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Teaching and Research: Implications for Active Learning in Higher Education

ABSTRACT

The paper presents practical execution of a course *The Qualitative Research Methods* at the two-year master's programs 3+2 (MA) in pedagogy at the Faculty of Education of University of Białystok, conducted according to premises of research-based learning (RBL). The aim of *The Qualitative Research Methods* is to develop research competence of students in the area of designing, conducting and reporting qualitative research. During classes the students prepare team projects of qualitative research dealing with their everyday life. The paper presents the results of analysis of 161 projects of qualitative research done over three-year period (2017–2020). Methodological premises done by the students at the stage of research planning were reconstructed: 1) the topic of research; 2) the subject and the goals of research; 3) motivation of a subject choice; 4) research problems. The analysis allowed to establish that linking research with teaching enables students to gain knowledge of: 1) conducting scientific research; 2) the scientific field they study as well as the fields related to it; 3) team work (including one dealing with executing and presenting the scientific research); 4) themselves as researchers.

Keywords:

research-based learning, students, qualitative research methods

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INTRODUCTION

For years, the need has been stressed to prepare educators to do various research tasks: aiming to self-progress as well as progress of institutions they work for and processes that undergo there (Brinkman & van Rens, 1999; Dobber et al., 2012; van der Linden et al., 2015). It has been noted that combining research with teaching is essential (Brew & Boud, 1995). Hattie and Marsh (1996) argued that marrying teaching and research by enhancing the relationship between them is a desirable aim of universities. A numerous reasons can be pointed out that argue for the need of combining research and teaching, for instance, complexity of reality that requires new knowledge (Mitchell, 2009), ever increasing value of scientific knowledge for society (Drucker, 1969; Bell, 1975; Lyotard, 1997), changes in the nature of research and in the nature of teaching in higher education (Rowland, 1996). Every student's educator at university should be an active researcher. The nature of academic work is connecting the results of research with teaching students.

Shaping research competences among students is an important element of education programme at university (both BA and MA). Over the years the students of pedagogy at the Faculty of Education of University of Białystok have been prepared mainly in the field of application of quantitative research strategy. Since 2003, there are developed qualitative research skills as well. The new curriculum requires students to use research skills. Students have to conduct a number of small research projects (using both qualitative and quantitative strategies) aimed to prepare them to become a researcher. If pedagogues are expected to conduct research and to use the results of research in their practice, more knowledge about the research is required. Particularly the knowledge of what and why is researched is useful for the stimulation of growth of their research competences. The paper deals with the analysis of project undertaken by students in the course of *The Qualitative Research Methods* classes. The analysis allows establishing: 1) what research knowledge the students develop during the introductory course in research; 2) what kind of concepts regarding research the students develop during the introductory course in research.

RESEARCH-BASED LEARNING – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Research is a vital component of master education and should “play a key role in students' learning, their higher education experience, and the development of general skills” (Granjeiro, 2019, p. 553). Angela Brew made a distinction in academics' conceptions of research: (1) conceptions of research which are atomistic and

synthetic with an orientation towards external products and where the intention is to produce an outcome, (2) conceptions which are holistic and analytical with an orientation towards internal processes and where the intention is to understand (Brew, 2001; Brew, 2003). Angela Brew and David Boud proposed a common element shared by teaching and research – both are concerned with the act of learning though in different contexts. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the ways in which knowledge is generated and communicated. Those aspects of teaching which lead to learning and the learning which occurs through research provide the vital link (Brew & Boud, 1995, p. 261).

Research-based learning is a multifaceted concept that describes the new face of a learning strategy that links research and teaching. Practicing a good research-based learning should include four aspects: 1) the results of the study should have an impact on the curriculum, 2) methods of teaching and learning must be based on research, 3) learning should use research elements, 4) RBL should be able to develop a context of inclusive research (Blackmore & Fraser, 2003). Blackmore and Fraser (2003) have identified an overall framework for considering research-based learning, derived from the experience of academic staff. The framework consists of four elements:

1. Outcomes: including research outcomes in the curriculum (for example, modules designed around the research expertise of members of the staff).
2. Process: using research-process-based methods of teaching and learning (for example, problem-based learning).
3. Tools: learning to use the tools of research (for example, bibliographic searching, methods of data collection, qualitative analysis, etc.).
4. Context: developing an inclusive research context and culture (for example, the students assisting with the staff's research, student and staff research seminars, etc.) (Blackmore & Fraser, 2003, pp. 135–137).

