

WCETR 2011

Contemporary teacher and core competences for lifelong learning

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Elsevier use only: Received date here; revised date here; accepted date here

Abstract

The paper shows the results of testing the opinion of students of IV-th year of the Pedagogical Faculty, future teachers, preschool teachers, for the important indicators by which is evaluate their competence for the performance of teaching, assessment of the teachers and their own work, their competence for further lifelong learning, their future professional development. Outlined and explained the eight key competencies necessary for lifelong learning, and presented the results of testing on a sample survey of 286 respondents, students of pedagogical faculties in the Republic of Macedonia. Used the factor analysis and procedure for concretization of the numerous indicators to determine the competence of contemporary teacher, with prominent are accentuated: met cognitive skills, self-esteem, problem solving, and application of modern ICT, information, mathematical and language literacy, and ability of empirical research

Key words: core competencies, contemporary teacher, lifelong learning, students

1. Main text

Introduction

21st century is known as a century of change, the century in which intensify development of science, technique, technology, the century in which the thirst for acquiring knowledge among young people is growing and bigger. In the last century especially underscore the importance of lifelong learning, lifelong education.

The term lifelong education is often used as a synonym of the word education in aall human lifel, permanent education and is termed like "continuous (permanent, lasting,) process concerning the education of the completion of a degree of formal education until the death, or to the end of working life, and education throughout life is related to education from birth to death. "²

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² Studija stanja i pravaca razvoja, Regionalnog centra za permanentno obrazovanje", *Mašinski fakultet Kragujevac* , str. 12-14, 2005

The need for lifelong learning, lifelong education is present among all people in all professions, and particularly highlights the need for continuing professional development of teachers. Is famous dictum of Socrates who said “When Athens would have a poor shoemaker, the Athenians would go barefoot, but when I had bad teachers, there would not have any Athens”

In this regard it is necessary to work to improve the quality of the educational system because education is a prerequisite for increased productivity and quality of production. "Hence the objectives and principles of the conception of contemporary education imply a complete restructuring of the traditional education system, update its objectives and content, change of its methodological basis and restructuring the institutional and organizational forms"³

In order to implement the concept of contemporary education, having in mind the saying of Socrates, it is necessary to operate on the quality of teachers education, his professional development, meeting the need for permanent education, lifelong learning . Training of teachers to meet the contemporary needs of youth in the 21st century suggests that it is a profession in which is learn throughout life, shaping and acquiring knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies through programs constantly vocational training. Hence, we have set a number of issues that we tried to find appropriate answers: What is quality education? Who is responsible for implementation of quality education? Which competences and what has and should have quality, contemporary teacher? Who should be involved in training of teachers...?

What is quality education?

One of the strategic goals associated with the development of R. Macedonia is raising the educational level of the population, especially children and youth. An important factor that depends on the international reputation of the R.Macedonia is the establishment of high educational standards; enhance creativity and innovation, fostering multi-ethnic specificities and cultural differences and the use of modern information and communication technology.

The changes occurring in the field of education is accepted in our country, our education in order to correspond with that which is being nurtured and developed in the developed countries, characterized by dynamic and flexible structure that allows horizontal and vertical mobility of students and teaching staff. The changes in the educational system should provide: quality; efficiency, mobility, recognition, competence.

Achieving quality in education is a factor that can provide quality in all other areas.

