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## REFLECTIVE APPROACH TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION - INSPIRATION, EXPERIENCES, QUESTIONS

ABSTRACT. Tomková Anna, *Reflective Approach Towards Professional Teacher Education - Inspiration, Experiences, Questions* [Refleksyjne podejście w kształceniu zawodowym nauczycieli - inspiracje, doświadczenia, pytania]. *Studia Edukacyjne* nr 29, 2013, Poznań 2013, pp. 327-340. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISBN 978-83-232-0000-0. ISSN 1233-6688

The topic of the paper is the reflective approach towards professional teacher education. Its goal is to consider the relationship between teacher education and definition of the quality of teacher performance as well as the relationship between teacher education and means of professional competence evaluation. Another aim is to introduce core principles and selected examples of reflective approach to primary school teacher education at the Faculty of Education of Charles University in Prague. The paper will present reflected examples of specific procedures used in pedagogical and psychological classes, in the course of teaching practice and during optional courses.

**Key words:** professional education, reflective approach, reflection and self-reflection, reflection tools-essays, double-entry diary, description of pedagogical situations, portfolio

In the Czech Republic as well as abroad, the generally accepted concept of the teacher is the perspective of **reflective practitioner**.<sup>1</sup> In current professional literature that analyses further development of this concept are the teachers - reflective practitioners defined as professionals who reflect on their pedagogical work and their role in this practice, feel the need to analyse pedagogical situations in their context as well as relations and with respect to current knowledge. They seek and share experience as well as questions with others with the aim of improving the quality of pupils' learning and to facilitate their professional growth. Reflective practitioners aim to

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<sup>1</sup> D. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*, London 1983.

understand themselves, the child, as well as the learning and teaching processes in context. Further on, they aim to act independently in complex situations and various contexts and also aim for on-going professional development.<sup>2</sup>

A quality teacher is "an expert on himself/herself (autonomy), in pedagogical relations (helping the individual development of a pupil and finding solutions to educational situations), in the ways how to help a pupil along the learning process, in reflection on practical activities and self-reflection".<sup>3</sup>

In the light of these requirements, it is also necessary to reflect on possible forms of education of future teachers. We cannot accept the idea that the university prepares a finished teacher. Development of professional competencies is a long-term process. Undergraduate education of teachers becomes a part of lifelong teacher education and universities are obliged to provide students with professional competencies and tools which will enable them to deal with new circumstances, situations, discoveries and professional challenges in a professional manner.

**Reflective approach to teacher education** is currently perhaps the dominant one.<sup>4</sup> This concept is based on social constructivist approach to teaching that emphasises the practical experience of students and its deepened reflection, which enables to solve the theory - practice relationship in an effective way in the teacher education process. In this model, reflection becomes the foundation pillar of teacher education.

**Reflection** is perceived as a conscious process that can be verbally communicated, as a more or less induced activity that follows an action and as an act of looking back at past activity. It involves the description of a phenomenon, analyses of key factors, explanation, comparison, evaluation, synthesis, prognosis and the establishment of further procedures.

This involves a process of questioning and sharing.<sup>5</sup> Apart from the reflection, we also define self-reflection as

the capacity of an individual to examine his inner world..., to look back at his actions, thoughts, attitudes, feelings, to recapitulate certain parts of his own life or behaviour and decisions taken in situations that are significant for him. The aim is to

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<sup>2</sup> P. Perrenoud, *Développer la pratique réflexive dans le métier d'enseignants. Professionnalisation et raison pédagogique*, Paris 2001; V. Spilková, A. Tomková and col., *Kvalita učitele a profesní standard*, Praha 2010; M. Altet et al., *Former des enseignants réflexifs*, Bruxelles 2013.

<sup>3</sup> B. Kosová, *Profesia a profesionalita učitel v teoretických súvislostiach*, Prešov 2006, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> D. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*; F. Korthagen et al., *Jak propojit teorii s praxí: Didaktika realistického vzdělávání učitelů*, Brno 2011; M. Altet et al., *Former des enseignants réflexifs*.

