COMPARISON OF OPINIONS OF TEACHERS, PARENTS AND PUPILS OF SOCIAL HEALTH ASPECTS IN FORM TEACHER ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: The paper sums up results of one of partial topics being he integral part of the research project of the Faculty of Education MU Brno MSM0021622421 School and Health 21. The study is based on research findings published in the period 2006–2007. This paper compares opinions of the teachers, parents and pupils concerning form teachers activities, contributing to strengthening and development of healthy social relations in the classroom (e. g. communication of the form teacher with the pupils, with parents of the pupils, and finding a number of solutions to other problems which emanate from school and out-of-school activities and life of the pupils).

Keywords: form teacher, parents, pupils, comparison of opinions, social health aspects

Background

Form teacher is considered the person having relative high possibilities for affecting healthy social development of individual pupils and the whole class. It is assumed in general that the form teacher is informed best not only about the overall educational situation in the class, but that he/she also disposes of the knowledge and skills important for development of personality and social qualities of the pupils. In other words, the form teacher should know strengths and weaknesses of his/her pupils, should be informed effectively about their state of health, family environment, about important out-of-school activities and about their prospective study or profession orientation. Adequate information background is important for the form teacher in particular in direct relation with the pupils of his/her class as well as a starting point and support for integration and coordination activities focused on cooperation with other teachers, pupils' parents and other educational partners (greater details see Střelec, Krátká, 2005; Krátká, 2007).

Social health is one of significant integral parts of pupil's health and school is an important institution affecting the process of its development. The term social health is interpreted in the professional literature at different levels and in different contexts. When resolving our partial research assignment we have considered certain links between activities of the form teacher and the tasks following from the project Healthy School – Health Supporting School (hereinafter referred to as the "Healthy School") and from the General Educational Programme for Primary Education (Schools) (hereinafter referred to as RVPZV). The basic conceptual and content starting points of the "Healthy School" are designated metaphorically as the three piers (well-being of the environment, healthy teaching, open partnership) and further specified through nine principles (see below Havlínová, 1998). Four of these principles have the closest relation to the social health aspects in the pupil's education within the "Healthy School" project. The principle of peace of the social environment is based on humanistic attitudes between individuals, on creation of positive school climate, on support of open communication and helpfulness, respect, trust, tolerance, patience and willingness to help. Comfort of the organizational environment assumes that organization of school activities conforms with the requirements for the day regime, switching between work and rest, healthy nutrition and active movement of pupils and the teacher. The principle of participation and cooperation assumes application of the methods and forms of teaching which offer utilization of democratic principles, effective cooperation and participation of children, development of contacts with other social and professional partners – parents, representatives of state administrative authorities and representatives of other participating institutions. The principle named School - Model of Democratic Community assumes change of hierarchically arranged relations into partners relations enabling to experience the democratic life at first inside and later on also outside the school.

We also pay attention to certain principles of the "Healthy School" project, because the material part of the assignments connected with realization of the principles above relates directly to the work of the form teachers and not only those teachers longtime interested in this project. Comparison of the starting points of the "Healthy School" with the RVPZV concept leads to the conclusion that both documents are focused on the same objectives, but each of them is characterized by a specific educational strategy. In the "Healthy School" project health is declared in its physical, psychical and social dimension as the core and dominant objective. This fact is reflected in educational and pedagogic aspects of the whole project and the pedagogic/formative (personality and social development accentuating) aspects are given the priority here. If we compare the "Healthy School" and RVPZV, RVPZV is a more complex and comprehensive programme (from the point of balance of the educational and pedagogic dimensions). RVPZV is the nation-wide realized educational programme with legislative and institutionally provided support. The "Healthy School" project, accepted in the time period of its creation rather as one of alternative educational possibilities, inspired authors of RVPZV and of other general educational programmes in many aspects. The issue of the healthy pupil's development fades into RVPZV in its curriculum foundations, key competences, fields of education, cross-sectional topics and other accompanying educational means of this conceptual starting point for reform of the Czech primary education system. Both documents ("Healthy School" and RVPZV) reflect the global strategy of the World Health Organization that has declared the long-time programme of improvement of the state of health of the population named "Health 21" (see below Holčík, 2004).

