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Preparing Teachers for the Profession with Regard to the Individualization and Differentiation of Instruction

Abstract: The idea that the pedagogical mastery of a teacher and his/her increasing expertise are based on his/her ability to reflect on his/her own practice is widely recognized in the world, irrespective of the concepts and approaches applied to teacher training. It is shown in this paper that fundamental change is needed in terms of the aims, means and processes of prospective teacher education. They should turn away from science popularisers to experts capable of fostering the complex social and personal development of students (and not only in relation to the group of students with specific problems). We present a connection within the capacity of the individual (student, teacher and training teacher) to think critically and conduct professional reflection on pedagogical practice.

Keywords: critical thinking, reflection, continuous teaching and pedagogical practice, individualization and differentiation of instruction.

Introduction

One of the main outcomes of school education is to make students cogitative individuals, who will contribute to solving the problems of society and creating its values. Thinking is the highest form of cognition and is composed of a number of thinking operations. It is conditioned socially and culturally, closely related to language and speech. From the

pedagogical point of view, the development of thinking, mainly the critical one, is considered as a priority of school education. Society should, through the school as a social institution, strengthen the level of responsibility. The school cannot afford to treat this as a “dead letter” and create only an illusion of reform. On the contrary, the school should accept the offered challenges and contribute to the changes that are associated with school reform.

The ability to think critically is generally regarded as one of the objectives of education and training. American researchers M. Scriven and R. Paul (1993) stated that critical thinking or reasoning is an intellectual process based on a conceptual grasp (conceptualization), analysis, synthesis and information evaluation. The above mentioned authors created an institute in California (USA), that is devoted to describing and teaching the various aspects of critical thinking. We offer their overview with the aim of improving the understanding of the complexity of critical thinking. Reasoning (inference) includes four aspects: elements, features, standards and skills. According to the authors, any critical thinking or reasoning includes a certain number of the following elements: an objective, a problem, a referential framework and perspective, information, key terms, premises, drawing inferences and implications. The main features of critical thinking are humility, courage, responsibility, discipline, empathy, curiosity, persistency, integrity and spiritual independence (an individual does not recognize any higher authority than himself and does not place any value higher than his own opinion). The quality of the opinion is recognized if it is logical, complete, clear, accurate, specific, plausible (probable), consistent, deep, broad, adequate, proper, appropriate and significant.

The current definition of the term critical thinking, from the cognitive point of view, is also described by the Slovak authors Stríženec (2010) and Ruisel (2008, 2011). According to them, the content of critical thinking extends to such areas as scientific thinking, formal and informal logic, probabilistic thinking, and evaluation of the information quality, generation and selection of alternatives and objectives, and argument analysis providing access to adequate solutions.

The quality argument, according to Turek (2003), should contain a statement (the key idea), the statement justification and the evidence in support of particular statements. It is in the ability of argumentation where we can find the link between the philosophical and cognitive approach to critical thinking. The lack of ability to justify one's own attitudes or behaviour, or weak use and validation of acquired knowledge in solving life problems reduces the importance of information and knowledge itself.

We file critical thinking (together with the competency to solve problems and think creatively) under a set of capabilities that belong to the key competencies of the teacher. Critical thinking means the assessment of new information, to form opinions, to evaluate the significance of information for our own needs and for the real needs of the society. The ability of reflection on one's own action is a fundamental capability of teachers. I understand reflective thinking as a part of the critical thinking process referring specifically to the processes of analysing and making judgments about what has happened. It is a competence needed for personal growth, self-development and self-improvement in education. Teachers in primary education, in accordance with the description of their field of study, should possess professional competencies that enable them to carry out their profession effectively. They should have theoretical knowledge about the key factors and processes of socialization and upbringing, about the cultural connections of anthropogenesis and its psychological interpretations. They can demonstrate their awareness of the content of basic general education and transform it effectively for didactic purposes. They possess the ability of didactic education projection in basic areas of human culture, with an emphasis on the initial acculturation of children, as well as the enculturation of immigrants and members of culturally disadvantaged minorities. Finally, they should fulfil the requirements of the State Educational Programme and ensure that the educational activity is focused in the way that the school and school education operate as fair systems where all students have the equal opportunity to develop their potential.

