professional life. Educational support should therefore not be understood merely as a response to difficulties, but as an integral part of the educational process that creates conditions for the optimal development of the individual.

This issue of the journal presents support in education as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing the historical development of counselling

systems, empirical reflections on current counselling practice, analyses of individual psychological factors influencing learning, issues related to health literacy, and specific methodological approaches to student support within higher education curricula. Together, the individual studies demonstrate that educational support is not limited to a single domain or level but represents a continuous process that connects systemic structures, institutional measures, and the individual experience of the learner.

The importance of systemic support in education is evident from a historical perspective. The theoretical-historical study by Gabriela Mikulková analyses the emergence of educational and psychological counselling in Czechoslovakia between the 1960s and the 1980s. This theoretical study shows that the counselling system did not arise as a single institutional measure but as the result of the gradual development of professional approaches, institutional structures, and societal conditions. The study identifies

a key process of integration of various counselling domains, including vocational guidance, educational counselling, and developmental psychological approaches, into a unified system of child support in education. At the same time, it highlights the persistent tension between the need for systemic coordination and respect for individual needs. This historical context demonstrates that educational support is not a new issue but a long-standing component of the development of educational institutions, continuously evolving in response to changing societal and pedagogical challenges.

The contemporary form of support in higher education is addressed in the opening article by Anna Kucharská, which analyses the state of university counselling from the perspective of counselling professionals. This empirical study, based on a questionnaire survey among university counsellors, demonstrates how university counselling in the Czech Republic has undergone significant development from a marginal support service to an integral component of the academic environment. Counselling services have become a stable and institutionalized part of higher education. The findings indicate a growing demand for psychological support, with anxiety, overload, uncertainty, and weakened social competencies among the most common student difficulties. These changes reflect a broader shift in the perception of student mental health – from an individual concern to a syste-

mic challenge. Counselling services are increasingly oriented not only toward students but also toward academic staff, who encounter growing diversity in student needs and difficulties in their teaching practice. The role of counselling centres is expanding beyond responding to individual student problems to include preventive, methodological, and supportive functions within the broader academic environment. At the same time, the study highlights structural challenges, particularly limited-service capacity and unequal access to support. The findings confirm that effective student support in higher education requires a systematic approach and appropriate institutional infrastructure, including strengthening the capacity of counselling centres and redefining their role within the university system.

The importance of support is also evident at the level of individual psychological factors influencing academic success and student adaptation. The article by Markéta Švamberk Šauerová focuses on academic self-efficacy among students with psychological difficulties and chronic illnesses, defined as students' beliefs in their ability to cope with academic demands. This research-based study, complemented by reflections from counselling practice, shows that such beliefs represent a key factor influencing students' academic behaviour, motivation, and persistence. The study emphasizes the importance of support measures that strengthen student competencies and

enable effective engagement in the educational process. Proposed interventions, including adjustments to study conditions, psychotherapeutic approaches, and programs aimed at strengthening personal resources, highlight the importance of individualized support and interdisciplinary collaboration among educators, psychologists, and other professionals. Student support is thus understood not merely as compensation for difficulties, but as a process of strengthening autonomy and the ability to actively manage one's own learning. Academic self-efficacy emerges as a crucial protective factor enabling students to overcome obstacles and actively participate in their educational development.

Support for personal development in education is also closely related to the development of broader competencies, including health literacy and preventive attitudes. The article by Josef Krejčí and Barbora Dočkalová examines abstinence as a factor associated with the development of health literacy among adolescents and young adults. Abstinence is understood as a factor related not only to physical health but also to overall personal development and psychological stability. This review study shows that the ability to make informed decisions about one's health represents an important component of personal development, with implications not only for individual health but also for functioning within the educational environment. The study also draws attention to the insufficient

attention devoted to this topic in educational practice and research and emphasizes the preventive role of educational institutions, which can play a key role in fostering health literacy and resilience among young people.

A specific example of systematic student support is presented in the methodological study by Monika Kadrožková and Kristýna Janyšková, which describes the concept of a support-oriented elective course aimed at helping students manage academic demands and supporting their personal development. This didactic study presents a concrete educational intervention integrating the development of academic competencies, self-regulation, and the ability to cope with academic workload directly into the higher education curriculum. The study demonstrates that student support does not need to be limited to counselling services but can be systematically embedded within the educational process itself. This approach reflects a broader shift from reactive interventions toward systematic prevention that promotes the development of self-regulation, stress management, and effective learning strategies. Integrating wellbeing support directly into the curriculum represents an important step toward creating educational environments that foster not only academic achievement but also long-term personal development.

An important dimension of educational support is also the development of foundational literacy skills during the

early stages of schooling. The empirical study by Eva Wildová, using a design-based research approach, examines the use of mobile technologies to support reading literacy among first-grade students at a bilingual primary school. The study tracks students' progress in reading fluency and comprehension over a four-month period while analyzing the pedagogical potential of mobile devices as instructional tools. The results demonstrate improvements across all observed areas, particularly in increased reading speed, reduced error rates, and enhanced comprehension. Furthermore, the use of gamified applications contributed to higher motivation and active student engagement in reading activities. The study highlights the importance of carefully designed digital educational tools in supporting the development of key literacy skills from the earliest stages of education and emphasizes the potential of technology-enhanced learning as an integral component of contemporary pedagogical approaches.

A common denominator across all contributions in this issue is the emphasis on supporting individuals in education as a continuous process that connects historical experience, current practice, and innovative approaches. The individual studies demonstrate that educational support encompasses a wide range of activities - from the systemic development of counselling structures, through strengthening individual student compe-

tencies, to the integration of supportive approaches directly into teaching.

At the same time, it is evident that effective educational support requires coordination among various actors within the educational process, including educators, counsellors, institutions, and students themselves. Support is not a one-sided process but an interaction between the individual and the educational environment, enabling the development of each student's potential. Educational institutions thus play a crucial role not only as providers of education but also as environments that create conditions for personal and professional development.

This issue contributes to a deeper understanding of educational support as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. It demonstrates that educational support is not limited to addressing difficulties but represents a fundamental component of a high-quality educational system that enables individuals to develop their abilities, competencies, and potential across different stages of their educational trajectories.

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