Basically, research-based learning aims to create a learning process that leads to activity analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, and improve the ability of students and professors in terms of assimilation and application of knowledge.

THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS – CURRICULUM

At MA Pedagogy Department at the Faculty of Education of University of Białystok there is a methodological module consisting of three subjects: Methodology of

Social Research, *The Qualitative Research Methods*, and Methods of Quantitative Research with Elements of Statistics. Methodology of Social Research is taught at the first year, the first semester. It introduces students into general idea of research and the next two courses further broaden the students' knowledge. The Qualitative Research Method course is done during the first year, second semester, along with methods of quantitative research. Full time studies devote 25 hours (10 hours of lectures and 15 hours of workshops) and extramural studies cover the material in 13 hours (5 hours of lectures and 8 hours of workshops).

The Qualitative Research Methods curriculum is based on interaction between: (1) teachers and learners, (2) learners and learners, (3) learners and curriculum content. Curriculum is not only the transmission of concepts and skills, mostly it is a way of student's self-development. Curriculum is a general guide, or as Richards (2001, p. 2) mentioned – the bigger picture. The curriculum consists of three elements: (1) course planning, (2) materials/methods, and (3) course evaluation (Nunan, 1988, pp. 4–5). *The Qualitative Research Methods* course aims mainly at shaping students' identity as a researcher that includes professional competences, solid personal dispositions and situation related attributes that emerge through communicative interaction with researched (Usher, Bryant, & Johnston, 2001). Its goals are focused around a development of research skills among students in the area of designing, conducting and reporting qualitative research. An important premise of the course is preparing students for undertaking both individual and team professional work in the field of designing and executing qualitative research projects.

The course follows Uwe Flick's concept of qualitative research project (2007). According to his concept, the design of qualitative research is an interactive, dynamic and flexible process of undertaking research decisions. It cannot be taken as a scheme of repetitive actions (Flick, 2007). There is no just one guide for making research project due to their diversity; a number of applied paradigms and methods can be used (Stasik & Gendźwiłł, 2012). A project is a result of careful consideration, planning and decision-making at each stage of its construction. The students make their own methodological decision at various stages of research design, starting with the choice of subject and ending with presentation of the results in a report. The reports are the key element of completing the course.

During *The Qualitative Research Methods* course the teacher offers the students a general topic of research such as “everyday life of pedagogy students”. The teacher then guides them through the research process starting with the identification of a research idea to the presentation of results (research report). The research field, according to premises of research-based teaching, is related to the teacher's

research which guarantees enthusiasm and the depth of knowledge (Blackmore & Fraser, 2003, p. 135). To enhance students' engagement, a problem-based collaborative approach to teaching and learning was adopted. With this goal in mind the students are divided into 3–4 person research teams where they execute three main activities: *planning* – research design; *execution* – conducting a research, analysis and interpretation of empirical material; *effect* – reporting of research. Students “learn by exploring issues, by setting their own questions and finding ways to solve problems and evaluate outcomes in the same way as a researcher tackles a piece of work” (Blackmore & Fraser, 2003, p. 135). A student is involved into subject operation at each stage of a project. Their role as learner is described by three factors: “negotiator of learning content and modes of learning; development of learning strategies; accept responsibility of learning and learner autonomy” (Azarnoosh & Kargozari, 2018, p. 137).

The teacher fulfils divergent roles (Azarnoosh & Kargozari, 2018, p. 137). They facilitate and support students' research teams during executing particular tasks. At each stage of project work the teacher encourages learner's self-expression and autonomy, inspires to make conscious, autonomic research decisions. The teacher is also a negotiator of content and process in the process of subject choice and research perspective.

The stage of research planning starts with a choice process and research subject. Students, in the process of recognizing complexity of everyday life, suggest several topics and then decide on the one that is the most relevant for them. This independent choice of research subject serves to build positive beliefs regarding research and a positive attitude toward research. The teacher's task is to unleash learner's creativity, to inspire students, make them realise that an authentic involvement of a researcher and an interest in the research subject is the key component of qualitative research. The choice of research subjects in the framework of a wide-sketched area of everyday life of students is a dynamic process of mutual agreement on its meaning among team members. The students, when deciding on the subject, take into account their personal motivation and validity category as well as novelty of the research. They try to address the question raised by U. Flick (2007): Will the research bring about any fresh ideas? The final goal of the research is consulted with the whole workshop group because each research team researches something unique. Then, the students formulate preliminary goals and research problems, keeping in mind that they are still open and their subject range can still be adjusted in the research process (Flick, 2007). The most cognitively engaging for both the students and the teacher is a search for the right research perspective. Towards that goal the students get acquainted with the latest theories