<sup>5</sup> D. Nezvalová, *Reflexe v negraduální přípravě učitelů*, Olomouc 2000.

self-evaluate oneself and decide what and how should be changed, to choose suitable strategy for future.<sup>6</sup>

In the context of teacher education, reflection mainly applies to instructional (pedagogical) situations and self-reflection of one's own experience in the teaching role. Acceptance of reflection and self-reflection as a necessary professional teacher competence is distinctively based on **attitude** and belief in its significance.

**In the reflective approach to teacher education, reflection and self-reflection** should be integrated into the whole programme of future teacher education. Reflection and self-reflection is the aim as well as the means and it is necessary to create conditions for its development and meaningful usage. Good conditions for reflection can be facilitated by the education that enables continual development of professional competencies of future teachers. Reflection and self-reflection have to be naturally linked to the system of student teaching practice, which is further linked to other courses. From the conceptual perspective, it is possible and necessary to identify **places where students should encounter reflective and self-reflective activities**. Afterwards these activities can be sensitively joined by further subtasks or optional **reflective** tasks.

Another significant factor is to consider whether the proposed models are finalised to the form of **specific procedures and tools**, which enable one to implement principles of the given approach. We can find specific functional models of reflective and self-reflective work in the programmes offered by individual universities that prepare teachers abroad.<sup>7</sup> These models inside of the Czech Republic have been influenced by long-term innovative programmes, which in fact started reforms of our education after 1989. These programmes have significantly contributed to the development of the requested key competencies of our pupils and professional competencies of our teachers. It wasn't until later times that these programmes became linked to broader theoretical frameworks. Undoubtedly, one of the most influential innovative programmes is **Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking**.<sup>8</sup>

The RWCT programme is valuable mainly for successful implementation of socio-constructivist pedagogy in practice. It deploys strategies and teaching methods that aim to enhance pupils' **critical thinking** skills (KLOOSTER

<sup>6</sup> J. Průcha, E. Walterová, J. Mareš, *Pedagogický slovník*, Praha 2009, p. 259.

<sup>7</sup> V. Spilková, A. Tomková and col., *Kvalita učitele a profesní standard*, Praha 2010; M. Altet et al., *Former des enseignants réflexifs*.

<sup>8</sup> [www.kritickemysleni.cz](http://www.kritickemysleni.cz); A. Tomková, *Program Čtením a psaním ke kritickému myšlení v primární škole*, Praha 2007.

2001). University teachers are inspired by the models of RWCT courses and their methods of teacher skills development. In the further education courses, teachers take on the role of pupils in order to experience model lessons followed by the two-phase model of reflection, at first from the position of a pupil and afterwards from a teacher's position. With the help of gradual steps, the students teachers are led to build their own teaching concept are able to describe it, reason and defend it. This leads to the development of critical thinking as well as of **reflective and self-reflective competences** in the sense of developed skills, knowledge, attitude and belief that it is needed for quality teaching and for teacher's personal professional development.

Building on the thesis that reflection and self-reflection in teacher education enhances the quality of professional performance of future teachers, we conclude that it's necessary that **all students of teaching** develop and use reflection and self-reflection in the course of the process towards becoming a teacher. For example according to the research by Altet et al. (2013) it can be expected that some students will show resistance to the reflective and self-reflective approach to teacher preparation for various reasons. The reasons include persistent stereotypes concerning the way teaching preparation is thought of, students' resistance to all tasks that are compulsory, destabilizing and on-going, or negative attitude towards writing as well as towards the discovery process in general. Students can also be afraid of being evaluated in another competence, the competence related to reflection. We can help student teachers, who are not strong reflective or study types, by offering them a sufficiently wide array of reflective and self-reflective activities and tools. However, the significant part always belongs to written form of reflection and self-reflection, which goes in hand with the necessity to express the meaning of one's own thoughts in a comprehensible manner. The written records can be later on looked back at and the content can be shared with others.

