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The attitudes of educators participating at undergraduate practical training for teachers to their further education

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Abstract

The paper presents the results of an empirical investigation focused on pedagogues' attitudes to their further education. The results point out to several bottlenecks in the professional training of pedagogues. The weakest of their professional preparedness are knowledge of continuity of the practice to other practices and theoretical subjects and knowledge of modern methods of leadership and modern instructive methods. These findings will be incorporated into the design of innovations.

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1. Introduction

The current form of undergraduate teacher training focuses on only on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge but also on the development of practical competencies and above all on the integration of theoretical and practical disciplines. Prospective teachers are trained not only by the experts on the individual subjects at universities but also by teachers at primary and secondary schools who work as outside collaborators of the university (faculty teachers). Their task is to guide student teachers when they gain practical experience and help them to consolidate their teaching skills through common reflections on their teaching. Obviously, the role of faculty teachers in undergraduate practical teacher training is vital. Data obtained through various surveys on samples of students (Juklová, Haviger, 2011) showed that students often completely separate theoretical and practical knowledge, preferring the practical part and rejecting the theory. Nevertheless, the effort to provide efficient professional preparation must necessarily be connected with the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge during the undergraduate teacher training. Without theoretical knowledge, the student has to rely solely on his/her experience. On the other hand, s/he needs practical experience in order to be able to apply theory in practice. This is why teacher training currently relies on various reflective models of undergraduate teacher training (e.g. Korthagen et al., 2011,

Pišová, 2005, Pišová a Duschinská, 2011, Brücknerová, 2014). Successful realization of these models depends on certain conditions, the most important one being the professional readiness of the educators of future teachers.

2. Research objectives

The purpose of our research survey was to describe the **professional readiness to realize undergraduate practical teacher training** in pedagogues participating at practical teacher training provided by the University of Hradec Králové. This general objective comprised several specific objectives:

1. Describe the **current state of awareness** of pedagogues participating at the management of undergraduate practical teacher training.
2. Describe the **current state of methodical abilities** of pedagogues participating at the management of undergraduate practical teacher training.
3. Describe the **current state of further education** of pedagogues participating at the management of undergraduate practical teacher training.
4. Describe the **current state of support and needs in the area of education** of pedagogues participating at the management of undergraduate practical teacher training.
5. Identify the **statistically significant differences in professional readiness** of pedagogues in dependence on **age, the amount of practical experience and workplace**.
6. Use the analysis of the above described areas to formulate conclusions concerning the current state of personnel readiness to realize innovations in the area of undergraduate practical training in pedagogues participating at its management and propose recommendations for the employers of these educators.

3. Method and research sample

We opted for a quantitative research. The data was obtained using an on-line questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised 33 items in the form of self-evaluation scales of the Likert type. The answers were given on a five point scale. The obtained data was analysed using the methods of descriptive and verification statistics in the application SPSS.

The research sample comprised 44 pedagogues, 86,4 % were women (N=38) and 13,6 % were men (N=6). The average age was 44 years; the youngest pedagogue was aged 28 and the eldest one 60 years. 62 % (N=27) pedagogues are outside collaborators of the Faculty of Education and 38 % (N=17) were internal employees of the faculty. The length of their experience ranges from one year to 22 years. 24,4 % (N=11) pedagogues have 1-3 years' experience, 36,6 % (N=15) pedagogues have 4-10 years' experience, 17,1 % (N=8) have 11-15 years' experience and 22 % (N=10) pedagogues have 16 years' experience or more.

4. Results

The study of professional literature (Pišová, 2005, Pišová, Duschinská, 2011) makes it evident that important elements of professional readiness are awareness, professional knowledge and skills, methodological abilities, further education, engagement and the existence of support. The following sections analyse the answers of pedagogues in our research sample from the perspective of these indicators.

4.1 Current state of the pedagogues' awareness

An important part of professional readiness is the **access to information**. Our research survey focused on the following criteria: the awareness of the aims and outputs of practical training, the awareness of organization matters of practical training, the awareness of the connection of practical training with other practical trainings, the awareness of the connection of practical training with theoretical courses and the awareness of problems and needs of students. The table below presents the results based on the statements of pedagogues in our research sample.

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