How can a primary school teacher create suitable conditions for the equal education of all Slovak citizens, including ethnic minorities? How to

achieve the aim that educational programmes are constantly improved and upgraded based on functional mechanisms of feedback and evaluation? How to promote the participation and cooperation of all participators in education, including children and students?⁴⁰ How to ensure that collectively-oriented training in terms of the content and also process aspect contribute better to the development of individuals and respects their individual differences? How to plan the learning activities of students, taking into account the fact that not only training content, but also the very form of knowledge mediation plays the same role in the development of the mental functions of an individual, his/her relationship to reality and the planning of one's own activities? How to establish a learning environment that encourages individual thinking and the creation of the personal philosophy of the world stimulates mutual discussion and the exchange of opinions and beliefs? In other words, what can teachers do in order to turn classes into intellectual centres stimulating students' thinking and preparing them seriously to a future independent life in a democratic society?

Innovation in the professional and practical training of future primary school teachers

The regional education reform depends on the quality of teachers who are prepared by the universities. The efficient output of a university graduate is necessarily associated with changes of quality of his/her preparation. It is expected from students, as future teachers of primary school, to bring innovations into the educational system. The systematic emphasis and training of critical thinking skills in school practice would help students to become aware of the requirements and the needs of modern society. It is therefore necessary to make students aware, already during their studies, that the organization of teaching activities, at present, cannot count with the same development potencies of all students

⁴⁰ See www.minedu.sk: Objectives proposal of the National Programme of Education and Teaching Development THE LEARNING SLOVAKIA.

with whom a professor works. It cannot be ascribed uniform and universal contents and processes in any situation of learning in all students equally. It is desirable that they should think about which content of the student's curriculum would be mediated and what are his development conditions. To the forefront comes the requirement of the importance of acceptance of an individualized developmental plan for some individuals and their supporting activities.

Pedagogical practice is a direct source and means of knowledge for students of pedagogical faculties. It should therefore be designed to lead them to learn from their practical experiences through their conscious self-reflection. The continual pedagogical teaching practice is the result of students' theoretical and practical training and the protraction of their learning practice in three previous semesters. A second-year master's student works continuously during five weeks in the educational environment of one class. S/He continuously teaches all subjects and has the possibility to obtain comprehensive knowledge of the workings of a primary school, the functioning of the classroom, the teacher's work and the opportunity to apply in the study of acquired knowledges and skills to solve authentic educational situations. Students learn to handle tasks close to the demands of the real teaching process, including extra-curricular activities followed by methodological and expert analysis, feedback from the teacher trainer, didactics in the field and a reflection on one's own didactic skills and pedagogical capabilities (competencies relating to teaching behaviour that make a decisive contribution to the effectiveness of education). The mentioned pedagogical practice is focused on the complex development of a teacher's competencies, and students gain teaching experience in the overall context of the class and functioning of the school, followed by a verification of their own teaching competency (Kosová et al., 2015).

Continual teaching practice creates the conditions for university students to acquire professional experience and opportunities for linking theoretical knowledge and practical skills to form their individual style of professional thinking and actions that, among other factors, will enable university students to:

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- continuously implement teaching in one class, applying methods of instruction, strategies, teaching concepts, means and tools that are optimal and effective for a given level of education;
 - recognise the diverse needs of pupils, accept expressions of their individuality within the classroom, identify the specific features of students' learning, specific educational needs and apply the elements of differentiation in teaching and the means of pedagogical diagnostics in the process of one's own learning.
 - analyse, evaluate, organise and generalise their own teaching experience and knowledge in confronting feedback from teacher trainer and didactics in the field to get an objective self-image.

The reflexive nature of continual teaching practice creates the conditions for students to acquire professional experience and opportunities for turning theoretical knowledge into their own concepts of professional thinking and acting by allowing them to:

- professionally evaluate their teaching activities and develop pedagogical views;
- improve their skills of meeting the individual needs of primary school children and differentiate the instruction according to their educational needs;
- understand the concept of a comprehensive social and personal development of a child;
- verify their potential for the teaching profession.

The university character of teaching training suggests that students develop their capabilities through the intellectual work that resembles scientific pedagogical thinking. This results in the ability of the student to think critically. Unfortunately, the analyses of results, carried out by the international PISA (2003, 2006, 2009, 2012) and PIIAC (2015)⁴¹ measure-

⁴¹ The study of OECD PISA is searching for the educational outcomes in terms of the labour market requirements (meaning the functional literacy of students in terms

ments, indicate the significant evidence that higher cognitive functions, particularly independent, evaluative and critical thinking, are not adequately developed in our school conditions. This deficit is also brought to universities by secondary school leavers. We believe that if the monitored variable is not developed by students in the conditions of primary and secondary school, they will not be able to think critically even as graduates or as individuals included in social life.