We will present **selected reflective and self-reflective procedures** in the context of the specific *Primary school teacher education* programme at the Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague.

### Student essay

Student essay belongs to counts amongst the complex reflective and self-reflective written tasks.

Reflective and self-reflective task, which is evoked by the topic, problem or a question linked to previous practical activity, and which is based on the assignment de-

manding reasoned arguments and providing scope for subjective statements at the same time<sup>9</sup>.

In the course of their study at the Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague, future teachers write altogether three essays called *I as a future teacher*, *I'm becoming a teacher* and *I as a beginning teacher*. The essay form allows for independence, creative thinking and self-expression at the same time enabling students to use literary means and symbolic expression. By gradually assigning the three successive essays, students are led to reflect on themselves as future teachers, their journey to teaching profession, main milestones and influences as well as their own strengths and personal or professional challenges. Often the journey students undertake starts by the ideals and wishes in the 1st year, followed in the 2nd year by questions and doubts brought about by intense teaching practice and its reflection. This journey then leads to the integration of existing study experience in the 5th year, which becomes reflected in a more clearly captured description of characteristic of students own teaching philosophy, their own specific professional strengths as well as other questions and further development tasks<sup>10</sup>. Of value is not only the process of writing these essays but also the process of further sharing of their contents.

Because of the constant monitoring of reflective tasks assigned to students in the mentioned teacher education programme, it is apparent that apart from this basic line of essays students encounter many other reflective tasks in the course of their studies. These tasks have further aims, such as to clarify and change student's relationship to mathematics etc. The information gained through mapping of all the assigned reflective tasks should help to avoid the danger of assigning an excessive number of these types of tasks. Their high number and lack of coordination can result in loss of motivation for the students and their learning.

Extract from the essay written by the 1st grade student:

*(...) I want to become a teacher because I know that this is something I have significant prerequisites for and that it will fulfil me. Of course it is not only about me being happy. My aim is to act as a helping hand for children, to guide them in their first school years. Together with teaching I would also like to study special pedagogy*

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<sup>9</sup> A. Tomková, M. Chvál, H. Hejlová, *Pedagogický a výzkumný rozměr studentských esejí v přípravě studentů učitelství pro primární školu*, *Pedagogika*, 2010, LX, 3-4, p. 314.

<sup>10</sup> A. Tomková, *Reflexe cesty k profesionalizaci učitelství na Pedagogické fakultě UK*, [in:] *Současnost a budoucnost učitelského vzdělávání*, Sborník referátů z odborného semináře Profesionalizace učitelského vzdělávání, Pedagogická fakulta, Ostrava 2008, p. 55-71.

*because I like the idea of integration very much. I think that this is the way to contribute to better understanding between handicapped and healthy people and as a result between people in society. I believe I'll be able to show children that each of us is unique...I like that teaching is not stereotypical. Every day in school is different and brings events that simply can't be prepared for. This is when the true quality of the teacher and person comes forward. Can he master the situation, improvise, stay calm, admit his/her mistakes and apologise? The teacher is not just a person who is teaching, but also one who is learning (...)*

Extract from the essay written by the same student in the 2nd grade:

*(...) In fact, the majority of my activities in school and free time are aimed towards the goal of becoming a teacher. Why am I no more so sure if I really want to become a teacher? Why did I become unsure after two years of studying at the Faculty of Education? There are probably more factors that come into play. First of all there is a feeling that I don't have what it takes. Because I don't feel well in a noisy environment and because I don't cope well with the eye to eye contact (even though I'm working on it and I think that I'm improving!)...Some time ago I've been sitting in a class in the 5th grade class of a speech therapy school. I liked it very much also because there are usually around ten children in the class. Maybe this could be the right way forward for me. I enjoy speech therapy as well as teaching very much... Also the teaching practice in the 4th grade of elementary school helped me. I enjoyed it and was happy with my work. That doesn't mean that I wouldn't find any mistakes in my performance, but I think that I did well and the things that I didn't cope with so well were not fatal and can surely be changed... In the course of this year's teaching practice I discovered what I want to do as a teacher. I for example think about daily rituals in the class, about the matters that to a large extent create the sense of belonging to the class. I liked the rituals introduced in "our" class when I was doing teaching practice and I saw how much it gives to children (...)*