The identification of the term quality often encounters obstacles. Namely, since Aristotle said that there are six terms that cannot be defined including the notion of quality. But, in this moment we have different opinion. Namely, quality as a term have relative meaning - means property, attribute, virtue, value, good feature

To answer the question, quality education, can come through appreciation of the changes that are coming due as a result of the action of the holders of the activity "education" The carrier of this activity are the teacher and students. Namely, the changes that occur in the persons of the student, and by consequence that comes, as a result of the activity of teachers and students themselves, is the area which should be sought and to determine the quality of achievement in education

Quality is something that happens, what can happen in a particular stage or phase of education. Quality education is one that meets the educational (development) needs of its users, or education that is tailored to the users. On it affect a multitude of factors such as: environment, tradition, the conditions in which realized the educational process, professional competence of teachers. The quality of education mainly focus on: the input conditions, resources, goals, teacher quality, characteristics of students, the processes - the quality of the teacher is directly associated with quality schools, quality programs, quality of instruction, quality of teaching and results-achievement, attrition, attitudes and aspirations;

The concept of quality in education is not static, but changing, it means quality teaching (knowledge, clear goals and objectives, appropriate teaching methods, continuous feedback, positive relationships and quality learning - students are well advanced, endurance, respond to the challenge set task, evaluated their own work, help each other.

³ Parlić, J. (1997): *Permanently obrazovanje i savremena obrazovna tehnologija – imperativ našeg vremena*, „Pedagoška stvarnost“, br. 9, Novi Sad, str. 744

What is the basic characteristic of quality education?

In R. Macedonia outlined six dimensions that are determined by quality education like: inclusiveness; effectiveness; health, safety and productive school environment; gender equality; participation and active participation of all stakeholders in the life and work of the school environment; respecting the rights of children and multiculturalism.

The realization of quality education depends largely on the quality of work of the primary stakeholders-teachers. The quality of the teacher work out depends on:

- The quality of his theoretical and practical training/capacity of the universities that produce teachers and builds throughout life;
- the representation of pedagogical-psychological and methodical disciplines, especially the practical exercises with students in elementary schools in the last two years the number of hours provided for practice realization (pedagogical and methodical);
- Control of the quality of education (in primary and secondary schools, is stressed administrative control, especially the respect of legislation and financial and material operations of schools, little attention is given to professional and pedagogical aspects);

Based on the above we can conclude that the quality of education largely depends on the degree of professional and methodical-pedagogical competence of teachers, their professional and material incentives to work, and the desire for development, improvement and self-improvement. So, the teacher is placed in the epicenter of the educational system, which in turn sets a range providing assumptions relating to: providing a system for preparing teachers; providing sufficient practical training and instruction; training for the application of modern technology; creating system for continuous learning; creating a system and resources for training; the introduction of a system for promoting and motivating the best teachers and measures to improve others - material, objective, moral motivation of teachers, stimulating the investment of funds to invest in self-knowledge expect higher results, evaluation of educational requirements;

What is the roles exercised contemporary teacher?

Educational role of the teacher in modern schools is increasingly, having in mind the needs for enhance the educational process and the active role of all participants in it. The teacher is increasingly occurring in the role of planner, developer, organizer and realizes the education activities, educator, counselor, diagnostician, therapist and forecaster; coordinator, researcher, confirmatory. "In the foreground are large changes in the role of teacher to all areas of his work. These changes are caused by new understandings of the role of knowledge, the tasks of teaching and the ratio of direct factors of teaching, the impact of new scientific knowledge about the nature of the learning process, an influence of psychological knowledge about the nature of the child, the role of educational technology, teaching facilities and equipment, application of various media in teaching, the development of extracurricular activities in the car and the application of the cultural role of the school in the social environment"⁴

The teacher is more need to be able to follow up on new discoveries in science and profession, changes in society; to engage maximum in planning, implementation of goals and tasks of education; to optimally use all teaching materials in all stages of implementation of the teaching process; greater focus on education and motivation of pupils; more responsibility for the quality of communication in teaching; involvement of ICT in education, greater involvement in researching in their practice and consequently to promote the same

Teacher should have certain competencies, to all this can be achieved, to realize all these roles, and after that, as a result of their education to further improved. The new competencies and changes in the curriculum for the teacher's education do "reversal of the transfer of knowledge and developing competence as a goal of education"⁵.

Emphasis is placed on key competences to be acquired after completing the appropriate level of education.

