

Reflection at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Vilnius College

Perfection, improvement of learning (teaching), understanding the context they work in, and importance of his/her work are very important issues for a teacher. Since teachers care about the young citizens, the opportunities life brings to them, socialization and experience of children at that given moment, they can never avoid value-related issues. Facing the necessity to solve the emerging dilemmas, model possible conflicts, and look for the ways of their settlement, they always encounter the must to make professional decisions. Professionals of the rapidly changing new age need to have flexible attitudes and firm determination to keep on improving, therefore the importance of reflection is high.

Reflexive teaching helps to maintain and improve professional experience. Reflexive process is the basis for constructive professional improvement that renders efficiency to one's goals and influences. Reflexive teaching brings satisfaction to teachers as personalities and constantly improves the quality of teaching. Since reflexive teaching is evidence-based, it helps students, beginner teachers and experienced professionals to strive for operational benchmarks and necessary competencies, and constitutes an inherent part of professional activities. Reflexive teaching pays particular attention to educational goals, values and fundamentals of social education.

Future teachers speak of these dilemmas more often than experienced pedagogues. We could suppose that older teachers lean on their professional perception and experience. For beginner teachers, pedagogical perception could help develop specific practical teaching skills. Reflection enables the teachers, who have just acquired professional qualification, to consciously strive for better understanding, improve their skills and become more and more professional. The time requires alteration of roles of and inter-relations between teachers and students; therefore reflexive teachers and students understand that this requires much time and effort.

Reflexive activities are more valuable, provided that they are carried out together with practicing teachers, traineeship tutors and colleague students.

Two difficulties are usually faced in practice: experienced teachers find handling a class easy and natural and have had entered into relations with students at the beginning of the academic year already, meanwhile trainees must find out certain rules, orders of the class, and reflection with the teacher and traineeship tutor creates conditions for transfer from teaching to learning, which should be life-long. Trainees must be regularly encouraged and induced to critically analyse their activities based on search and experimenting. Our goal is to make trainees reflexive specialists, who assume responsibility for their own improvement.

Students note that the most often dilemmas are as follows: organise pupils as personalities, develop cooperation and socialization skills, induce inner motivation of

students considering their specific interests, strive for quality and not quantity in the in-school work, comprehend specific situation and reflect it.

Students, who undergo their traineeships, write respective reports that reflect acquired professional competencies, professional experience, observations and their reflections, and cognition of the child. Conclusions are made on what has been achieved and how, as well as on what fields need to be improved, what questions will be provided to lecturers of pedagogy, psychology and other disciplines, how has the trainee managed to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, why certain difficulties have arisen, how were they analysed and eliminated.

During their classes, lecturers present certain materials for the purpose of illustrating through inclusion of personal experience of students, asking them to think about and describe, why is one or another topic relevant for them, what problems do they see and could solve, and how could that be done by invoking theory.

At the end of each course, students evaluate its benefit for their personal experience, their involvement in the process of studies, provide comments and suggestions on what, how and why certain things should be changed. Evaluation covers both, subject-related material and communication of the lecturer with students, as well as the general atmosphere dominating during classes and practical work, communication and cooperation opportunities, and state of mind.

Materials of the project “Teachers In Practice and Process” also induced participants of the project for new reflections: look at the content of teaching from a different angle (how am I teaching in addition to what am I teaching), and this has given rise to new questions: what can teaching activities and processes, group-formation form be when striving for teaching differentiation, since every group is heterogeneous, e.g. from the aspect of the teaching/learning style. We suppose that it is quite possible to presume that students pertaining to different teaching/learning styles comprehend the content of learning differently.

It is rather difficult for find (or formulate) a task during an active class that would not be too easy (and would not cause boredom) or too complex, which causes excitement and anxiety. Moreover, how should one choose tasks, so that they correspond different learning styles? Or shouldn't it be done at all, should the lecturer just allot some time to identify one's learning style and induce students to do the work in the way most acceptable to each student, so that the best result is achieved at the least cost?

We suppose that, in the future, at the end of classes, we are going to ask more often, why do students find one or another way of learning or a task beneficial (or interesting), what analogous tasks would they formulate for their pupils and what activities would they promote more often.

Would it be more relevant to observe the process of execution of a practical task more often and analyse it individually with a student? This would give rise to the question: am I able to model and manage the behaviour of my students?