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REFLECTION AND SELF-REFLECTION, COMPONENTS OF INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract. Professional development for teachers, essential to successfully implementing the educational process, is intimately related to the quality of education. Professional growth includes various elements, including academic and educational training, enhancing instructional strategies, increasing emotional intelligence and managing emotions, growth of social and communication abilities, implementation of innovation in education, reflection and self-reflection, and establishing communities and networks for professionals. This paper focuses on reflection, and self-reflection as significant characteristics of teacher's professional competence.

In the paper, I tried to answer several crucial questions related to the existence of differences between these two concepts; their meaning and role; how they are implemented in the education of future teachers; and the benefits of their application.

Key words: students, empowerment, competencies, self-evaluation, professional development

Introduction

We live in a dynamic world, one characterized by constant changes across various sectors. Education is a crucial area for fostering successful social development. Like other aspects of human life, education involves a continuous search for answers to numerous questions, and their constructive solutions can lead to its improvement. A key question that emerges is the question about teacher professional development. This question is asked from the start of the preparation for a specific profession.

When we refer to professional development, we are talking about an ongoing process of enhancing an individual's existing skills and competencies, but also at the same time, acquiring new competencies. This involves improving, expanding, and deepening the knowledge and expertise relevant to their profession and field of work. The aim is to enhance the individual's abilities and competencies, enabling them to stay current with existing trends as well as to prepare for future developments and practices within their area of expertise.

Strengthening teacher competencies is a key goal in the educational sphere. This aim not only enhances the quality of teaching but also improves the overall quality of life within a specific social community. Achieving this goal requires an investment in the continuous professional development of teachers.

The continuous process of professional teacher development can be achieved through various methods, including attending certified training courses, participating in workshops, engaging in mentoring programs, taking part in project activities, pursuing master's programs and specializations, networking with other professionals, etc.

Participation in various forms of professional development enables teachers to stay current with contemporary trends in both educational and social spheres. This involvement introduces teachers to the latest innovations in technology and emerging digital resources, providing valuable insights into how these tools can be effectively integrated into the classroom. It also provides teachers with the knowledge needed to implement new approaches, strategies, and methods that are specifically designed to address the unique needs of their students.

In addition, professional development promotes the cultivation of emotional intelligence, helping teachers effectively manage their own emotions and those of others as they face stress, conflicts, and challenges. It enhances their communication skills and encourages a culture of continuous reflection and self-reflection.

Reflective practice provides valuable feedback, enabling teachers to foresee potential challenges and identify effective solutions.

Additionally, participation in professional networks and communities focused on specific educational challenges, plays a crucial role in collaborative problem-solving and shared learning.

Continuous education, reflection, self-reflection, activities that encourage professional and personal skills, and the application of new technologies, are crucial for teachers to remain effective and meet the needs of students in a changing educational environment.

Reflection and self-reflection are important characteristics of teachers' professional competence. They are fundamental competencies, necessary for quality teaching, the basis of their further professional development, the backbone of future teachers' education.

When it comes to the application of these two important concepts, crucial for the successful realization of the teaching profession and its advancement, we must point out the differences that exist between one and the other concept.

Differences between reflection and self-reflection

The concept of "reflective thought" was first introduced by Dewey, an influential philosopher and educational reformer. He described it as a dynamic activity that implies deep contemplation regarding one's knowledge or beliefs. This critical thinking process serves as a tool through which individuals collect and analyse data, forming a solid foundation for planning and executing future actions (Dewey, 1993). Over time, similar terms such as "critical thinking," "problem-solving," and "higher-level thinking" infiltrated, which essentially had similar meanings and referred to the same concept.

The term "reflective thought" was first introduced by Dewey, who identified it as an activity that involves thinking about any knowledge or belief and with the help of which data is collected that is the basis for planning one's further action (Dewey, 1993). Later, the terms "critical thinking", "problem-solving", and "higher-level thinking" infiltrated, which essentially had similar meanings, referring to the same concept.

Reflection, at its core, carries the authentic meaning of looking back and thoughtfully considering past experiences or beliefs.

In the literature, we have a rich array of definitions, surrounding this concept.

For instance, Schon (1983, p. 81) describes reflection as the ability to think about action in order to enter the process of continuous learning.