Extract from the essay written by the same student in the 5th grade:

*(...) My study of the Primary Education is about to finish, I've completed the final professional placement and can therefore be counted amongst beginner teachers. What are the key topics for me? For a long time, I haven't been aware of them and was mainly following my intuition. But now I think that in the course of my (so far short) teaching experience I have been putting stress on values and attitudes. I like that the current school accentuates not only education but also upbringing. At the same time I realise that the school and work also brings me up.... If I want children to behave well to each other and not to treat each other badly, it is also me who should behave well and treat all people around me with respect...Many other topics*

*remain questions for me or to be more correct areas of research and examining. Here belongs for example the topic of child individuality and its personal development in the condition of a big group of children. Another one is the topic of working with voice, speech and communication in general, the topic of ideal forms of preparation, which is effective and at the same time will not take excessive length of my time. And many other topics...I still consider teaching a wonderful, very important and needed profession.*

### **Double-Entry Diary**

In the course of their studies, the students of the above mentioned field have many opportunities to gain hands-on experience of working with pupils. These are reflected from the perspective of general as well as subject didactics. It is necessary to look for all opportunities in which the impulses from general and subject didactics can supplement and support each other. If this doesn't happen, they often "live" next to each other like two worlds where different languages are spoken and this unnecessarily weakens the role they play in teacher preparation for the future profession. Students experience the model lessons from the position of pupils. The lessons are afterwards reflected on from the pupil's as well as the teacher's point of view. Students also watch video-recordings of lessons and sit in on classes, which is then followed by the reflection process. Also they teach and once again reflect and share their experience with their classmates as well as faculty and university teachers.

Inspiration for effective written reflective methods can be drawn for example from the above mentioned RWCT programme. For example, the Double-Entry Diary method<sup>11</sup>, which was originally developed to enable pupils to express their thoughts when working with narrative texts, can be used by student teachers to think about observed lessons providing we adapt the instruction. It also enables students to separate what they hear and see during the lesson from their own thoughts, opinions, questions etc. When working with the Double-Entry Diary the focus is on selected issues within the teaching process. The individual written reflection in the Double-Entry Diary serves as a source for shared reflection that takes place in a group of students and it can also promote dialogue between the student and the teacher. Students often mix reality with their own interpretations influenced by their previous experience and the state of knowledge of rele-

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<sup>11</sup> A. Tomková, *Program Čtením a psaním ke kritickému myšlení v primární škole*, Praha 2007.

vant issues. At the beginning, evaluation dominates in their comments above questions and deeper reflection. These are demanding skills that become improved with further professional experience as well as with the broadening knowledge base and practice of partial reflective skills.

An extract from the Double-Entry Diary recorded by the student of teaching during sitting on in the literary education classes in the 3rd year of elementary school. The lesson was dedicated to the legend About Krok and his daughters:

