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Self-reflection as a phenomenon in regards to the professional competencies development of a teacher of specialized subjects

Introduction

The school reform in Slovakia, which reflects the needs of current market economy and trends of education in the states of European Union, has rapidly influenced not only demands on curricular transformation of educational system, or development and improvement of the key competencies, but demands on the quality of work of a teacher, his competencies and his pre-gradual, post gradual preparation and permanent lifelong education and professionalizing the teachers have been influenced as well.

The effort to classify demands which allow you to teach as well as the competencies and capabilities of teaching are not latter phenomenon. The article deals with two interconnected fields, which are nowadays a current issue within the pedagogical theory. It refers to the self reflexion of a teacher's work and his competencies as well.

In our opinion, self-reflection of a work of the teacher of specific subjects is a field which allows him to improve himself.

1. Demands on a teacher in the context of changes of the whole society

There has been an effort to classify the most accurate and necessary competencies and capabilities of a teacher, which should predominantly outline his professionalism in the theory of a teacher's profession- pedeutology – for more than two decades.

When framing the teacher's competencies profiles within the European area, we proceed from the understanding of a teacher as an autonomous subject as well as from demands of the educational society and from more and more intensive autonomy of schools, the orientation to social and cultural competencies, to changing role of a teacher and the needs of evaluative methods which can guarantee unprejudiced evaluation of teacher's performance etc.

According to the European Commission (2002) the division of teacher's competencies was suggested as follows:

- competencies concerned with educational process,
- competencies concerned with results of teaching.

Theoretical works dealing with the demands on teachers, prerequisites as well as conditions of their development often offer a lot of various names for individual parts of their performance (*key competencies, capabilities, but also qualification etc.*).

Among very many authors who deal with the issue of competencies of a teacher and their categories, we may mention e.g. V. Spilkova [in: Prucha 2002], who suggests the structure of competencies reflecting phases of gaining and developing them in the process of preparation for the profession and in its educational practice as follows:

- **proficient- subjective:** to master the content of teaching and similar subjects,
- **psycho-didactic:** to create positive conditions for teaching; to motivate students to learning, studying; to activate and develop their abilities, key competencies: informative, teaching, cognitive, communicative, interpersonal and personal; to create positive social, emotional and working atmosphere; to control the process of teaching students and to adapt it individually according to time, speed, depth, limit of help and educational styles as well; to use optimal methods, organization forms and substantial forms of education,
- **communicative:** ability to communicate effectively with students, colleagues, supervisors, parents, social partners,
- **diagnostical:** validly, reliably, fairly and impartially evaluate educative performance of students; to find out their attitude to studying, school, life, as well as their problems,
- **plan a organizative:** efektively plan and projekt education, create and maintain orderand system in teaching,
- **advisory and consultative:** to advise students when solving problems, not just problems concerned to studies,
- **self reflexive:** to evaluate their own pedagogical work with the aim to improve next activities.

From the above mentioned it is obvious that the system of competencies is open and every competency or ability is interfered with other ones as well as influenced by them and therefore it is very difficult to classify their unambiguous category.

2. Survey focused on professional competencies of teachers of specialized subject

This section of the article aims to summarize partial results, which we gathered through the survey focused on the use of professional competencies of teachers of specialized subjects at chosen high schools of the region of Banská Bystrica.

We based the survey on the proposed standard of professional competencies of teachers of specialized subjects.

Subject of the survey

The subject of the survey is the monitoring of the current condition of teachers' activities in the school environment and analysis of the chosen professional competencies.

The goal of the survey

The goal of the survey was to find out the current state of the chosen professional competencies of teachers of specialized subjects on high schools, as well as the use of real methods of self-reflection within and out of the process of education.

Tasks of the survey

- Preparation of the questionnaire for the purpose of the survey based on the specification of the mentioned standard;
- Choice of the self-reflexive competencies;
- Qualitatively and quantitatively evaluate the results of the survey.

Identification of the deck of respondents

We have carried out the survey at the beginning of the November 2011 on the sample of forty-five teachers of specialized subjects of SVS in the chosen cities of the Slovak Republic. In the future, we are planning to carry out the survey on the sample of more respondents including the respondents outside of the Slovak Republic and compare the results.

Table 1

Number of respondents included in the survey

School	Sample
SVS 1	12
SVS 2	10
SVS 3	8
SVS 4	5
SVS 5	10
Together Σ	45

Respondents aggregate represents 45 teachers of specialized subjects.

3. Partial results of the survey

In this section of the article we describe our desired findings, as for instance why it was needed and how were particular information of the survey gathered

and processed. For the demonstration and for the limited number of pages we will only mention statistical interpretation of partial results of the survey.