Reflection actually, represents a continuous process that refers to the process of thinking, aimed at analysing and understanding a certain situation, people, or events, i.e. "implies orientation of one's own opinion towards designing and realizing one's own actions, reviewing one's knowledge, critically analysing the content and methods of one's cognition, the specificities of one's inner world", i.e. reflection refers to "the ability of the individual to devise, to regulate the achievements and weaknesses of his own work and behaviour (Nikolov, 1988, as cited in Popovski, 2007, p.18).

Reflection implies a thorough analysis of various aspects of the learning and teaching process. This in-depth analysis relies on diverse sources of information about students' work, including feedback from colleagues, professionals, parents.

The primary goal of reflection is to assess the effectiveness of the strategies, methods, procedures, and outcomes to identify areas for improvement. Reflection typically takes place during the day, whether during the teaching action or afterward. The results gained from reflection help answer meaningful questions: How much progress has been made? Where do we currently stand? What is our ultimate goal?

Reflection in teaching is essential; it requires us to critically assess our actions and determine if we have successfully achieved our intended goals within the planned curriculum. This process empowers us to pinpoint specific areas for improvement, including our approaches, strategies, duration, techniques, and methods.

Self-reflection is the process by which teachers analyse and evaluate their own professional behaviour and practices, as well as the impact they have on their students. It involves engaging in introspection about their roles, motivations, emotions and attitudes, particularly about planning, implementing, and evaluating the teaching process.

The goal of self-reflection is personal growth and the improvement of a teacher's performance. This process involves teachers observing, evaluating, and critically analysing their actions throughout the teaching process. By reflecting on their own experiences, decisions, and practices, teachers can enhance their effectiveness and achieve better student outcomes.

The focus is on internal aspects, including self-awareness of strengths, weaknesses, and personal beliefs about what should have occurred versus what happened. This reflection leads to personal development and an enhancement of teaching practices.

The metacognitive aspect of reflection involves self-reflection, which encompasses attitudes toward one's own beliefs, knowledge, and emotional expressions, and how these factors can influence one's actions (Akbari, 2007; Akbari, Behzadpoor, & Davand, 2010).

Thanks to self-reflection on their own teaching practice, a step forward towards her adaptation and improvement is possible. Self-reflection is one, that helps teachers to face and cope with challenges, to make a realistic assessment of their effectiveness, and to work on their own progress. Of course, this is a step towards achieving a higher quality of teaching and greater satisfaction with the teaching profession.

Self-reflection also plays a crucial role in developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Critical thinking, in turn, fosters the generation of new ideas for improving the teaching process and enhances the skills necessary for successful and effective performance in one's work.

Additionally, self-reflection contributes to the development of emotional intelligence. Teachers become more aware of their own emotional reactions and learn how to channel these emotions into their teaching practices. They also gain the ability to handle conflict situations and manage stress, both in themselves and among their students during the educational process. In fact, the teaching profession is often subject to significant emotional and psychological pressures.

Self-reflection enables teachers to recognize the different learning styles of their students, allowing them to adapt suitable methodological approaches accordingly. It is an essential, ongoing process of continuous self-assessment and self-improvement.

Both reflection and self-reflection are important for the continuous improvement of the teaching process and for creating a supportive, stimulating, and inclusive school environment. The significance and role of these two important concepts have been highlighted by various authors. For instance, Schön (1983) emphasizes that self-reflection is key to improving practical skills and creativity among teachers. Boud, Keogh & Walker (1985) assert that students who practice self-reflection techniques can identify their weaknesses and make concrete improvements. Gibbs (1988) developed a model for reflective thinking that consists of five stages: description, feelings, assessment, analysis, and action. This model is used in teacher training programs to help students structure their self-reflection process and focus on experiences that can lead to improvement. Larrivee (2000) states that self-reflection is a critical factor for professional growth and helps teachers develop emotional intelligence, which is essential for creating a positive classroom

environment. Costa and Kallick (2000) emphasize the value of self-reflection diaries and reflective questions, as they can significantly enhance self-awareness and encourage students to evaluate their teaching skills. Zeichner and Liston (1996) recommend regular analysis of teaching practices and the use of video analysis as effective methods for promoting self-reflection. Moon (2004) highlights that the process of self-reflection is beneficial not only for personal and professional development but also for adapting to various work environments, which is important for future teachers. Era & Bell (2013) point out that teacher education students who actively engage in reflection processes tend to have a better understanding of their professional behaviour and often demonstrate greater effectiveness in their teaching practice.

How and in what ways are teachers preparing to use reflection and self-reflection for their personal and professional development?

The training of teachers in reflection and self-reflection is a crucial aspect of their initial education. This training is delivered through diverse teaching subjects, emphasizing pedagogical practice, and utilizing various methodologies to deepen their understanding.