Actions of the form teacher include in connection with development of the social health of the pupils a certain field of constant activities incorporating:

- Continuous diagnosing, analysing and interpreting personality possibilities of the child, diagnosing in case of educational and pedagogic problems.
- Learning living conditions of the child, its family environment, social structure
 of the class.
- Trying to resolve different educational situations, incl. the situations incorporating the issue of socially pathological phenomena.
- Initiating positive relations between the classmates irrespective of dissimilarities (cultural, religious, social and health). Share of the form teacher in creation of the class climate.
- Coordinating main activities of educational factors other teachers, interest groups, family. The form teacher represents the teaching staff before the children and its class before the public.
- Cooperating with the family and creating cooperative attitudes to the pupils' parents. The form teacher is familiarized with out-of-school activities of the pupils and initiates their development.

The implied starting points have been taken into account when considering strategy of our survey research with the set **objective to establish**, how is the form teachers status reflected in relation to their possibilities to affect social health of their pupils. We have tried to reach relevant finding by comparing and assessing the answers acquired from three groups of respondents (form teachers, pupils and parents) in three separate, but thematically linked research studies; we were interested in the following:

- 1. The degree of importance attached by the form teachers to their basic pedagogic activities from the point of their impact on the pupil's social health.
- 2. What are the pupils' opinions of those form teacher's qualities (capabilities, skills ...) that can affect creation of healthy social relations between the pupils.
- 3. What topics (issues) are considered the most important by the pupils' parents, when cooperating with the form teachers of their children.

With respect to restricted scope of the paper below we present only selection from outcomes of the survey research in the form of illustrative data to the methodological procedure and its basic findings, with reference to three separate studies published in the period 2006–2008 and focused in details on each of these partial problems, which the data for this comparative summary have been taken from (Střelec; Krátká, 2006, 2007).

Selected hypotheses:

- **H1** Form teachers from individual school types assign different importance to the fields, through which it is possible to contribute to pupils' health.
- **H2** Pupils of primary schools appreciate other features of their form teacher than the students of secondary schools (general, technical, vocational).

H3 Parents of the primary school pupils consider the fields important for cooperation with the form teacher other than parents of the students of secondary schools (general, technical, vocational).

Respondents have expressed their opinion through three author (non-standardized) questionnaires.

Questions and answers were modified formally and by their content so that they may be understandable for the respondents and so that the acquired data may be comparable to the maximum possible degree. The scale system has been applied for each answer – 5-point numerical scale, from the value 1 (least important) up to the value 5 (most important). When drafting the questionnaires, we have tried to create such questions that could reveal self-reflective attitudes of the form teachers, pupils and parents and that could differ just in dependence on sociographic or demographic structure of the respondents. The acquired data could then be interpreted in correlation to the school type (primary schools – lower and higher grades; secondary schools – general, technical, vocational), where the role of the form teacher is executed. It means that we have awaited differing references or attitudes to the form teacher's activities in the primary and in the secondary schools.

Research set, selected data processing and presentation

The first research set was created by 240 (100 %) respondents, teachers of primary and secondary schools, of which 65 (27 %) form teachers exercise this role on the lower grades of the primary school and 65 (27 %) form teachers are active on the higher grades of the primary schools. Respondents from the secondary education institutions were represented by 74 (46 %) the form teachers from the general, technical and vocational schools. 56 (23 %) man form teachers and 184 (77 %) woman form teachers took part in the survey research.

The second research set was created by in total 248 (100 %) respondents. 169 schoolgirls/students (69 %) and 79 schoolboys/students (31 %) took part in the survey research. 141 (57 %) respondents attended the primary school and 107 (43 %) respondents attended the secondary general, technical or vocational school.

304 parents participated in the third survey research, of which 62 (20 %) parents of the pupils attending lower primary school grades, 115 (38 %) parents of the pupils attending higher primary school grades and 127 (42 %) parents of the secondary school students (general, technical, vocational). From the point of the sex the sample incorporates 48 (16 %) men and 258 (84 %) women.