I hear, I see:	My comments:
1st part of the lesson:	
<p>1. The teacher gave pupils a dictionary of foreign words with the words from today's text. Pupils read the words and guess their meaning. They mark the words they don't understand, discuss them in groups and together explain meaning of the words.</p>	<p>Is it a good idea to choose beforehand the words the children may not understand, or is it better to deal with it in the course of the lesson? How else can a dictionary be called that contains the old Czech language words?</p> <p>Great instructions by the teacher – they encourage pupils to discuss and help each other, all that in logical order.</p>
<p>2. Pupils sit in a circle on the carpet and gradually narrate the first part of the story About Krok and his daughters, which they read last time. Afterwards the story is one more time retold by two girls, who weren't in the class last time.</p>	<p>Children managed to put together all of the existing parts of the story. They can all follow up what they did last time.</p> <p>I noticed how patient the teacher was as were the pupils when waiting for someone to find the right words. Pupils didn't interrupt each other and nobody shouted the answer. How did they get there? Is it always the case in this class? And is it natural with such small children? The teacher praised pupils aloud. It was clear that children have been gradually becoming more engaged in the activity. Was it because of the encouragement?</p>
<p>3. In groups pupils predict what is going to happen in the story. They were given a few key words. Afterwards they present their stories orally and evaluate each other.</p>	<p>This was a difficult task because each group had to agree on one solution. During the presentation, the teacher and pupils listen attentively. The group which deserved it was praised without emotions. There was also some criticism and objections not only from the teacher but also from pupils, such as "you didn't use all the words". The pupils themselves self-critically commented on why they didn't do well.</p>



## Pedagogical situations

In the course of teaching preparation, students' attention should be navigated not only towards individual pedagogical topics and problems, but also towards an integrated perception of the real authentic situations. These should be reflected orally as well in written form together with the self-reflection of students in teaching roles. During the teaching practice, the students of the above mentioned field gather, take notes of specific pedagogical situations and share them (teaching cases). When designing their structure we were again inspired by the RWCT programme<sup>12</sup>.

In the course of teaching practice, students take notes of specific situations and describe their context. The course of events and solutions are recorded also with the help of direct speech. Students analyse the causes of the situation, comment on its solution. Taking into account their experience and growing theoretical knowledge, they suggest better and additional solutions.

Some pedagogical situations are simple, have one solution and leave no room for discussion. However, in many cases the situation is more complicated, depends on the given context and has more causes and several solutions. Every student teacher should pay attention to general issues and topics, that stem from these situations. The majority of these situations concern such issues as building a good climate in the class, communication between the teacher and pupils, teaching process management and individualisation of teaching. The described and suggested solutions reflect and further enhance educational and teaching strategies of future teachers. They integrate the competencies for class and instructional management with the ability to understand the context, the child as well as the professional field.

Outputs of these reflective tasks can serve as one of the sources of the pedagogical situations that are presented to students during the final state exam from Pedagogy. Suggested solutions show whether the student is prepared to see the situation in its complexity, analyse it and solve it with the help of sufficient professional knowledge. Inclusion of pedagogical situations in the state exam enables students to present qualitative levels of their competencies for reflection and self-reflection.

Extract from the finished version of the pedagogical situation focused on knowledge of a child and its thinking as well as on strategies facilitating individualisation in teaching (the finished version written by H. Hejlová):

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<sup>12</sup> J.C. Richards, *Psaní a sdílení výukových případů: Podpora koležiality při řešení pedagogických problémů*, *Kritické listy*, 2001, 6, p. 13-17; A. Tomková, *Stratégies et méthodes d'enseignement en République tchèque, au' 4 service de la continuité des apprentissages...comment y former les enseignants?* [in:] *Les dynamiques des apprentissages*, ed. M. Coupemanne, Bruxelles 2009, p. 137-144.

**Title: Invisible pictures**

**Context:** *In the 1st grade during the art lesson, pupils were getting acquainted with the new working material and new art technique. A picture was painted with glue and afterwards was transferred onto the coloured sand, which made it visible. All children enjoyed their work and wanted to make at least three pictures. Just Adam didn't want to start working, although he had good knowledge for his age and good logical thinking skills. When working in a group he would lead the work and tell the others what to do. He is a leader and can get his own way when necessary.*

*Description of the situation:*

*Adam was sitting behind his desk with the empty paper in front of him. "Why are you not working like the others?" asked the teacher. "I don't know what to paint. I've been thinking about it for quite a while but have no ideas," responded Adam. The teacher advised him several topics to use for the painting. Adam nodded agreeing to give it a try. When he still didn't have anything after a while, the teacher came to him: "You should have at least a draft by now. Time goes by and you haven't done anything. What is the matter?"*