Fostering skills in self-analysis, critical thinking, and life-long learning is at the heart of this process.

This training process encompasses numerous steps, incorporating a variety of strategies and techniques that enhance teachers' awareness of their teaching practices. These methods provide clear guidelines and identify opportunities for continuous improvement in their approaches to education.

The first step refers to the theoretical elaboration of the concept of reflection, self-reflection, their role and significance for the professional growth and development of the teacher, or Colier states, "Students can effectively apply reflection only when they are familiar with the concept and practice of reflection, but they need individual orientation through guidance from the teacher and mentor through the reflection process" (specified at Županić Benić, 2018, p.121).

The following steps are aimed at the application of these concepts.

Cooperative learning, group discussions, debates, critical essays for assessing teaching methods and outcomes from various perspectives, sharing personal experiences about their own teaching practice as examples, constructive criticism, and guidance for the application of critical reviews of implemented teaching lessons/activities by mentor teachers and their colleagues are just a few of the interactive techniques they are trained to apply, under the supervision, instruction, and guidance of the subject teacher.

The subject teacher trains students to apply various tools necessary for reflection and self-reflection. These tools include reflection diaries, self-assessment portfolios, and methods for preparing anecdotal notes and case studies. Through these instruments, students are guided to consider their own behaviours, their strengths and weaknesses, and overall progress, and in that way foster personal growth and continuous improvement in their learning journey.

"It is precisely in such reflective observation of practical activities, that students become aware of the structure of the teaching process and connect theoretical knowledge with practical experience. Self-reflection is also a key part of teacher training because the experience that students gain through practical work is not enough in itself for their professional development. In practice without reflection, only convergent learning outcomes are achieved, and the process of self-reflection is a condition for divergent learning, i.e., a form of learning in which students become aware of other situations or teaching opportunities that they have not encountered in practice until then" (Županić Benić, 2018, p.121).

The next step involves implementing the practical activity, which includes participatory observations. In this phase, the student takes on the role of a participant observer during the activity and classes. Based on these observations, the student prepares critical reviews.

These reviews are followed by individual conversations and group discussions with the mentor professor, where feedback is provided, and any shortcomings are addressed.

Reflection and self-reflection are essential steps in the students' training process, carried out independently after the implementation of the activity and classes. During this phase, students analyse their efforts and outcomes, adapt to various educational situations, and identify areas for improvement. They focus on establishing realistically achievable, specific, and measurable goals for their personal and professional development. Emphasis is placed on developing self-awareness and emotional regulation, as well as understanding how to respond to diverse emotional and social needs. This comprehensive approach ensures that students not only grow academically but also develop critical life skills that are vital for their future success.

"Reflection on one's own performance is also a key process that leads to the identification of problems in practice, so that teachers can correct them on time, and self-reflection can correct problems related to teachers' behaviour and their beliefs or attitudes that affect professional practice" (Županić Benić, 2018, p.121).

Implementation of this strategy in teacher training plays a crucial role in emphasizing the significance of the two previously mentioned concepts. Future educators will harness the knowledge gained from this practice to continue their professional development. On their journey toward continuous professional growth, they will receive continual guidance and support from a network of colleagues, professional associates, experts, parents, and educational specialists. This support system is essential, ensuring that, these emerging professionals are well-equipped to adapt, excel, and make a meaningful impact in their careers.

Methodology

To obtain qualitative insights into the ability of future teacher students to apply reflection and self-reflection after the implementation of the teaching and educational process, we conducted a small micro-research. The research aimed to examine the thoughts and attitudes of future teacher students regarding their ability to perform reflection and self-reflection after the implemented teaching lessons and activities, in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses and opportunities for improving their reflective practice.

We conducted qualitative research with fourteen students, five regular and nine associate students, from various departments (preschool education, departmental teaching) within the Faculty of Educational Sciences. This research was essential in the 2024 academic year, focusing on methodological practices related to the study subjects Methodology of Development of Elementary Mathematical Concepts 2 and the Methodology of Natural Science and Society 2. The chosen sample was highly appropriate for our objectives. We opted for a qualitative methodology because it effectively integrates developmental and research dimensions, allowing for a thorough examination of outcomes and transformations experienced by the students. This approach specifically targeted the enhancement of students' overall competencies, with a strong emphasis on reflexivity and self-reflexivity.