and literature on the subject (on epistemological, theoretical and methodological level) that relates to the research field (Flick, 2007). The qualitative research is characterised with diversity of methods used that are placed in various theoretical and methodological contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 1997). For this reason, the students especially require a support from the teacher at the stage of selection of research method. The teacher consults them by sharing their knowledge and research experience. The key task of the teacher is to make the students aware that pedagogical qualitative research are very diverse, each method can relate to various theoretical premises and adopts different ways of interpretation of the empirical matter (Urbaniak-Zajac & Kos, 2013; Kubinowski, 2011, 2013, 2016). The goal is to develop flexibility of the students so they are able to adjust their research premises as well as similarly all research activities in the face of current cognitive situations that can emerge due to decision made in the course at different stages of gathering and analysing the empirical data (Patton, 1990).

The stage of research is preceded by a preparation process, i.e., preparing students for a “contact with a research field”. Students practice during classes (workshop) various ways of gathering data (for instance, they practice different types of qualitative interview, conducting participation observation, gathering visual data, etc.). These activities aim to make them aware that despite the flexibility of research procedures of qualitative research, the choice of particular research method is interrelated with familiarising with its rules. Students are also made sensitive to the meaning of language and to the analysis of concept categories.

At the data report stage the students make choices regarding, among others, arguing the need of research, a goal and a form of presentation, a presence of the author in the text, the content of report, and the way of communicating the results. The students learn to process data representation seen as various approaches and also learn to present the empirical data that synthesises the results of categorisation and analysis. In the research report, besides quotation of the researched people, the students also work on various forms of data representation like maps, networks, taxonomies, templates (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The above description of subject premises that there is no solid structure of classes; they are always a result of interaction, ever-changing series of planned learning experiences. A student is an autonomous subject researching a part of reality and simultaneously learning. Student’s life situation is linked with learning and research. It gives an opportunity for a great involvement in the research process. Teacher drawing on students’ professional experience decides what is the most productive for the students’ growth in any given situation. They support student at each stage of the project and point to ethical issues of qualitative research. Teach-

ing *The Qualitative Research Methods* inspires students to reflect on each stage of research project. It is a process of becoming a researcher who is ready to work on research project with another human (Szymczak, 2016).

The stages of classes described above point to conceptions of research (adopted by a teacher) as the holistic and analytical process where the intention is to understand, which Angela Brew called “journey conception” (Brew, 2001, p. 281). Content, issues and processes are integral to the researcher’s life and presented as a personal journey of discovery. The researcher grows or is transformed by this (Brew et al., 2016).

METHODOLOGY

We have analysed 161 student projects of qualitative research prepared in *The Qualitative Research Methods* class during the three-year period (in the academic years 2017/2018, 2018/2019, 2019/2020) at pedagogy course of two year masters’s programs 3+2 at the Faculty of Education of University of Białystok (both full-time studies and part-time). The goal of the research is to reconstruct the methodological premises adopted by students of pedagogy at the stage of *project planning* of qualitative research. The main research questions are as follows:

1. What aspects of everyday life are the objects of students’ research?
2. What goal do the students decide on designing research on everyday life?
3. What motivates students to decide on a given topic of research?
4. What research problems do students formulate in the quality research projects?

We used conventional content analysis method. This type of design is usually appropriate when existing theory or research literature on a phenomenon is limited (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Researchers avoid using preconceived categories (Kon-dracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002), instead allowing the categories and names for categories to flow from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279).

Before the research started we created *A Guide to Student Research Project Analysis*, presenting analytical categories referring to research problems. The research material was sequentially analysed by two researchers. We started data analysis process by first selecting and organising research projects. At the first stage we analysed the content of projects in the vertical (linear) dimension related to just one case and then we analysed comparatively all projects in a horizontal

dimension. In order to make the data more coherent we created templates (see: Miles & Huberman, 1994) which were chronological (the year of a project) and conceptual (aspects included in the data analysis guide). In the templates we included selected fragments of project content: research topics (research object); research goals; research problems, motives of research. Organised material was coded in a factual way (Charmaz, 2006) and each data pieces were assigned term labels. Assigned codes were agreed upon and modified by the researchers. The original codes were verified after intentional coding procedure in order to work out a proper coding system. The next stage was to categorise data that referred to particular data that could be singled out and which were significant segments of analysed material. The last stage of analysis was to prepare a synthesis and interpretation of the research results referring to research problems. In order to achieve that, we compared each data, we attempted to fill analytical categories with meaning, identify their properties and integrate them. During interpretation process of the qualitative data, we related collected material to the selected literature.