The international research conducted by PIAAC is investigating, in particular, how citizens of different countries are prepared to meet the new challenges of a knowledge-based society. The direct skills measurement of respondents in adulthood brings incomparably more advantages over previous attempts to measure adult literacy based on their qualifications. A diploma or certificate of completed education does not say enough about the real potential of the respondent, not even to mention documents and certificates acquired many years ago. PIAAC will in particular help to better understand the effectiveness of educational systems in the development of basic cognitive and working skills. PIAAC is an ambitious programme that not only maps the competencies, but also tries to evaluate how skills are related to the socio-economic successes of individuals or particular countries. The research also provides information about the extent to which the education systems are successful in conveying the necessary competencies and how it is possible to increase the effectiveness of educational policies.

For this reason, it would be interesting to find out the status of the critical thinking level among students of MA degrees in the field of primary education and to analyse to what extent has this capacity directly affected the application, implementation and realization of individualized and differentiated teaching provided through school practice.

of the lifelong education theory) and it is focused on students in the last years of compulsory education. The project PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) is an international assessment of adult competencies. Both projects PIAAC and PISA complement each other. PIAAC explores the following development of the acquired competencies, while PISA verifies what and how students learnt.

We suggest the following procedures and instruments for the observation, analysis and evaluation of the quality of the student's activity in the studying area:

- To identify and analyse the level of critical thinking among 60 students of MAs in the field of the teaching for primary education (instrument: test/ The Watson-Glaser test of the critical thinking evaluation).
- To establish the means of pedagogical reflection and self-reflection application of the individualized and differentiated instruction to the continuous teaching and pedagogical practice (instrument: standards for students).
- To develop a measuring tool to verify (observation, analysis and evaluation) the level of achievement standards (instrument: the recording sheet for observation).
- To present the standards and procedures for the assessment and evaluation of the recording sheet for observation to the students.
- To evaluate the level of achievement standards in relation to the application of individualization and differentiation of instruction by students on continuous pedagogical practice (direct observation of the educational process at the primary level of training schools, the reflection of the trade didactics, self-reflection of the student, talks with students).
- To encourage developing of students' ability to evaluate their teaching activities, to innovate pedagogical views and to improve their teaching capabilities aimed at capacity to meet the individual needs of students and differentiate instruction according to their educational needs (instrument: reflective discourse).
- To show a correlation between the competence of the student to think critically and his ability to implement and reflect individualizes and differentiated teaching on continuous pedagogical practice (statistical processing, analysis of the results).

Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CTA)

Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CTA) captures the abilities that are frequently used by people of primary decisions. This is particularly the ability to recognize weak arguments, misconceptions and assumptions, illogical conclusions and dubious opinions. The development and specification of the test has lasted for more than 50 years. The test was systematically subjected to more progressive and experimental analyses and resulting improvements, which were based on careful consideration of the theoretical background as well as practical utilization. In the later American editions of the tests that have been pioneered in the UK, detection of critical thinking was regulated and tailored to the selection procedures of a number of large companies and organizations. The final result is Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CTA) of 1990. It comprises subtests and items that are based on the most recent conceptualization of critical thinking. The test is intended for the professions of primary decision-making.

Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CTA) is the most commonly used in five areas:

- As a means of prediction. It allows the estimation of the potential success in certain types of professions, which are known that critical thinking plays an important role in them. It is used mainly in the selected proceedings.
- As a measure of performances in critical thinking in the context of training programs in the industry, management and state administration. Such programs have the task of developing the ability to think critically. Test results are also take into consideration in the selection of those programs.
- As a measure of performances in critical thinking when evaluating the results in school and other educational programs. It provides objective evidence of critical thinking skills development due to the completion of a course or training.
- As a means of psychometric evaluation. These are situations in which the knowledge of the critical thinking characteristics of an

individual can contribute to the success of any coaching and development.

- As the research tool in identifying and determining of the relationships between critical thinking skills and other abilities, features and phenomena.
- As a means of self-esteem and achievement of greater personal effectiveness. The test result can provide an individual the objective picture of his abilities and possibilities for further development and thereby create a basis for further professional career and its planning in many years.

Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CTA) is a series of five testing tasks, each of which requires the application of analytical thinking abilities. Such capabilities are applied in tests to statements representing a wide range of written and spoken materials, which are frequently encountered in everyday situations in work or while studying. The tasks include such information that is commonly found in newspapers, magazines or the media and include comments and arguments that should not be accepted by a person blindly, and therefore to accept without critical evaluation. The test consists of the following five subtests:

Test 1 – Opinion

Evaluation of the opinion's validity created on the basis of a series of factual data.