The descriptive-explicative method was applied. As a technique for data collection, the interviewing technique and its instrument protocol for an unbound interview were applied, and an interview reminder was also used. Individual interviews were conducted in November, after implementing lessons/activities by students, lasting 25-30 minutes. The subject teacher (mentor professor) played the role of the interviewer. The subject of analysis was the self-assessment of the student's future teachers for their activities before, during, and after the implementation of activities/lessons. The interviews were conducted in classrooms of the Faculty of Educational Sciences.

We started our research by asking how students from the Faculty of Educational Sciences evaluate their own activities/lessons.

The key topics discussed were: self-assessment of the activities, problems, and challenges faced when preparing for the lesson; implementation of the lesson (challenges,

difficulties related to time management, resources, discipline, procedures, and activities), self-assessment of the success of the activity/lesson; reflections on changes that they would make after implementing the same activity, the same teaching content; and how and in what way the practical implementation of the activities/lessons can be improved.

Results and discussion

Students - future teachers carry out their methodological practice of various teaching subjects in the "laboratories", primary schools, and kindergartens. They are obliged to carry out at least five teaching hours in different classes; four activities in different educational groups in kindergartens, during the specific semester in which activities and teaching hours take place in schools and kindergartens.

The interviewing of the students was carried out after the realization of the third activity/teaching hour in the appropriate teaching subject/area, teaching subjects: Natural Sciences, Society, History and Society (departmental teaching students), Mathematics (students of preschool education), because the initial classes are most often the ones conditionally speaking 'the most difficult' accompanied by nervousness, fear, excitement when we are faced with something new, unknown to us, something that we are practicing for the first time.

Individual interviews, previously arranged, took place in a room at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, in a pleasant, free atmosphere after the completion of the lesson, an activity by the student in primary school, kindergarten. The conversations most often began with some general questions related to their current student status, the beauty of the teaching profession, the competencies necessary for a successful teaching career, etc. and their feelings during the lesson, to gradually move on to the designated topics for conversation, the same, approximately the same for all respondents.

Regarding the first topic of discussion, self-assessment of activities, problems, and challenges faced during lesson preparation, we concentrated on several key questions: What specific challenges did you encounter while preparing the lesson or activity? Did you experience any particular issues while developing the lesson plan or script? Was there anything essential that was lacking in your teaching process?

Regarding this topic of conversation, we received almost identical, similar responses from all respondents.

When preparing for the implementation of a lesson/activity, they face personal re-examinations concerning: the setting of goals (formulation, reality, feasibility), their concretization in tasks (correct determination, formulation), proper determination of the didactic and methodological apparatus, suitability of teaching aids; correct dimensioning of the time for the individual stages of the micro-articulation of the lesson/activity, suitability of activities related to stimulating and maintaining the interest, motivation of children, students; possibility of using digital resources; cooperation with students, the teacher; control of stress, method of explanation, atmosphere in the class; etc.

S.6. I had difficulties in preparing the lesson, especially in the schedule of activities for implementation, and in devising appropriate activities through which the children would more easily adopt the teaching unit.

Such answers are both expected, because the students are beginners, and do not have enough experience in working in a classroom, usual reactions when we are faced with things that are new, and unknown to us.

The second topic of conversation is related to self-assessment concerning the implementation of the lesson/activity (challenges, difficulties related to time management, resources, discipline, procedures, and activities), i.e. What challenges did you face during the implementation of the lesson/activity as a general question, from which during the conversation other sub-questions arose that related to: the correct dimensioning of time for the individual stages, discipline, procedures, the appropriateness of the activities, etc.).

Regarding this topic of conversation, we can arrange the respondents' answers in the following order:

- Atmosphere in the class, maintaining discipline;
- Cooperation between students;
- Maintaining motivation, and interest of students;
- Dimensioning of time;
- Established interaction and communication with students;
- The need to use more resources related to the relevant teaching content.

S.1.: During the work with the students, I noticed a lack of interest in listening to the story, in the introductory part of the lesson, and a lack of interest in answering the questions asked. Maybe I should have paid attention to expressive reading, diction, intonation; the formulation of the questions "

S.2. I applied the group form of work, but there was no cooperation between the children within the groups. I assume that this form is very rarely applied, the students are in the second grade. I assigned each student a special role within the group to maintain the atmosphere in it, I questioned myself whether I acted correctly.

S.3. I incorrectly allocated the time for the different stages of the lesson. I spent little time on the introduction, the main part went as planned, and I had a lot of time left at the end of the lesson.