The survey research was realized in identical schools or through them. Our selection can be designated as intentional (and available), because the contact was acquired through the schoolmasters or their deputies favourably inclined to cooperation. In our case we have addressed 12 schools and asked them to grant the necessary data (primary school Tyršova, Slavkov u Brna; primary school Komenského, Slavkov u Brna; primary school Rousínov; primary school Slovanské náměstí, Brno; primary school Křídlovická, Brno; primary school Náměstí Republiky, Brno; primary school Jasanová, Brno; secondary technical and secondary vocational school

Charbulova, Brno; integrated secondary school Tyršova, Slavkov u Brna; secondary technical and secondary vocational school Jílová, Brno; general secondary school Slovanské náměstí, Brno; secondary vocational school Rousínov; general secondary school Bučovice). The data were gathered at the turn of January and February 2006

A relatively low number of respondents, in particular their non-representative selection, belong among possible methodological drawbacks as well as character of the applied scales which are ordinary, despite the average has been applied for their comparison. These variables will therefore be considered quasi-cardinal for purposes of analysing, because it simplifies presentation of results materially and does not lead to explicit misrepresentation. In our case of selection of the respondents on the principle of their availability, comparison of spread between the groups and variability inside the groups by the categories of independent variables and not determination of reliability after generalization to the target population is the very reason for verification of statistical importance. The data were then loaded into the database, encoded and assessed by the SPSS programme. The graphs were created separately in the Excel programme, out of the main database. Check of transcript, encoding and data processing was running through computation of basic descriptive statistics (minimums, maximums, missing data, creation of categories). The basic descriptive statistics were done (e.g. tables of large numbers, computation of the average, median, mode, spread, deviations distribution normality). Certain statistically significant differences were tested by the spread analysis comparing more averages (non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test). T-test has been applied for comparison of certain data.

For purpose of processing the material hypotheses had to be operationalised into the form of statistic hypotheses. But even the statistic hypothesis was not verified (checked) directly, namely against the zero hypothesis, i.e. the assumption which claims through the statistic terms that there is no relation between the examined variables. Further on, based on the relevant test of importance, we have decided that a certain research result is statistically important, i.e. that it is very improbable that it would be caused by chance only. The possibility to generalize the knowledge to up to the level of the whole basic set is the purpose of frequent verification of statistic importance of the result. In our case of selection of the respondents on the principle of their availability, determination of spread between the groups and variability inside the groups was the very reason for verification of statistical importance.

Results and Discussion

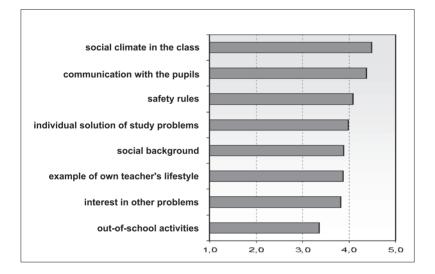
Survey research No. 1

By what and how the form teachers can contribute to physical, mental and social health of their pupils/students?

- a) by individual solution of study problems of the pupils,
- b) by expressing interest in other problems of the pupils, by active participating in their resolving,

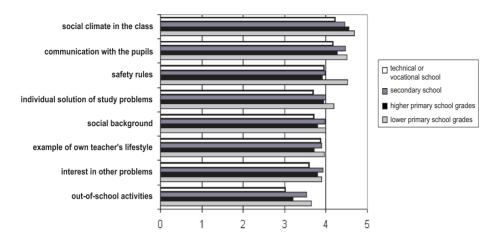
- c) by suitable communication,
- d) by recommendations and by creating opportunities for out-of-school pupils' activities,
- e) by expressing interest in social background of the pupil, by communicating with the parents,
- f) by the example of own teacher's lifestyle,
- g) by creating a good social climate in the class,
- h) by adhering to the safety rules, by familiarizing with the danger of injuries.

The following graph of average values on the scale compares the fields through which the form teachers can contribute to the pupils' health, as claimed by the respondents:



From results of the survey research it follows that the respondents (form teachers) appreciate – from the point of exercise of their role and its contribution to support of pupils' health – most (on the first place) creation of a good social climate in the class (average value 4.5 on the 5-point scale). The good social climate is followed by suitable communication with the pupils (4.37), adherence to the safety rules, familiarization with the danger of injuries (4.1), individual solution of study problems of the pupils (3.97), interest in social background of the pupil and communication with the parents (3.88), example of own teacher's lifestyle (3.86), interest in other problems of the pupils, active participation in their resolving (3.81), recommendations and creation of opportunities for out-of-school activities of the pupils (3.36).

Relation between the school type and opinion of the respondents (form teachers) of how they can contribute to their pupils' health



Statistically important differences follow from answers of the respondents in relation to the school type where they teach. From the results of non-parametric spread analysis (Kruskal-Wallis test) it follows that the good social climate in the class (with respect to healthy development of the children) is appreciated most by the form teachers of lower primary school grades, followed in descending sequence by the teachers of the higher primary school grades, secondary schools and the secondary vocational school on the last place. Age of the pupils (degree of their physical, psychical and social maturity) is reflected indirectly in this correlation relation.