Test 2 – Recognition of presumptions

The identification of the untold presumptions or assumptions of sets of arguments.

Test 3 – Deduction

Determining whether certain conclusions result from the information contained in these statements and premises.

Test 4 – Interpretation

Considering the facts and decision of eligibility about generalizations and conclusions that are drawn on the basis of the given data.

Test 5 – Arguments rating

The distinction between the arguments that are, based on given problem, strong and substantial and those that are weak and insubstantial (CTA, 2000).

Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CTA) elicits responses to two different kinds of content. Some of the tasks require the assessment of critical statements from the candidate on a neutral topic such as weather, scientific facts or experiments and other topics that generally do not cause strong emotions or prejudices in people. Others, roughly in a similar logical structure, concern political, economic or social issues that evoke strong emotions, biases and prejudices in many people. Controversial materials were deliberately used with the intention of giving a partial picture of the individual ability to critically assess the issues that may arouse strong feelings or prejudices. When interpreting the test score, it is important to remember that the critical thinking skills can be trained to a certain extent. The authors of the *Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test* (CTA) define critical thinking as a combination of attitudes, knowledges and skills.

The Teacher Trainer– co-creator of efficient and reflective teaching practice

The most valuable thing that a supervising teacher can give to a beginning teacher or a university teacher, or a teacher to a student for his/her entire professional life, is a tool for constant reconstruction of their own educational theory – i.e. support the development of his/her ability to professionally evaluate their own teaching activity, and thus innovate their own pedagogical views and constantly improve their own teaching skills.

The ability of a student to reflect on his/her own teaching activity during school practice should become an important part of the self-improvement of a future professional. Professionalization is understood

as an equivalent and at the same time as a condition of improving a teacher's work (characteristics and criteria). Professionalism as a construct pertaining to the professional community (status aspects, attitudinal attributes and values) and professionalism as term relating to pedagogical performance (knowledges, capabilities and strategies).

The conceptual basis of professionalization is a professional standard based on competency profiles of particular teacher categories derived from the learning aims, values and school aims. The competency profile of a teacher trainer, as "teacher of teachers", is formed of competencies at 2 levels:

- pedagogical and didactic knowledges and skills related with the teaching of a particular subject or field;
- knowledge and skills of how adults are teachers (students of teaching) and how they are made competent teachers (mentoring).

The Methodological and Pedagogical Centre (educational and methodological institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic for the further education of pedagogical staff) has been devoted to working on the professional standards of teachers in Slovakia in recent years as a directly managed organization of Ministry of Education. The created draft of professional standards for training pedagogical staff (training teachers) contains a competency profile that is divided into 3 dimensions:

- dimension – Student during pedagogical practice:
 - competency 1.1: identify individual training and personal needs of student during pedagogical practice,
 - competency 1.2: identify learning styles of students on pedagogical practice.
- dimension – Training process:
 - competency 2.1: manage the training process.
- dimension – Professional development:
 - competency 3.1: plan and realize one's own professional growth and self-development

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- competency 3.2: identify the role of a specialist, the school and the school environment.

A competency profile should be formed of competencies (proven capabilities) in three areas:

- Competencies oriented to knowledge of the university student:
 - identifies the educational, personal and social needs of student;
 - accepts an individuality of each student;
 - takes into account the psychological and social learning factors of students;
 - reflects factors affecting student perspective on the learning process.
- Competencies directed to the development of professional teaching abilities of students:
 - create the conditions to transform the student role to the teacher role (leading to accountability, autonomy, professionalism);
 - present a didactic expertise;
 - project, analyse and evaluate the student's educational activities;
 - create a supportive and responsive environment for student;
 - develop professional and social abilities of student (support the cooperation and team spirit work, awareness of responsibility to the profession and institution);
 - demonstrate the effective use of ICT in education;
 - provide individual assistance to student.
- Competencies directed to the self-development of the trainee teacher:
 - uses tools of self-diagnosis and self-reflection;
 - uses reflection, evaluation and feedback from others (methodology experts, faculty teachers for further professional growth and self-development);
 - innovates teaching and makes it more efficient;

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- coordinates cooperation with faculty, creates collaborative projects with various partners;
 - demonstrates proficiency in the field of tutoring and mentoring.

