Content Pedagogy

Programme Director: Erzsébet Korom, PhD, Dr. habil.

The overall framework of the training programme

The improvement of teachers' pedagogical skills and professional knowledge is a crucial element in the development of education. This means the training of teachers who are able to identify problems arising in their everyday teaching practice; familiar with the research findings available to solve these problems; striving to induce change by applying these findings to learners; and able to track and monitor the outcomes of such interventions. In order to attain these goals, not only up-to-date knowledge of Education and Psychology but also of research methodology is required. The new curriculum of one-cycle teacher training puts emphasis on the research-based approach. Shaped by the same principle, the Content Pedagogy programme of the Doctoral School offers an opportunity for recent graduates as well as for practicing teachers and those who teach subject methodology to become researchers and teacher researchers.

Content pedagogy (also known as subject didactics or subject methodology) is a multidisciplinary field related to teaching the individual school subjects, and to exploring the issues of instruction and socialisation. It is closely tied to the disciplines related to the school subjects as well as to Education and Psychology. However, the strength and nature of this relationship vary in its different historical trends (e.g., German, or Anglo-Saxon). In Hungary, subject didactics i.e., the theory of instruction in the individual subjects, prevailed for a long time. This area has also been increasingly affected by the social and economic changes of recent decades, by the challenges education is facing, by the need for socially relevant, applicable knowledge, and by the development of 21st-century skills. Regarding the instruction of scientific content, a deeper understanding of learners and the learning process, the exploration of general as well as domain-specific features of knowledge acquisition and thinking, and the facilitation of learning have come to the limelight. Internationally, significant research results have accumulated in the field of content pedagogy concerning the teaching of Mathematics, Natural Sciences, reading, writing, foreign languages, Social Sciences, and Art Education; and these results inspire research and development in Hungary as well. The Content Pedagogy Research Program of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences launched in 2016, which led to the establishment of 19 research groups, helped to bolster Hungarian research in content pedagogy, and to catch up with the international forerunners. If content pedagogy is included in the programs of the various doctoral schools (i.e., doctoral schools of Education and various other disciplines), it helps to increase the role and the prestige of content pedagogy.

The Doctoral School of Education at the University of Szeged has a long tradition of research in learning and instruction, ability development and its facilitation, and educational assessment. This knowledge base can be utilised successfully in the content pedagogy program: in answering subject-specific theoretical questions of learning and instruction, facilitating developmental programmes embedded in content, and investigating the effectiveness of such intervention. PhD students have the opportunity to gain wide-ranging professional knowledge and to learn from renowned national and international experts. PhD students can also participate in the work of the Center for Research on Learning and Instruction (University of Szeged), the Research Group on the Development of Competencies, and the Science Education Research Group (the latter two are joint research groups maintained by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the University of Szeged). These research groups are closely associated with the Institute of Education, University of Szeged.

Main areas of research

- Cognitive and affective characteristics of learners regarding specific subjects;
- Acquisition of knowledge and development of skills in specific subjects;
- Tools for planning and instruction (curricula, learning materials, and instructional methods);
- Learning sites: in-school and out-of-school learning;
- Knowledge, views, and attitudes of teachers.