RESULTS

After analysing 161 team projects of qualitative research we were able to reconstruct their methodological premises that were put together by the students on the first stage of their projects: *stage of research planning*. The preliminary premises are: 1) research topic; 2) subject and goals of the research; 3) motivation for the choice of topic; 4) stated research problems. Students decide on research topic associated with some aspect of everyday life which interests them, and is cognitively and personally important. Motivation for choosing one is individual. The topics of the research reveal what intrigues the students—researchers, what they find particularly worth their effort. After analysis of the topics undertaken by students, we were able to identify five different areas of everyday life that are in the scope of their interest; 1) university education process (51 projects); 2) lifestyle and psychological wellbeing (42 projects); 3) existential and living problems (28 projects); 4) emotional and family life (24 projects); 5) professional activity (16 projects). In their chosen area, students deal with everyday life in relation to others, events that reoccur, placed in a space, in identified places (Sztompka, 2008). Students' goals refer to recognition, understanding and interpretation of widely understood everyday life. They try to grasp the fluidity and dynamic of everyday life processes.

EVERYDAY LIFE OF STUDENTS RELATED TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION PROCESS

Everyday life of students related to university education process is the most popular topic (51 projects). In this particular area the students are interested in (1) experience of didactic process in its various aspects, for instance, education methods, ways and methods of work, didactic tools; (2) particular didactic units like lectures, workshops, diploma seminars, vocational training paths. The goal of research is to reconstruct the meanings which students give to the didactic process which constitutes a part of students' education concept at university (Jendza, 2019). Typical examples of research in this area are as follows: *What are the experiences of pedagogy students related to class preparation; participating in lectures; writing a MA thesis; participating in vocational training?* The research subject includes various aspects to experience education process like strategies and difficulties in learning; mass-media as a helpful tool in the study process; e-learning. A significant part of research projects deals with the exam-taking. In this particular area the research inquiries are: *What emotions do students experience during the exam session? What does the everyday life of students look like during the exam session? How do the students prepare to exams? What do students experience during the defence of their thesis?* Students also try to recognise a phenomenon of cheating during the exams.

Goals set by students refer to recognition and understanding of relation between various subjects that exist in the university structure: students, lecturers, counsellors of diploma papers, administration. They call attention to problems in relations such as: *Abuse from the teachers; Discrimination of foreign students by Polish students; Competition process among students.* There are also topics that turn to positive aspects of interrelation like: *Friendships formed during studies; Integration and cooperation process in the students environment.*

A popular topic is also that of the meanings that students associate with various styles of didactic work of university. Students look into real psychological and pedagogical competencies of their professors and their own expectations in that matter. They point to the categories such as authenticity, involvement, individual approach and respect to students that are essential components of humanistic paradigm in university teaching (Sajdak-Burska, 2017, 2018). The students also research into organizational aspects of education process, i.e., mechanics of the dean office, schedule planning, and university infrastructure. They point to inadequate class schedule that does not meet their needs, and they name problems connected with this, i.e., waiting for lectures as well as time-managing between lectures. They analyse problems that are connected with their studies and how they are organised such as: enrolling for specific class, specialisations; scientific and social scholarships; the dean's leave.

Students research issues of symbolic abuse and its forms (Pryszmont-Ciesielska, 2010). They also analyse various choices they undertake while studying such as: type of studies, specialisation, particular lectures or their diploma counsellor. The goals of research focus around recognition of particular mechanics of life in a university environment of various student groups such as: those following two or more types of studies, Individual Curriculum Course, male students at pedagogic faculty, homosexual students, 50+ students or those participating in Erasmus. Analysis of research project shows that students are equally interested in academic culture and the quality of university (Sułkowski, 2014, 2018). They focus their research on everyday life of students related to education process and structure and organisation of work system which are important components of university education (Bauman, 2011).