The survey and the questionnaire itself were divided into several parts. Individual parts of the questionnaire were focused on these competencies:

- A1** Overview of the evaluation of competencies focused on the tuition A.
- A2** Overview of the evaluation of competencies focused on the tuition B.
- A3** Overview of the evaluation of competencies focused on the self-development of the teacher A.
- A4** Overview of the evaluation of competencies focused on the self-development of the teacher B.

A1A2 Overview of the evaluation of competencies focused on the tuition A

In the pre-gradual preparation of teachers it is vital to develop mainly competencies focused on the process of tuition (items 7-11). Of the allowed particular competencies, specialized knowledge and skills from the studied fields and the knowledge of the basic pedagogical documentation were weighed as the above average. The main weaknesses occurred in respect to the evaluation of designing and planning of the tuition in the compliance with the Standard of high school specialized tuition and development of the key competencies of teachers.

Table 2

Overview of the evaluation of competencies focused on tuition

# of item	Capabilities – competencies	Excellent	Very good	Good	Inadequate	Summary
7	I have knowledge, skills in the graduated field	25	14	6	0	45
8	I am aware of the pedagogical documentation	10	12	12	11	45
9	I know how to plan and organize tuition	17	9	12	7	45
10	I know steps of didactical analysis of the studying material	9	9	15	12	45
11	I know methods for supporting an active learning	3	12	15	15	45

The most common in the evaluation of monitored competencies were evaluations with *Excellent* and *Very good*. Respondents felt the main weaknesses regarding the knowledge of steps of didactical analysis of the studying material

and its realization. Relatively similar were results of methods for supporting an active learning of students.

A3 Overview of the evaluation of competencies focused on the self-development of the teacher A

In the questionnaire we were monitoring also the area of competencies oriented on the self-development of the teacher. Of the evaluated items 12 to 16, the most positively evaluated by respondents were knowledge of functions of the teacher of specialized subjects, teacher's vocation and the use of information and communication technologies within the self-development.

Table 3

Overview of the evaluation of competencies focused on the self-development of the teacher A

# of item	Capabilities – competencies	Excellent	Very good	Good	Inadequate	Summary
12	I use information and communication technologies for the self-development	15	14	10	6	45
13	I use foreign language as a self-development tool	0	5	10	30	45
14	I know the role and purpose of the teacher's profession	17	9	12	7	45
15	I know functions of the teacher of specialized subjects	9	13	19	3	45

Conclusion

Creating character of a teacher is a very complicated, long-lasting process influenced and conditioned by many objective and subjective factors. Current period of rapid changes, either in respect to the national or international context, requires a high level of responsibility, activity, creativity, permanent education, evaluation of teaching and many other attributes of professional competencies.

It is necessary to update and renew the teachers' preparation, methods and educational supply. Teachers should implement self-reflection, all available substantial techniques and knowledge to their work so they can make the educational process more attractive.

The process of transformation of our school system interferes in all fields of the section. In this process we should pay some attention to teacher, because not even the most elaborated programmes of education could be realized without a creative effort of teachers. The complexities of educational process, but especially also new and advanced demands of the society constantly increase new

requirements on the profession of a teacher. In that sense more or less known demands connected with the teacher's work are re-evaluated and created. This article classifies two coexisting fields, which are present within the pedagogical theory nowadays. It is self-reflection in respect to the teacher's work and his competencies.

We share the opinion that self-reflection of a teacher is the field which helps them to improve and it is also a prevention against the burn-out syndrome. The most crucial is a fact that regular and informal self-reflection improves the quality of educational process and its results as well.

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Abstract

This article aims to outline current demands in regard to the professional competencies of a teacher within national and international context. In addition, we would like to point out differences in attitudes concerning their categorization. Self reflexion is a very important part of teacher's development because it helps them to improve their professional competencies. We were interested in evaluation of their preparation in order to manage the demands of pedagogical practice by applying their competencies. We have done the survey based on the professional standard. Its results are presented in the text as well as with enclosed charts.

Key words: Selfreflection, Teacher of specific subjects, Profesional competencies, Competencies.

Autorefleksja nad rozwojem kompetencji zawodowych nauczycieli przedmiotów specjalistycznych

Streszczenie

W artykule poruszana jest problematyka niezbędnych aktualnie kompetencji zawodowych nauczyciela w kontekście wymagań krajowych i zagranicznych. Ponadto zwracamy uwagę na różnice występujące w podstawach ich kategoryzacji na Słowacji i w Europie. Refleksja jest bardzo ważną częścią rozwoju nauczyciela, ponieważ pomaga mu doskonalić swoje kompetencje zawodowe. W opracowaniu przedstawione zostały wyniki badań ankietowych mających na celu określenie przygotowanie nauczycieli do realizacji postawionych przed nimi zadań zawodowych.

Słowa kluczowe: autorefleksja, nauczyciel przedmiotów specjalistycznych, kompetencje, kompetencje zawodowe.