The continual educational programme for the training of primary school teachers⁴²

The programme proposal is based on the above mentioned competency profile of training teachers and is regarded as specialized education.⁴³ The career system for teachers in Slovakia contains one of the career ways for obtaining specific professional competencies (specialised functions) that are needed to conduct specialized or manage the professional competencies of teachers with specialized extra pay or extra pay for management being awarded. The specialized competencies of teachers are associated with the performance of career positions in the career system expressing their gradation (teacher with attestation), function (director, deputy director) or specialization (class teacher, teacher trainer, induction teacher, a specialist in the education of disadvantaged pupils and so on.).

It is obvious that the professional specializations circuit is a dynamic system that has to respond to the current and prospective needs of schools. The creation of new positions with specific tasks besides teaching can increase the career differentiation horizontally. The career level that distinguishes the extra responsibility is the access to more demanding career levels, requiring more responsibility and the narrower selection. However, it also brings a higher status and remuneration. It is mainly about the

⁴² This document was developed under a developed project Innovation of Professional and Practical Training of the future teachers 002UMB/2013 that is also financed from the state budget of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak republic.

Note: the author of the paper was a member of the working group. For more, see: www.minedu.sk.

⁴³ For more information see: www.minedu.sk.

positions of mentors, tutors, coaches, counsellors and others whose widely branched system of support for teacher development is required.

The structure of the programme contains the following components.

Name of the education programme:

Specialised education for training teachers

Names of modules:

- M1: Training teacher as a mentor.
- M2: Training teacher as an expert on teaching.

Target group:

teacher in accordance with §13, paragraph a-f, of the legal code no. 317 / 2009 of the Law on pedagogical and professional employees and on amending and supplementing of Acts.

Required entrance education:

according to §7 paragraph 2 a) and b) of the Act no. 317 / 2013 Law Collection on the educational and professional employees and on amending and supplementing certain acts and first attestation test.

Conditions for the programme placement:

- professional curriculum vitae;
- 5 years of pedagogical practice;
- during the implementation of specialized education, must assist university students during pedagogical practice.

The Graduate profile:

A graduate with a specialized education will be qualified for a career position as a teacher trainer. S/He will acquire competencies in planning, implementation and reflection of the professional development of future teachers in the form of effective mentoring via education. He will confirm his expertise in the profession, as well as in the pedagogical, psychological and professional spheres.

Organizational form of education:

combined (full-time and distance learning)

Range:

100 hrs. (60 hrs. full-time and 40 hrs. distance learning)

Didactic plan and curriculum:

The aim of the programme is formulated in terms of the proven profit of the education participant, the development of his/her professional competencies, in order to be realistic (achievable in scheduled time of education), specific (unambiguous in interpretation), quantified (includes data on the time, range), measurable (can be ascertained if it is fulfilled, i.e. if the participant acquired the planned competences). Partial objectives derived from the main objective of the programme as expected demonstrable competencies of the participant designed to reflect the sequence in level (quality) acquired competencies (knowledges, skills, attitudes) based on the output level of aim. They are formulated based on activity (operations) of the participant of the educational process, contain an active verb with the subject matter. Particular tasks have criteria of the tasks completion, tasks indicators that are manifested externally in the activities of education participants.

Main objective:

to acquire the professional competencies of the pedagogical employee that are necessary for the performance of specialized activities in the career position of a teacher trainer (see Table 1).

Specific objectives:

Graduate of specialized education will be able to demonstrate expertise as a mentor that he can:

- identify educational, personal and social needs of a student;
- take into account the psychological and social factors of students' learning as adults;

- reflect factors affecting the student’s perspective on the learning process;
- create conditions for the transformation of the student’s role to the teacher’s role (lead to responsibility, autonomy, professionalism);
- design teaching activities of students;
- analyse and evaluate the pedagogical activities of the student;
- create supportive and responsive environment for students;
- develop professional social capabilities of students (support co-operation and ability of team work, awareness of responsibility to the profession and institution);
- demonstrate the possibilities for the effective use of IT in teaching;
- provide individual assistance to students;
- use different tools of self-reflection;
- present didactic expertise;
- innovate teaching and make it more efficient.