H1 Form teachers from individual school types attach different importance to the fields through which they can contribute to the pupils' health.

The zero and alternative hypothesis, concerning the relation between form teachers' opinions of the methods by which they can contribute to the pupils' health and between the school type where they exercise their role of the form teacher, has been formulated:

 ${\rm H_O}\!=\!{\rm There}$ is no dependence between frequency of answers of the form teachers to the said questions and between the school type where they execute the role of the form teacher.

 $\rm H_A$ = There is a certain dependence between frequency of answers of the form teachers to the said questions and between the school type where they execute the role of the form teacher.

Partial rejection of the zero hypothesis concerning non-existence of any differences between answers to the said question and between the school type where the form teacher executes his/her role, emanates from the results of non-parametric spread analysis comparing more averages (Kruskal Wallis); these results have shown that there are statistically important differences between answers of respondents from individual

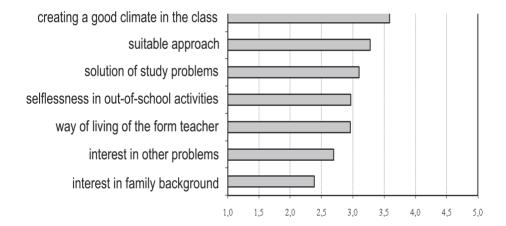
school types, namely recommendations and creation of opportunities for out-of-school activities of the pupils, p adherence to the safety rules, familiarization with the danger of injuries, creation of a good social climate in the class and suitable communication (see below Střelec, Krátká, 2006; Krátká, 2007).

Survey research No. 2

What do you appreciate most in your form teacher?

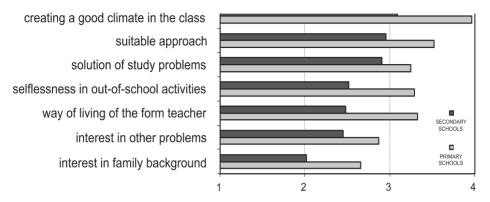
- a) suitable, friendly and factual approach (actions),
- b) individual solution of your study problems,
- c) interest in other problems, active participation in their resolving,
- d) selflessness in out-of-school activities (e.g. excursions, interest groups),
- e) interest in your family background, communication with parents,
- f) way of living of the form teacher,
- g) effort at creating a good climate in your class.

The graph reflects average values how the pupils appreciate qualities (capabilities, skills, ...) of the form teacher contributing to affection of social health of the pupils:



From the results of the survey research it follows that the respondents (pupils of primary schools and students of secondary schools) appreciate most the teacher's effort at creating a good climate in the class among the qualities and skills of their form teachers (average value 3.59 on the 5-point scale). The effort is followed by suitable, friendly and factual approach (3.28), individual solution of pupils' study problems (3.10), self-lessness in out-of-school activities and way of living of the form teacher (both items – 2.96), interest in other pupils' problems (2.69) and interest in pupil's family background, incl. communication with pupil's parents (2.38). The shown sequence corresponds in principle to our assumptions and testifies to certain tendencies in life of primary and secondary school pupils, manifesting themselves inter alia in relation of the pupils to the teacher's profession, in relations between the teachers and pupils' parents, etc.

Relation between the fields appreciated by the pupils in their form teacher and between the school type attended by the pupil



Statistically important differences follow from answers of the respondents in relation to the school type they attend. From results of the non-parametric spread analysis (Kruskal- Wallis test) it follows for instance that the primary school pupils appreciate all qualities and features offered by their form teacher much more higher than the secondary school students.

H2 Pupils from different school types appreciate different qualities in their form teacher.

The zero and alternative hypothesis, concerning differences in appreciation of form teacher's qualities and the school type, has been formulated:

 H_0 = There is no dependence between frequency of answers of the pupils to the said questions and the school type they attend.

 H_A = There is a certain dependence between frequency of answers of the pupils to the said questions and the school type they attend.

Rejection of the zero hypothesis concerning non-existence of any differences between answers to the said question in dependence on the school type which the pupil attends, emanates from the results of a non-parametric test comparing two averages (Mann-Whitney U Test); these results have shown that there are statistically important differences between answers of respondents from individual school types concerning qualities of the form teacher leading to affection of the pupils' health (see below Střelec – Krátká, 2006, 2007; Krátká, 2007).

