

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING OF FUTURE TEACHERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND ITS' REFLECTION BY STUDENTS OF SLOVAK UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE

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Abstract

Teaching experience is an integral part of the pre-gradual preparation of teachers, and is perceived as the bridge between theoretical and practical training. It is also a tool for the development of professional competences of future teachers and therefore it is necessary to pay attention to it in terms of theory, research and practice. The paper presents the theoretical background and briefly describes the results of empirical investigation, which was conducted in conditions of Slovak University of Agriculture. The paper describes the current state of practical teacher training in Slovakia and provides specific findings in the field of self-reflection and evaluation of teaching practice by student teachers of professional vocational subjects at Slovak Agricultural University in Nitra. Through the regular feedback gathered from the student teachers can be constantly improved the professional practical training of future teachers, which finally can influence the overall quality of vocational training.

Keywords: teaching practice, teacher preparation, teachers of professional vocational subjects, university student

JEL classification: I21, I23, J44

1 Introduction

Professional competencies are currently being discussed in the context of the need to ensure quality of teacher training, and there are also views on the need to construct various new models of higher education in teacher preparation. *“The current world is strongly interconnected and countries must adapt to the new conditions especially in the area new educational activities”* (Mravcová, 2014, 470). There is a permanent discussion on the content of the study, especially on the proportion of theoretical and practical parts of study.

The pedagogical practice and the development of the teacher's professional competencies can be realized only in close connection with the theoretical knowledge gained in the study of particular professional, pedagogical and psychological courses. The Reflective Practice concept is also becoming a key model for designing practical training for future teachers as part of their higher education. The study provides brief theoretical background and results of the survey on reflection of observation practice of students from Slovak University of Agriculture.

1.1 Professional pedagogical practice

Teacher education consists of four core components: 1. vocational education; 2. pedagogical-psychological education; 3. professional-subject area; 4. pedagogical practice. Practical training is a necessary part of the preparation for the teaching profession. Pedagogical practice belongs to the fundamental forms of tertiary education of future teachers. It is implemented in the curriculum through compulsory courses of pedagogical practice. The pedagogical practice have an integrating and practical-training character, it follows the theoretical and practical study of the students at the faculty and is realized within the scope defined by the curriculum. *“The students as future teachers need an education that will prepare them for present and future opportunities and challenges”* (Mravcová, 2015, p. 646). Pedagogical practice is conducted in the conditions of a specialized workplace (training school) and under the guidance of qualified specialists (training teachers). From other courses of higher education, it differs mainly by providing students with space for independent creative teaching in real school practice. Practical activity of students in training schools has the character of the supervised, controlled and evaluated activities by authorized persons. Key players in teaching practice are: student teachers, teachers of pedagogical and vocational courses in higher education, faculty teachers of subject / field didactics, training teachers from primary and secondary schools.

Pedagogical practice, which is the main source of pedagogical knowledge and natural environment for the integration of professional – field subject, psychological and pedagogical knowledge, has several organizational forms.

In introductory reflective observations, students get orientation in the activities of teachers and pupils, learn to observe the conditions in which the pedagogical situation is taking place. It provides a systematic development of the pedagogical competences of the student, opportunity to perceive and orientate in pedagogical situations, to describe and analyze them. These lesson analysis are designed to show students' ability to apply and verify theories in specific pedagogical situations. The most important part of pedagogical practice is **teaching performance**. It allows students to enter the school life, realize their own ideas, models of teaching, and also give space for their appropriate activity. In addition to preparing for the teacher performance, and its' realization, there is a great emphasis on the analysis and assessment of the performance - the lessons analysis. Through it students get a deeper insight into pedagogical phenomena, they think about the educational process and reveal the secrets of teaching activity. The lessons analysis are seen as a positive motivation both for the student and for the training teacher. During the teaching performance assessment the student expresses their views on the lesson.

The highlight of the practical preparation of the students is a **continuous pedagogical practice – placement at selected training school** (includes teaching performance, work with a pedagogical agenda etc.), which focuses on the following: - to be acquainted with the climate of the school, organization of the school; - to analyze teaching performance with the participation of training teachers, - to select appropriate means of expression, to formulate ideas clearly, to create a suitable atmosphere in the classroom, to build up relation with pupils, - to respond appropriately to specific situations, - work with experienced teachers, - to work with parents, - to organize out-of-class events with children, - to make use of regional specificities in particular subjects, - to work with documentation about pupils.

Students first learn to observe (describe, analyze, evaluate) and after this they learn step by step to project, implement and evaluate their own teaching performance. The fulfillment of the requirements is directly checked and evaluated by the **training teacher**, but the level of the pedagogical competencies development should be evaluated also by the **faculty teachers** of subject/field didactics or **coordinator of the teaching practice**. Evaluation and assessment is based on analysis and of various evidence such as: *Videos* of parts of the student's teaching units that demonstrate that they have applied effective teaching practices; *Student assessments* of lessons and subjects taught during pedagogical practice; Observations

records and *assessments by mentors* (faculty teachers, methodologists, etc.) or *classmates* during the teaching units that the student taught during pedagogical practice; *Didactic tests* or other written statements of pupils created or evaluated by the student teacher during the pedagogical practice; *Observation records* of the lessons the student has attended; *Diary* from pedagogical practice, written preparation of the student for teaching (Zatková, 2008).