What are the key competences that should have students-future teachers, in accordance with the commitment for quality in European teacher's education?

⁴ Janković, P. (1994): Profesionalno usmeravanje, selekcija i obrazovanje učitelja, Pedagoška akademija, Novi Sad, str.9

⁵ Baranović, B. (ur.) (2006), *Nacionalni kurikulum za obvezno obrazovanje u Hrvatskoj: različite perspektive*. Zagreb: Institut za društvena istraživanja u Zagrebu, str.98.

- High expertise in one or more specific courses (academic education);
- Possession of a stable knowledge and understanding of the subject / area /s for which he / she is responsible;
- Knowledge of at least one foreign language;
- supplementing their subject expertise with pedagogical skills, including motivation for learning, creativity, cooperation, understanding the social context of education (especially subject teachers);
- Understanding of the pedagogical potential of technology (especially ICT), development of capabilities to be integrated in the process of teaching and learning;
- Ability to integrate the principles of lifelong learning in the process of teaching and learning;
- Ability to achieve the international (European) standards in the teaching behavior;
- Broad and balanced knowledge and understanding of the basic characteristics of education in various, especially European and intercultural context;
- Ability to establish and maintain meaningful argument about educational issues in a clear, lucid and coherent manner;
- Accountability for contributing to the education of the child or youth and taking professional responsibility for the development of personality, talent and mental, spiritual and physical attributes of each child or young person;
- Knowledge, understanding and readiness for inclusion in the current educational issues and contributing to the processes of development of curricula (especially at the local level), the professional development of staff and overall school development;
- Capacity for implementation of a wide range of different teaching strategies in order to enable the learning of children, including appropriate use of information and communication technology (ICT);
- The ability and commitment to promoting equal opportunities for all people in an inclusive society and active steps to eliminate discrimination;
- Intellectual independence and critical engagement proven;
- Knowledge and skills to enhance the learning of those students who have problems / barriers to learning, including those who need support in certain curricula areas and those with emotional and behavioral problems;
- reporting to parents and other stakeholders for the success and progress of students;
- ability to apply research and other valid evidence in order to provide information that would lead selection, changes and priorities in promoting educational practices and progress;
- appropriate behavior as a professional development / professional development to other teachers and colleagues from other professions, para-professionals and agencies engaged in providing support to students and gaining experience in cooperation with them;
- performing administrative tasks required by the school;
- Taking responsibility and commitment to own professional development arising from professional self-insight and self-evaluation of their own professional practice and the practice of other.

Having in mind that at the Pedagogical faculties generally educate teachers who are involved in primary education, particularly in the first and second part of the nine-year cycle of primary education, and of course in accordance with the recommendations of the European Council⁶ where as key competences for lifelong learning are set: communicating in their native language; communication at least one foreign language; mathematical competence; competencies for science and technology; digital competence, learning competencies or learning how to learn; social and civic competencies;, we decided to implement micro research in which we set the research problem-to examine the opinions of students of IV-th year of the Pedagogical faculties in Macedonia on what competencies they possess and whether they are in accordance with the competencies identified by the Council of Europe as key for lifelong learning. The sample consisted of 286 students from the Faculty of Education in the Republic. Macedonia, preschool students and students for primary schools. The same questionnaire was offered skaler sheet, which had raised 20 claims, the answer offered in the form of a scale of Likertov type of 3 degrees by means of which the respondents gave a degree of consent from 1 to 3rd. We obtained the following result:

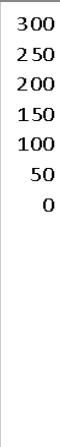
⁶ PREPORUKA EUROPSKOG PARLAMENTA od 18. prosinca 2006. o ključnim kompetencijama za cjeloživotno učenje objavljena u : L 394/14 en Official Journal of the European Union 30.12.2006.