The interviewed students highlighted a realistic assessment of the problems they faced, which even more experienced teachers can face, especially if they work in classes, in conditions that are not sufficiently familiar, when we do not have enough teaching experience to conduct lessons, activities ...

Regarding the third topic of conversation, self-assessment of the success of the activity/lesson, i.e., how would they rate the success of the implementation of the lesson activity, if they had a rating scale from 1 to 5, the average rating given by the interviewed students is 3.5, which means that there is always an opportunity for advancement, improvement of their success in planning, performing the teaching activity.

What changes would you make when implementing an activity, or a lesson for the same teaching content? What changes would you make in your approach? was the fourth topic of the interview.

The interviewees' answers, based on their critical approach, mainly concerned: with inserting new activities such as games, and teaching sheets, changes in the order of activities; changing forms of work, and methods; and using new media to maintain interest, especially in the introductory, final part of an activity/lesson.

S.12. I can prepare a teaching sheet - in the final part, in addition to the game „Day and night“, I can give the students the task of creating their own food pyramid;

S.13. I can think about a new interesting game related to maintaining personal hygiene, maybe I can insert a video showing a child properly maintaining personal hygiene.

S.7. If I were to implement the same lesson again, I would change the final activity of the students from working in groups to individual work or working in pairs on a teaching sheet.

S1. I will change the class work by coming up with more activities for the students that will be interesting to them and creating a quiz for feedback.

S10. The only thing I would alter is the sequence of the tasks, specifically the cube activity. However, I have another idea on how to use the same motif to enhance a later activity. To let the kids, choose what they need to prepare, I would set up a game in the kitchen where they could see a large assortment of cooking tools and name what they needed. For instance, one youngster would say, "I need a tall glass, then I need a wide plate, etc." Another child might respond, "I need a low pot." Naturally, the kids would carry out all of this after being given an explanation beforehand and given an example of the course of the game.

S.11. Each child would receive three cubes of a different colour if I were to repeat the same activity. This way, when I say, "Put the blue cube on top of the red cube," everyone does it simultaneously and lifts them, making it easier for me to see if everyone did it correctly and to correct the kids who did something wrong.

S.5. Given the abundance of activities and visual aids available to me, I would cut down one of the main activities and substitute the cube exercise for it because of the pupils' demonstrated enthusiasm. This would allow me to make the worksheet I assigned for homework in this instance as well, but I believe it is acceptable because the kids demonstrated a strong interest in the activities by meeting the objectives, and the worksheet will serve as an extra, independent exercise that will be used to gauge the student's understanding of the lesson.

The fifth topic of conversation related to the student's thoughts on how to improve, and promote the activities/lesson in general, i.e., the question: If you had the opportunity to replicate the lesson/activity for the same teaching unit, what would you change to improve your achievements, satisfaction, and student's achievements?

The students' answers are mainly focused on activities aimed at improving and intensifying communication, the interaction, and cooperation of multiple relations, activities related to the application of different knowledge resources, activities related to finding various forms of their professional advancement and improving, on the topics from different areas in the educational sphere.

We highlight the following answers:

S.1. I will encourage and motivate students to cooperate, to be more friends with each other, to help each other, to respect the opinion of others, to always raise their hand when they want to say something, and not to interrupt while someone else is talking.

S.3. If students are not focused and do not pay attention to what I am teaching them, I can tell them an interesting example, and thus the students' attention will be directed to me.

S.10. I can improve my practical realization by self-assessment in my work, then by monitoring my work and consulting with colleagues, by using different methods and strategies in my work, by attending different mathematical workshops, and seminars, but mostly by everyday practical work with students. I work on improving my own teaching and communication skills with students. I am guided by the rule of being aware of my strengths, knowledge, and skills and using them purposefully in a practical situation, but also to recognize the areas in which I need to improve my competencies and skills.

At the end of the individual conversations, the students were asked about their views on the application of reflection and self-reflection in teaching/educational work. We asked them the questions: In your opinion, is it necessary to do reflection, and self-reflection in the lesson, activity? What resources or support do you need to be able to apply them in your everyday work? What will the application of them lead to?

We were not surprised by the fact that all respondents consider these two concepts to be equally important both in the process of their training as future professionals and for their further development. They emphasized that the aforementioned concepts are their guide for taking further actions, for more successful implementation of teaching lessons/activities, and for acquiring the epithet of successful, quality teachers. On that path, they expect support from professors, educational experts, and colleagues. Constant application of reflection and self-reflection will lead to their continuous professional growth, but at the same time to the achievement of quality, effective teaching.