LIFESTYLE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF STUDENTS

The next identifiable field of everyday life is related to lifestyle and psychological wellbeing of students (42 projects). The research aims to identify reactions, emotions, behaviours and habits related to widely understood lifestyle (Ponczek & Olszowy, 2012; Siciński, 2002). Research looks into individual everyday choices of students that make up their lifestyle: eating habits, relaxing, stimulants used, and physical activity. The students ask the following questions: *What are the eating habits of students? What is overall experience of students' physical activity? What actions do students take as to their psychological and physical condition?* Students are also interested in their healthy lifestyle, they can identify their health habits and behaviours (Romanowska-Tołłoczko, 2011) relating to: regular physical exercise, eating, amount of sleep, avoiding stimulants and the way they cope with stress. The students also researched destructive behaviours impacting health among them: *Use of alcohol from a perspective of pedagogy students' experience; Problem of nicotine addiction among pedagogy students; Stimulants during an exam session from the perspective of pedagogy students.*

Analysis of projects shows that the students are interested to learn the lifestyle as a set of everyday life activities (acting, life activity) characteristic to a student group (Siciński, 2002). They try to identify a particular style of life of students that sets them apart from others. Researching the lifestyle, the students try to answer the following questions: *What do the students like and what are their interests? What is their inspiration? How do they spend free time? Who do they spend time with? Where do they relax?* The research also refers to the interest and passions of students like: *Experience of passion of pedagogy students; "The one who reads does not err" – reading experience of pedagogy students; Process of interest devel-*

opment of students; *Creative and extraordinary hobbies of pedagogy students*; *Travel in pedagogy students life*; *Video games as a form of free time activities of pedagogy students*.

An important aspect of students' analysis is their social life. They identify particular form of social life and meeting places. They are interested in events important for their academic life such as: *Juwenalia*; *Faculty Day*; *Science and Art Festival*. Analysis shows that virtual world is an important aspect of their social life. They deal with phenomena such as, for instance, *Students life in social media*; *The role of Facebook in social life of pedagogy students*; *Communication between students via various Internet applications such as Twitter, Messenger, Skype, etc.* The students learn categories of lifestyle that relate to their bodies, e.g., tattoo culture, body care, beauty care, or body modification. They are also interested in various aspects of their image control, e.g., students' dress code, creating their image of 'I' on social media.

Students' lifestyle is researched in a context of their emotional states and psychological health (15 projects). Research topics cover psychological wellbeing defined as an effect of cognitive and emotional evaluation of one's own life which includes high level of life fulfilment and satisfaction (Diener, 2000; Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2008; Kasperek-Golimowska, 2012; Niškiewicz, 2016). Research projects deal with problems of experiencing happiness by students and its sources in particular. Students research various elements of happiness which researchers of this phenomena direct attention to, such as: experiencing positive emotions, participating in activities, a quality of interpersonal relations, a sense of meaning (Seligman, 2011; Czapiński, 2017). The projects also deal with phenomena that hinder experiencing of psychological wellbeing, i.e., stress in everyday life of pedagogy students. Students bring up problems such as: *What are the sources of experiencing stress? In what types of everyday life do students experience stress? What are psycho-physical symptoms of stress? What are the effects of prolonged stress experienced by students in various areas of everyday life? In what way do the students cope with stress?* Stress is identified by the students in a context of physiological changes, various psychological reactions and changes at the subjective level (emotional) (Strycharczyk & Clough, 2017).

LIVING END EXISTENTIAL PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS

The next identified area of students' research relates to their living and existential problems (28 projects). Research topics refer to a dimension of existential search, recognising and creating one's own personality (Gara, 2017). Students research spiritual and religious life, look into process of becoming a human, and teacher.

They also identify students' living condition related with meeting their material needs. The goals of the research refer, among others, to identifying and understanding of such dynamic processes as standing on their own feet, adapting to new conditions. Then the students create questions as follows: *How do the students of the first year become independent and its process? What is independence from a perspective of students' experience who study outside their hometown? What are experiences of students concerned with moving away for the duration of studies (from a rural to urban environment)? What are the experiences of students who changed from full-time studies to part-time?*

Research also covers widely understood living situation. Topics include financial situation, sources of living, spending money (on-line shopping). Students try to answer following questions: *What are students' experiences related to spending money? How important to a student are students' discounts in their academic life?* Research also analyses accommodation of students, i.e., everyday life in a dormitory, rented flat, family house. Students are interested in relations with cohabitants. They come up with topics presenting everyday life difficulties like long-distance commuting to university every day.