*He replied: "I can't think of any unicolor picture!" At this moment the teacher realised how the boy thinks.*

*Because the picture got transferred into one colour sand, he had to come with a picture that would be just in one colour. He thought it strange that if he paints for example a lawn and a sun they both become transferred in let's say blue colour. All other children were engaged in transferring the pictures and didn't mind that the picture would have different colour than it has in reality. After the teacher had asked him to try something, he looked unhappy. It was as if somebody was asking him to do something he couldn't achieve. Afterwards, Adam asked: "And do you have brown sand?" When he found out that it was available he finally begun to work. At this moment, the rest of the class was finishing the last picture transfers, some children were already cleaning up. Adam also came with his picture and wanted to make a transfer. When it was done, the picture looked as follows: there was a forest drawn by the pencil and two boletus mushrooms in the middle, sun was shining above the scenery. Just the two boletus heads became transferred onto the brown sand because they are brown. Adam was happy and asked right away: "Do you also have yellow sand?" The teacher understood that the yellows sun would appear in the course of the following transfer. By that Adam would achieve the right colouring as he wanted. However all was already tidied up. The boy felt offended and threw the picture into the bin.*

## Pedagogical portfolio

Pedagogical portfolios have become a widespread and also much discussed reflection and self-reflection tool for becoming teachers. The main aim is not the portfolio itself as a finished product, but the process. That is the activities surrounding its creation, presentation, reflection and defending, in other words the process of gathering, selecting and sorting of materials, commenting on them and reflecting as well as sharing these materials, presenting and defending them. One of the main functions of the portfolio is to help students of teaching to reflect on their teaching practice. At the same time it is used in teacher education as a source for the final evaluation, the certification. In professional literature the tension between formative and evaluation function of the portfolio has been discussed<sup>13</sup>.

In the above mentioned - primary school teacher preparation programme at the Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague, pedagogical portfolio has been used for more than ten years. The continuous activities can be utilised at the end of the studies by choosing the option to defend the **Final pedagogical portfolio** as a component of the final state exam in Pedagogy. The set rules and evaluation criteria for the Final pedagogical portfolio make it possible to see originality and individuality of each student. One of the portfolio's evaluation criteria is the quality of student's competence for reflection and self-reflection, which becomes mirrored in the reflected and self-reflected framework of the whole Final pedagogical portfolio. This framework is set by the obligation to reflect on one's own professional development at the beginning of the document and in compulsory reflexion of individual inserted materials as well as in the inserted work of students.

We present the expected quality of reflexion and self-reflection skills on the example taken from one of the Final pedagogical portfolios. One student of the part-time course reflects her discoveries related to the significance of including reflection as a full-fledged part of the lesson:

*It wasn't until later days when I found out that reflections by the pupils at the end of lessons, blocks of lessons or projects actually help me to further plan and im-*

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<sup>13</sup> A. Tomková, *Portfolio v přípravě učitelů primární školy*, [in:] *Současné proměny vzdělávání učitelů*, ed. V. Spilková and col., Brno 2004, p. 180-190; M. Pišová (eds), *Portfolio v profesní přípravě učitele*, Pardubice 2007; L. Paquay, C. Van Nieuwenhoven, P. Wouters (eds), *L'évaluation, levier du développement Professionnel?* Bruxelles 2010; M.L. Lopez, C. Van Nieuwenhoven, *Co-élaboration d'un dispositif d'évaluation entre formateurs: quelles relations de régulation au sein de la communauté de pratique?* [in:] *Évaluation en tension entre la régulation des apprentissages et le pilotage des systèmes*, eds M.L. Lopez, M. Crahay, Bruxelles 2010.

