The phenomenon of festive humor as an invisible part of school culture

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The contribution is dedicated to the phenomenon of festive humor in schools. Humor can be understood as a performative act and as an important part of school culture. Although humor is everyday part of school reality it is rarely an object of conscious reflection and therefore it can be interpreted as an “invisible” phenomenon.

The festive humor is a certain type of school humor bound to certain traditional and institutionalized opportunities, such as exceptional calendar days or trips outside the school. The analysis shows that this humor is analogous to folk carnival laughter described by Bachtin (1975) and is used for expression of both, resistance to the school as well as affirmation to the institutional order. In addition, the school festive humor is an important tool for harmonizing relations between teachers and pupils.

The contribution is based on qualitative analysis of written storytelling of pupils (n = 137) and teachers (n = 41) from lower-secondary schools in Czech Republic. The data was analysed with structural and thematic narrative analysis methods (Riessman, 2008).