The students deal with existential and living problems related to current social issues. Research project conducted beginning in March 2020 refers to problems connected with the spread of COVID-19 in Poland and around the world. They are interested in problems related to influence of social quarantine on everyday life such as restriction in movement, meeting other people. The goal of the research is to recognise the process of changes in students' life during quarantine in various areas of life: private, educational, and professional. They ask questions relating to: *Experiences of pedagogy students connected with spending time during coronavirus pandemic; Physical activity during social quarantine from a perspective of pedagogy students' experience; Long-distance partnership from a perspective of pedagogy students; Students' experiences connected with online teaching conducted by the Faculty of Education during a break caused by COVID-19; E-learning at the Faculty of Education during social quarantine from a perspective of pedagogy students.* They bring attention to students' frame of mind during coronavirus pandemic and its psychological and social consequences. They point to a phenomenon of chronic stress during pandemic in various areas of everyday life. Research problems focus around problems of losing freedom, separation from the closed ones, or fear of being infected. Through their research the students realise that "the Covid-19 pandemic has a very significant impact on social and economic life by deeply transforming the conditions of functioning of people and organizations" (Sułkowski, 2020, p. 2). Analysis of projects show that students focus around:

progress and self-creation, presence versus possibility, reality versus perfection of being a student (Gara, 2017).

EMOTIONAL AND FAMILY LIFE OF STUDENTS

The analysis of project shows that an important dimension of research of everyday life of students is emotional and family life (24 projects). Students looked in to various events that mark each stage of family life, from emotional relationship to establishing a family. The students' research focuses on identifying of various ways of searching for the right person to live together, e.g., dating portals on the Internet. An important area of research is a phenomenon of living in a partnership. Student endeavour to answer the following research questions: *What does everyday life of students living with a partner look like? What is everyday life of married women?* They are interested in emotional life, in intimacy. Intimacy is perceived as a value in their research that keeps the relation together, give both partners psychological satisfaction and the essence of friendship and solid sexual connection (Giddens, 2006, p. 51). The students also research the process of preparation for a wedding during their studies.

A solid number of projects are related to maternity and paternity during studies (11 projects). The analysis of research on maternity shows that students ascribe to it a certain solid value in the context of social changes (Gawlina, 2003). Students research process of becoming and being a mother that includes both giving birth and raising the baby, and pregnancy as well (Lesińska-Sawicka, 2008). Like in other research projects related to this area, the maternity is perceived from the perspective of a biography of individual mothers (Pryszmont-Ciesielska, 2011; Sobolewska-Popko, 2016). They aim to learn how pregnant students cope with education and the environment. They try to understand the possibility of combining the role of a student with a role of a mother. They try to understand if there is a conflict or synergy (Lachowska, 2012). There are following research question here: *How do the students combine maternity with the education process? What kind of difficulties does combining of maternity with the education process create? What kind of support do the studying mothers receive?* Students also deal with the phenomenon of single mothers during studies. Being a mother is for the students related mainly with care and raising a child. They analyse the role of a mother from a perspective of self-reliance, participation or help of other people in this process (Gajtkowska, 2014). Other aspects of family life that students turn their attention to are, for example, family bonds, trans-generation bonds, and conflicts in family. The analysis shows that the family as a way of everyday life and as a social institution is highly valued by the students.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY OF STUDENTS

The research of the students also looks into professional activity (16 projects). The goals of the research focus around identifying professional activity in regard to its development: looking for work, adaptation at work, professional awareness and relative stability at work (Czarnecki, 2006). The research deals with hopes for the professional vision, for example, *Hopes of pedagogy students regarding their future employment*. The research focuses on creation of a future employee like *Social media profile and a future job from a perspective of pedagogy student experience*. The research looks into everyday life of students who work professionally in line with their academic education (e.g., teacher, pedagogue, counsellor, animator, guardian), and those who do other jobs (e.g., shop assistant, hostess). Research focuses around professional tasks, conditions and requirements of an employer. The students are interested in phenomena such as: (1) applying pedagogic theory in a real job experience; (2) interpersonal relations at work; (3) comparison of job experiences according to their gender and study mode; (4) mobbing and nepotism at work; (5) frustration and professional burnout. The students tend to pick up a topic that is related to application of education process to their professional work, being at the same time a student and an employee. Analysis show that the students indicate that there is a conflict between the two roles or facilitation phenomena (Lachowska, 2012a). The goal of the research is to learn about the process of reaching equilibrium between professional and personal life. This equilibrium is related to being aware of different requirements for investing time and energy of a given person, ability to make choices and select values (Clutterbuck, 2005; Tomaszewska-Lipiec, 2014).