Table 1. Basic characteristics of the educational programme

The module name	Educational content	Methods and Forms	Full-time lessons	Distance lessons
M1 Training teacher as a mentor	Specifics of adult education Needs identification of adult learners Pedagogical practices system for pedagogy students Self-development strategy of teacher trainer Mentoring, coaching, tutoring, characteristic-supervision, principles, utilization	lecture analysis of scenarios direct presentations in practice active forms of learning	30 hours	20 hours
M2 Training teacher as an educational expert	Didactic and pedagogical-psychological analysis of lessons Reflection and feedback Interpersonal communication Student evaluation during practice, evaluation criteria Cooperation, teamwork in school Action research in the classroom Didactic processing of innovations in the field, learning subject Teaching modernization with ICT Creation and the use of learning resources	training of capabilities in specific teaching examples / models /samples / situations creation and presentations of didactic demonstrations active forms of learning individual counselling	30 hours	20 hours

Tasks for distance learning:

To the video sample of the lesson conducted by the student during pedagogical practice, the teacher trainer will prepare and submit:

- written comments on the preparation of the student's lesson, on the pedagogical practice related to the educational process and the didactic adaptation of curriculum;
- written feedback to the student of the presented lesson.

Duration: min.18 months

Completion of the specialized education:

- the presentation of the mentoring capabilities of the teacher trainer in the pedagogical practice in front of supervisor (the attendance of supervisor on the observation of student teaching and giving feedback to the teacher trainer);
- written final paper in the range of 12 pages thematically oriented to reflection on one's own interventions provided by the student (the work is reviewed by 1 reviewer).

Profile of the guarantor:

- under the Law;
- proven expertise in the management of student's pedagogical practice, management of training teachers and/or schools and school facilities.

Lecturers' profile of the accredited programme:

- under the Law,
- can demonstrate expertise or competencies in the education of pedagogical employees in the area of mentoring, tutoring, supervision, and didactics of the field.

Data on material and technical support:

- technical equipment (cameras, data projectors, data repositories, laptops for teachers, etc.);

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- webspace for the data storage and experiences sharing;
 - teaching integrated environment (LMS, Moodle), other software equipment.

Conclusion

The educational specifics of professionals who work with people (including teachers of primary education), is that the preparation for the execution of their professional duties cannot be achieved merely by theoretical study. The professional component of their preparation is based on acquiring the skills, capabilities and competencies for dealing with real situations that can be achieved only by practical experience. However, the practical training procedure is not enough for a real understanding of the situation. And if this is only routine, it does not enable pupils to improve their own professional practices. This requires the reflection on practical experience at a certain qualitative level – the specific integration of learned theory and proven practice.

The fact is that the development and genuine transformation of professional thinking and student's acting is not possible without a substantial share of practice and its reflection. It places undergraduate studies of teaching in a new context and gives it a totally different dimension. Currently, from this point of view, it does not have sufficient qualitative level. This level rests not only in the fact that the university should provide more practical training, but also that this practical experience should be constantly accompanied by professionally guided reflection, gradually structured and supported according to its phases. It should also be specifically guided to hacking of rooted gestalt and encourage the students' need to retreat into new theories, to understand and to change. At the university, it should be done not only during the analysis of the conducted lesson, as it is today, but in the course of all didactics, different practices and special colloquia after the practice. However, it assumes at the same time that the university teachers who provide academic studies and trainee teachers must prepare differently for such reflection.

For the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, from the Manifesto of the Slovak Republic Government for the years 2016 – 2020, the task arises to design the National Programme of Education and Teaching development, that will cover objectives and aims of the ten terms of the academic studying in the Slovak Republic in the field of teaching and education (www.minedu.sk).

It is stated in the proposal that the teaching profession is difficult and has its own specifics. Its successful conduction puts many demands on the teacher's personality. Their fulfilment is not possible to ensure automatically only through university preparation. Therefore, not only should the difficulty and quality of undergraduate teacher training be increased, but also the requirements regarding candidate selection should be stricter before entrance to university. As an integral part of the entrance exam what should be tested is their pedagogical knowledge, general knowledge, study conditions, psychological, personal and other specific capabilities for teacher's work, as well as their motivation for the conduction of this profession. The content of education is balanced in the area of theory and practice at the university. It reflects the requirements for teacher training in accordance with their new role and strengthening of individualization in education and the teamwork cooperation of educational-specialist teams.

The material presents the efforts of educational policy-makers in Slovakia to ensure qualitative and reflective teaching practice through a developed network of faculties and university training schools with experienced practicing teachers with whom the university cooperates systematically and deliberately. The Manifesto of the Slovak Republic Government for the years 2016 – 2020 promises to support the establishment of laboratory schools: experimental schools with a specific curricular status and relationship to the university, which might create a space for the activities of teachers and students of the university and might serve as a laboratory of educational innovations created in close cooperation between school teachers and university teachers.

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