Discussion

The qualitative research aimed to examine student-future teachers' thoughts and attitudes about their ability to reflect and self-reflect after the implemented teaching lessons/activities. We focused on their self-assessment and identifying their strengths and weaknesses observed in teaching practice.

The analysis of the results demonstrates that students encounter significant challenges when preparing for lessons and activities. They often face the challenge of setting up realistic, specific, and measurable goals that effectively guide their teaching practices, challenges with determining appropriate activities at each micro articulation stage of the lesson, activity, which impacts student engagement and learning outcomes. Time management is another critical area where students falter, as they must allocate time wisely

to ensure all lesson components are covered. Furthermore, many students find it difficult to harmonize didactic-methodical apparatus, resulting from their insufficient experience in crafting comprehensive teaching scenarios...

In the self-assessment of their implemented lessons and activities, the challenges become even more apparent. Namely, the analysed responses indicate that students faced a variety of challenges related to time management, resources, discipline in the classroom, stage fright, and stress. For many interviewees, this semester is their first practical experience in the field, where they must apply theoretical knowledge in real-world teaching situations. The array of problems and difficulties these future educators face has also been documented in the publication *Guidelines for the Implementation of Practical Teaching for Students - Future Professionals at Teacher Training Faculties* (Dimitrijoska et al, 2013). This highlights the pressing need for teacher training programs to address the transitional phase from theory to practice more effectively.

In assessing their success in lesson implementation, most students firmly rated their performance as satisfactory, recognizing many strengths in their teaching activities. However, it is essential to acknowledge specific areas that require improvement. Enhancing communication and interaction with students, demonstrating strong leadership during lessons, maintaining sustained interest through effectively designed activities, and managing classroom discipline are critical steps that must be taken. Addressing these areas will significantly elevate the quality of teaching and learning outcomes. The strategies aimed at improving teaching practices - such as enhancing interaction with students, fostering greater engagement, and integrating diverse methods and learning strategies - demonstrate student's understanding of the essential factors that drive higher achievement and elevate satisfaction with their educational experience.

Students pointed out that reflection and self-reflection are vital components of their professional development journey (similar conclusions presented in the paper by Zagyváné, 2018). They highlighted how these processes allow them to critically examine their experiences, enabling them to pinpoint mistakes and areas for improvement. Through this introspective practice, they can work on building upon their strengths, which leads to strengthening their capacities, and to the development of their skills and competencies.

An integral aspect of the research objective was to thoroughly assess participants' strengths and weaknesses. Through individual interviews, it became clear, that their strengths include a strong commitment to their work, a desire to engage all children and students, excellent organizational skills, and outstanding creativity, all of which enhance their effectiveness as educators. However, they also face notable weaknesses, such as difficulties in time management, challenges in maintaining classroom discipline, and a lack of self-confidence that undermines their effectiveness in the classroom.

To significantly enhance their reflective practice, students must be actively encouraged to engage in continuous self-evaluation and critically analyse both, their teaching methods and the lessons observed with their colleagues, also mentioned by Satková (2020). Implementing workshops, seminars, and other organized activities is essential, as these initiatives will compel student teachers to adopt self-evaluation techniques in their future teaching practices. By fostering this culture of reflection, we equip them with the tools necessary for ongoing professional development and sustained improvement in their teaching effectiveness.

Conclusion

The theoretical elaboration of the highlighted problem, as well as the empirical data that we came to as a result of the interviewing technique, lead us to the following conclusions.

- The questions that we asked at the beginning, in the introductory part, as well as with the survey, found answers both, in the theoretical discussions and the results of the conducted research:

- The research results should not be accepted categorically because they refer to a specific sample, at a specific time. They give us an insight into the initial efforts of the

students to implement the process of reflection, and self-reflection, which in turn points us to the need for constant support, help, and encouragement in their further steps, their professional development, and their path to success. They can be a guide for future efforts to improve the practice of training future professionals for the successful implementation of teaching activities. It can also be a guide for future research in this area.

- The necessity of constant development of the educational staff 'metania' - change of thought of the teaching staff, because only educated staff can contribute to their own and the development of the human world, to prepare young people to face the challenges and problems that are looming before humanity;

- Identification and implementation of a series of strategies for effective training of teaching staff.

And finally, a successful teacher in his work is guided by the principle according to which, in addition to the importance of 'what he teaches', it is even more important to 'how he teaches it', that is, 'how he can improve teaching and learning', in order to achieve better results.

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