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the students' research knowledge and projects' premises (topic, research goal, and motives for a given choice of topic) done at MA studies. The course, conceived as a process of planning and implementing own research in a qualitative research strategy, is oriented to the individual needs and capabilities of the learner. The students define research problems from their own experience. They design what they want to do and how they want to do it. In this concept, there is a central role of learners in the learning process in which their affective, cognitive, and research needs are taken into consideration. That is learner-centred process, which requires analysis particularly for specific purposes, individualization and learner autonomy, and ability to working in the group (Azarnoosh & Kargozari, 2018).

The Qualitative Research Methods is conducted based on premises of research-based teaching and gives the students a possibility to build their own knowledge about a structure and stages of qualitative research including: 1) gathering empirical data, 2) data access, 3) interpretation of results, 4) preparing a research report (Malewski, 2017, p. 111). Students learn research methods and develop research ability in a real research practise by doing their own research projects and self-directed work. Research helps students to explore aspects of their own everyday live. By gathering empirical data the students participate in the worlds of life that they explore and experience their specifics. Then by reflecting over *praxis* they are able to have “insight into ontology of sub-worlds explored and to reconstruct hierarchy of collectively accepted senses and meanings” (Malewski, 2017, p. 112). It allows to understand the world of explored and oneself. Students as researchers interpret in the light of accepted scientific theories previously identified natural disposition of researched people. They move from the common data to its interpretation in the light of theory. That results in a research report (Malewski, 2017). Students have an opportunity to realise that the *praxis* of qualitative research resembles a maze (Smolińska-Theiss & Theiss, 2010) and to negotiate it there is required knowledge and a number of decisions that influence the end result of research.

During research students gain knowledge both from their own area of science and from other fields that are required to reach the research goal. They learn how to carefully select theoretical premises for a set goal of research and to use them to interpret the results. Formulating research problems and searching for way to solve them and evaluating outcomes allow students “to identify where their knowledge needs to be enhanced [...] and to understand that knowledge is constantly developing” (Blackmore & Fraser, 2003, p. 135). This type of approach to knowledge is necessary to conduct a research and to complete professional tasks. Positive personal experiences with an object of research strengthen the ability of students to think as researchers.

Students learn to generate knowledge and communicate the outcome of their research in a group. Working in small research teams allows them to share their knowledge and experience (successes and failures or doubts) inside the group and between groups. Teamwork during preparation of a project allows for tuning cooperation, sharing the tasks and open exchange of ideas that is necessary in qualitative research. “The groups had the opportunity to choose the subjects to be addressed and to study them in a participatory, integrative, and engaged way. Importantly, all of the students were able to develop all of the stages of a research project, as well as to properly evaluate the results [...]” (Granjeiro 2019, p. 555).

Most of the time that is ascribed for the research is dedicated for cooperation with other research team members. A student can be more active by sharing their own experience and playing various roles in a group. “The students had the opportunity to acquire leadership attributes and to work in teams as effective researchers and organisers” (Granjeiro, 2019, p. 555). Research is a good way for students to combine their growth as a person with their intellectual interests. “Students experience team work and internalise the mechanics of a team work and thus they build and multiply resources based on managing common good” (Bochno, 2019, p. 227).

In conclusion, in the process of educating teachers at university it is important to conduct research-based learning and to develop this approach in such a way to most fully support students’ competences. Linking research and teaching will benefit one another in a number of ways (Blackmore & Fraser, 2003, p. 141). As the results show, student had to develop: (1) sufficient research knowledge, (2) positive beliefs regarding research, (3) a positive attitude towards research, (4) self knowledge, (5) interdisciplinary knowledge on the researched phenomena, (6) ability to play diversified roles in a group, (7) understanding of science through the development of research project, (8) understanding of the role of research in their future work.

After this research, we saw some limitation of this study. It is important to recognise the students’ point of view on (1) their research experience and their understanding of the research process, (2) what possibilities and obstacles they see in using the qualitative research in their future professional work, and (3) connection between research output and their own experience.

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