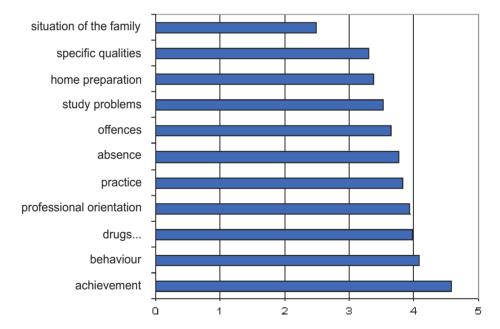
Survey research No. 3

Solution of what topics with the form teacher do you long for most (what topics have the highest significance – according to your opinion – for education of your children)?

- a) problems with school achievements
- b) problems of absence

- c) problems in behaviour
- d) offences against school regulations
- e) symptoms of using alcohol, drugs, smoking
- f) problems connected with specific learning disorders
- g) social situation of the family
- h) specific qualities of individual pupils
- i) further education and professional orientation of the pupils
- j) quality of professional training and practice
- k) inadequate preparation at home

We have constructed the graph, based on the computed averages (the central tendency degrees characterize a typical data value); from the graph it follows that the parents attach the highest degree of importance to the issue of positive achievements of their child and then to the behaviour. The first places are followed by the parents' interest in the topics connected with the risks of using drugs, alcohol and cigarettes. The lowest degree of importance is attached by the parents to the questions connected with social situation of the family, specific qualities of individual pupils and home preparation of the pupil for school lessons.



Results of the factor analysis have revealed clusters of variables in three main fields:

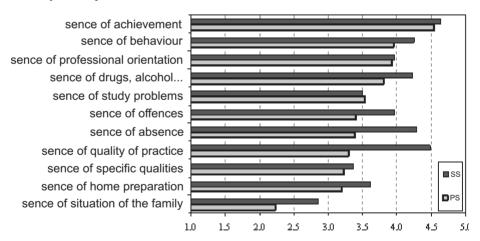
 field of socio-pathologic phenomena: problems of absence, problems with behaviour, offences against school regulations, symptoms of using alcohol, drugs, smoking

- 2) personality-individuality field: social situation of the family, specific qualities of individual pupils, further education and professional orientation of the pupils, quality of professional training and practice, inadequate preparation at home
- 3) field of education: problems with achievements

Relation between important fields for cooperation with the form teacher and the school type attended by the pupil

Primary content of the sub-chapter consists in dichotomic comparison of the fields which seem to be important – for cooperation with the form teacher – for the parents whose child attends the primary school and for the parents whose child attends the secondary school. For the needs of this comparison we have unified the respondents whose child attends the lower primary school grades with the respondents whose child attends the higher primary school grates – they are designated in common as the "primary school". In the same way we have unified the respondents whose child attends the secondary general, technical or vocational school – they are named in common the "secondary school".

To be absolutely clear, the following graph shows the differences between important fields for cooperation with the form teacher and between the school type attended by the respondents' child.



H3 Parents of primary school pupils consider other fields important for cooperation with the form teacher than the parents of secondary (vocational) school students.

The zero and alternative hypothesis, concerning differences in the importance attached by the parents to individual fields for cooperation with the form teacher in dependence on the school type attended by their child, has been formulated:

 H_0 = There is no dependence between frequency of answers of the parents to the said question and the school type attended by their child.

 H_A = There is a certain dependence between frequency of answers of the parents to the said question and the school type attended by their child.

Rejection of the zero hypothesis concerning non-existence of any differences between answers to the said question and the school type which the pupil attends, emanates from the results of non-parametric statistic tests that have shown that there are only three statistically important differences between answers of the respondents and the school type attended by their child. We are speaking about the following fields: social situation of the family, offences against school regulations, problem of absence.

The hypothesis, according to which parents of the primary school pupils consider other fields important for cooperation with the form teacher than the parents of the secondary school students, has been adopted partially. As awaited, parents of the secondary school students consider the problems of absence at school, practical skills of the student, use of alcohol, drugs and smoking and offences against school regulations more important for resolving, compared with parents of the primary school pupils. The results, processed by the factor analysis, have revealed clusters of variables in three fields (field of education, personality-individuality field, field of socio-pathologic phenomena), which the form teacher should be able to resolve with the parents of the pupils/students, because the parents have a keen interest in them.