plement lessons. This is when I find out from the pupils how they did, what was easy and what difficult for them, if they preferred individual or group work, when they got stuck, whether they understood or didn't get the subject matter in the end etc. In fact, pupils are "providing me with a manual" to plan effective and interesting future lessons... Very often it happens that a teacher doesn't attend to the reflection for the lack of time. I had the same problem at the beginning. I wasn't able to estimate how much of the lesson's time I had to allocate for it and what happened was that I included it in haste and in fact only because it had been already planned. Sometimes I even didn't include it at all for lack of time. Of course, both of these variants were wrong. The superficial reflexion surely didn't give much to pupils. It didn't give much to me either because I couldn't fully concentrate on pupils' answers under the pressure of time. I learned something from this badly undertaken reflection though. I discovered that this wasn't a way forward. I tended to literally overfill the lessons with activities. Therefore I knew that the situation would repeat itself next time if I did nothing about the content of the next lesson. It took me a while to talk myself into the fact that I have to lower the number of activities and tasks and come to terms with the idea that what won't fit into one lesson can be done in the next one. To get a better idea, I was measuring the time which I dedicated to the phase of evocation, which to the phase of realization of meaning and which part of the lesson was afterwards left for the reflection. That's how I managed to find the optimal pattern of the whole teaching unit (...)

Defence of Final pedagogical portfolios is perceived as a specific occasion for the final reflection, integration and synthesis of teacher education. The existing experience from the defence of Final pedagogical portfolios has proved that this opportunity can be effectively utilised by exceptionally good and mature students. Students who have mastered and adopted the reflective approach to teaching, want to present not only their results but also progress they made in their education. They also present plans for their future professional development. They are not afraid of the tension between formative and certification function of the defence of their portfolio. The remaining question is how can be this form of the final exam be used by students who are not currently capable of reflection and self-reflection in sufficient quality. If the majority of students of teaching are to use quality reflection by the end of their studies, it is necessary to work on its development and application in professional education with higher thoughtfulness and intensity. Not only necessary skills and tools should be developed but also major accent should be laid on building a positive attitude towards reflection so that students find it meaningful. This is task for students as well as for their educators, the university teachers in cooperation with mentors – practicing teachers.

## Conclusion

Based on theoretical background, the paper presents specific selected tools of reflective approach to the education of future teachers, especially student essays, pedagogical portfolios and selected activities from the RWCT programme – Double-Entry Diary and pedagogical situations, which gradually influence also other parts of teacher education. The students and university teachers, who are the agents involved in the reflective approach to education of future students, were introduced in the paper through the examples of students' reflection and self-reflection, and through partial conclusions of individual analyses.

Skills related to the competence for reflection and self-reflection are something future teachers learn. It is necessary to develop and utilise reflective writing, presentation and defending skills throughout the whole length of study time. Students need to be equipped with the wide selection of reflective tools that they use for their learning. They uncover meaning of these tools and the effect they have on their own learning as well as the education of their pupils, and they build positive attitude towards competence for reflection and self-reflection. One of the functional tools for reflection and self-reflection is offered by the RWCT programme. From the learning styles perspective, some students will always prefer the reflective approach to education, including the presented tools, more than others. In the teacher education programme it is necessary to select the places, where students can encounter reflective and self-reflective activities. For educators of teachers this implies necessity to thoughtfully coordinate reflective tasks they assign to students of teaching. Integration and strengthening of the reflective activities undertaken by student teachers goes hand in hand with the changes in demands related to the conception of final exams as well as on the required final competences of graduate teachers and on professional competences of future teachers' educators.

The paper analysed the presented reflective and self-reflective activities of student teachers mainly from the perspective of their general pedagogical and psychological education. A challenge for pedagogical research and practice is to analyse and utilise the above mentioned tools and products of reflective approach to teacher education in even closer cooperation with subject didactics, in closer connection to individual fields.

We assume that this form of professional preparation characterised by the development of the competence for reflection and self-reflection together with the use of tools such as pedagogical portfolio can create continuity with the system of future professional development of teachers that builds on the professional standard of the teacher – reflective practitioner.

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