Table 1. Students opinion about core competences for lifelong learning

No.	Key competences	1		2		3	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Ability to communicate in native language	0	0	1	0,35	285	99,65
2	Ability to communicate in at least one foreign language	2	0,7	20	6,99	264	92,31
3	Ability for critical thinking	22	7,69	15	5,24	249	87,06
4	Information Literacy	86	30,07	64	22,38	136	47,55
5	Flexible and creative application of acquired knowledge and skills	52	18,18	32	11,19	202	70,63
6	Ability to use ICT in teaching	1	0,35	1	0,35	284	99,30
7	Planning, implementation and evaluation of educational work	65	22,73	57	19,93	164	57,34
8	Competence of educational research activities	115	40,21	65	22,73	106	37,06
9	Ability to monitor, verify and assess student achievement	128	44,76	48	16,78	110	38,46
10	Knowledge and understanding of the content and features of teaching in elementary schools	115	40,21	68	23,77	103	36,01
11	Thorough knowledge of Macedonian language, mathematics, science, society, art, physical education and health, technical culture and English language	1	0,35	2	0,7	283	98,95
12	Use psychological-pedagogical knowledge to work with children with special needs	158	55,24	25	8,74	103	36,01
13	Integrate the principles of lifelong learning in the process of teaching and learning;	125	43,7	66	23,07	95	33,22
14	Possess knowledge, understanding and readiness for inclusion in the current educational issues and contributing to the processes of development of curricula (especially at the local level), the professional development of staff and overall school development	44	15,38	43	15,03	199	69,58
15	Is capable of taking responsibility and commitment to own professional development arising from professional self-insight and self-evaluation of their own professional practice and the practice of other	28	9,79	52	18,18	206	72,03
16	Cooperation with parents.	113	38,61	72	25,17	101	35,31
17	Understanding the relations between educational institutions and educational and social environment - a systemic view and work	129	45,10	64	22,38	93	32,52
18	Assesses the needs of individuals or group, their strong and weak areas, respecting the environment factors (physical, social, cultural), with appropriate procedures and instruments.	144	50,35	28	9,79	114	39,86
19	They can establish and maintain partnerships with other users or groups (local communities, advisory services, economy, etc...).	75	26,22	112	39,16	99	34,62
20	They understand the individual evaluations and evaluation systems, learning the professional-ethical issues.	96	33,57	115	40,21	75	26,22

ing:

- Ability to communicate in native language;
- Ability to communicate in at least one foreign language;
- The ability for critical thinking;
- Flexible and creative application of acquired knowledge and skills;



F

Figure 1. Key competences

B

ased on the bearing results, we can conclude that among the students, future teachers, are dominant eight key competencies included

- Ability to use ICT in teaching;
- Thorough knowledge of Macedonian language, mathematics, science, society, art, physical education and health, technical culture and English language;
- possess knowledge, understanding and readiness for inclusion in the current educational issues and contributing to the processes of development of curricula (especially at the local level), the professional development of staff and overall school Development;
- is capable of taking responsibility and commitment to own professional development arising from professional self-insight and self-evaluation of their own professional practice and the practice of others.

If we make a comparison with the core competencies recommended by the European Council, we can conclude that our students are at present most key competences for lifelong learning.

What that we have to work, concluded on the basis of the results and on the basis of conducting informal discussions with students of IV year is that they lack skills, knowledge how to learn, as a shorter time to reach the required knowledge and necessary and which are necessary for successful implementation of the teaching profession. Of course, to achieve the necessary success is our personal commitment as teachers in teachers colleges, as members of the community, the education of young students, in the changing style of teaching, using various strategies, training of young students to follow the modern trends in the profession, training for their lifelong learning.

Instead of conclusion

"... a highly qualified teacher, always ready to learn-sine qua non is facing with dynamic complexity, key to creating citizens who can manage their lives and be connected with others around him in an ever changing world. There is no substitute for good teachers ... We have not a society, without profession that teachers teach. "

Fullan, 1993

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