The parents attach a high importance to the role of the form teacher (x > 4) (value 4.30 on the scale). It is of extraordinarily high importance for them to resolve in particular the issues of achievements and behaviour with the form teacher of their child. Issues of social situation of the family (2.49) are of least importance for the parents. The hypothesis, according to which parents of the primary school pupils consider other fields important for cooperation with the form teacher than the parents of the secondary (vocational) school students, has been adopted. As awaited, parents of the secondary school students consider the problems of absence, quality of professional training and practice, symptoms of using alcohol, drugs and smoking and offences against school regulations more important for resolving than the parents of the primary school pupils. The results, processed by the factor analysis, have revealed clusters of variables in three fields (field of socio-pathologic phenomena, personality-individuality field, field of education), which the form teacher should be able to resolve with the parents of the pupils/students, because the parents have a keen interest in them.

Conclusion

Assessment of the results following from three survey researches enables – despite certain dissimilarities in the applied methodological tools – to come to certain generalizing conclusions:

Form teachers have their irreplaceable role in educational and pedagogic events
of the school. They affect relations between pupils in their classes to a high extent and contribute to development of personality potential of individual pupils.

- Share of the teacher in creation of good social climate in the class, which the
 method of teacher's communication with the pupils is connected with directly, is
 of principal character among form teachers' activities.
- Focal point of "functional" activities of the form teacher consists in particular in support of healthy interpersonal relations in the class. The activities close to intrapersonal dimensions of the pupil's development (form teacher' involvement in solution of pupil's study problems and achievements, form teacher's interest in family background of the pupil, in his out-of-school activities, etc.) have been assigned the second line by the respondents (form teachers ad their pupils)
- Status of the form teacher in the lower primary school grades is of a quite specific
 nature from the point of the school education degree. In this role natural penetration and integration of educational, pedagogic and usually also cultural and social activities takes place. From a certain point of view such activities and impact
 can be understood a basic model, where specific educational conditions enable
 optimum affection and support of healthy intra- and intersocial development of
 the pupils by the form teacher.
- Activities of the form teacher have not only their justification within each school
 education degree, but also their specific features following from pedagogic and
 psychological characteristics of the pupils of a certain age and from the level of
 their individual psychical, physical and social maturity.
- Pupils' parents connect high expectations with the form teacher's activities not
 only in case of school achievements of their child, but also in connection with
 support of its healthy development. The topics of truancy, offences against school
 regulations, risks of consuming alcohol, nicotine and other drugs belong to those
 that are considered important fields of cooperation with the form teachers by the
 respondents (parents).

Results of the survey research also indicate the prevailing methods of the frontal educational affection of the class as a complex whole and less frequent individual educational contacts with individual pupils. This tendency is based according to our opinion on traditions of the Czech education system and is also affected by the current conditions for work of the form teachers in the primary and secondary schools.

We assume that status (role) of the form teacher will not be losing importance within the scope of transformations of the Czech education system, on the contrary, significance of this pedagogic factor will grow step by step with realization of qualitative changes in school activities. We think, apart from other things, that status of the form teacher will be strengthened necessarily not only in relation with the pupils themselves, but also in relation with their parents, education advisers, school psychologists and other education oriented specialists.

KOMPARACE NÁZORŮ UČITELŮ, RODIČŮ A ŽÁKŮ NA SOCIÁLNĚ ZDRAVOTNÍ ASPEKTY V ČINNOSTECH TŘÍDNÍHO UČITELE

Abstrakt: Příspěvek shrnuje průběžné výsledky jednoho z dílčích témat, které je součástí výzkumného záměru PdF MU Brno MSM002162421 Škola a zdraví pro 21. století. Studie navazuje na výzkumná zjištění publikovaná v období 2006–2007. V příspěvku jsou srovnávány názory učitelů, rodičů a žáků na činnosti třídních učitelů, které přispívají k upevnění a rozvoji zdravých sociálních vztahů ve školní třídě (například komunikaci třídního učitele se žáky, jednání třídního učitele s rodiči žáků, řešení studijních a některých dalších otázek školního a mimoškolního života žáků).

Klíčová slova: třídní učitel, rodiče, žáci, komparace názorů, sociálně zdravotní aspekty