Reflective diary and portfolio used as part of the activities of pre-service teaching practice is a tool for descriptive, reflective and/or critical recording of professional experiences lived by the student in teacher training situations. As states Trif and Popescu (2013) the reflective diary helps organize the activity of guided analysis of pedagogical practice experiences aimed at: identifying students' own needs, interests, training motivation, the degree of mastery of past acquisitions, shaping an accurate image on their effectiveness in practical teaching situations. The analysis, processing and interpretation of such a structured reflective diary is focused on the following areas: characterizing the school climate factors where students conduct teaching practice; analyzing the relationship between the school mentor and student; identifying the strengths and weaknesses in terms of classroom management. (Trif & Popescu, 2013).

Although there is a high degree of autonomy in the universities and colleges preparing teachers, each college creates its own model of practical teacher training. "The increased processes of internationalization have impacts also on changes in the structure and content of educational systems within countries" (Svitačová & Mravcová, 2014, p.44). Among different models of pedagogical practice is however possible to identify certain common trends both in Europe and in the developed world, e.g.:

- Practical preparation has a **gradation character**. It creates a system of follow-up (usually three or four) different types of practice with the increasing difficulty of tasks for students. Often begins in the conditions of the faculty with practices or trainings that are preparing to enter school. It continues with observation of pupils, classes and lessons, then with micro-performance and assisting activities of the students, followed by the sequence of the lessons taught by the individual students up to the continuously realized longer-term teaching in one class.
- Careful attention is given to the **orientation on student's professional competences** and the level to be reached at the end of the study (performance orientation). Even in reflexive approaches, competencies are the content of practical training and the criterion of student assessment.
- There is also a focus on the **reflexive nature of practical training** and a particularly strong emphasis on the self-reflective skills of the future teacher achieve-

ved through structured self-reflection. Even in competence models, reflection and self-reflection are an important tool for learning of the students. Often are to the reflection of student practice devoted various group activities or seminars after passing the different types of practice that are led by a faculty teacher along with a training teacher.

- There is also a **tendency to demonstrate evidence of student competency** through the **student portfolio**. The portfolio as output of practical training, including structured requirements, appears in all countries and models of teacher preparation. Differences are in the function, whether it' primary importance is for student assessment or for learning of the student. More and more is actually mentioned electronic or an interactive portfolio.
- The basis of good implementation of the practice is **the close cooperation between the training school and the university**, constant pedagogical and scientific-research care of the quality of training teachers, their education, harmonization of requirements for students, etc. Very often, one of the training schools, sometimes called a laboratory, faculty or university school, is directly an organizational part of a higher education institution. Experts in field didactics and practitioners teach each other, jointly lead students to practice and their reflection, carry out research projects, and so on. Furthermore, it is possible to identify an increasing emphasis on **the role of mentor (training teacher)** and increasing level of requirements for performing this specialized function.
- There is **increasing the importance of student assessment in pedagogical practice for the overall success of studies**, e.g. in Canada, failure to meet the specified level of competency, or in the Netherlands, the lack of portfolios of a certain quality means abandoning a study; in Ireland, even the assessment of pedagogical practice significantly influences the admission of the job seekers to the school (Spilková & Tomková, 2010). In several countries, the defence of the selected portfolio problem is part of state examinations. (Kosová & Tomengová et al., 2015, pp. 23-28)

1.1.1 Realization of pedagogical practice in conditions of Slovak University of Agriculture

At Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra (SUA) is the preparation of teachers of vocational subjects carried out within the framework of accredited programs of the Supplementary Pedagogical Study (SPS). Centre of Pedagogy and Psychological Counselling at Faculty of Economics and Management (FEM) SUA prepares teachers of professional agricultural, economic, food and technical subjects. In

this type of study, in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Education (MŠVaŠ, 2014), the implementation of the practice is graduated in terms of development of teacher professionalism (orientation, diagnostic, didactic-projecting and integration-realization practice within 40 lessons).

SPS students undertake a pedagogical practice in a given period at training schools, which is divided into two parts during the 3rd and 4th semesters of the SPS and the practice follows the Guidelines for the realization of Pedagogical Practice of Students of the Supplementary Pedagogical Study (valid at SUA in Nitra). Pedagogical practice is carried out in cooperation with training schools. With these schools SUA concluded bilateral agreements on mutual cooperation in the field of preparation of teachers of agricultural, food, economic and technical subjects. Pedagogical practice is divided into two parts: **1. Observation practice in vocational subjects.** It consists of **orientation practice**, which includes instruction by coordinator of practice and by training teachers, observation of pedagogical activities of the teacher, processing of observation records. **Diagnostic practice** consists of student observations and subsequent analysis with training teachers. A final portfolio is required evidence of the student's activities during the teaching practice according to the practice guideline. **2. Teaching performance practice** consists of a **didactic - projecting** part comprising didactic analysis and written preparation for the teaching and consultations on the preparation with a training teacher. Immediately after it follows **the integration and realization** part of pedagogical practice. Component of this practice are the **final teacher performance** of the student, analysis of the practice experience, the assessment of the diary and the final assessment of the student. Students during their teaching practice take part in meetings of the Pedagogical board of the school, meetings of particular Subject Committees and participate in other activities related to the educational and organizational work of the training school. Students write a practice diary, which is signed by the training teacher and the director, of the school. The reflective diary is an effective professional training instrument for future teachers. The student is required to submit it to the coordinator of practice at the faculty for review. Its processing is a prerequisite for completion of the practice. The practice ends with the final teacher performance in front of the commission consisting of: the teacher from Centre of pedagogy at SUA as chairman of the commission, the director or the authorized representative of the school and the training teacher. (CPPP FEM SUA, 2014)

1.1.2 Reflection and evaluation of observation teaching practice by students of the Slovak University of Agriculture

Slavík and Siňor (1993, p. 157) define the specific reflective competence of a teacher as the teacher's readiness to reflect and evaluate the pedagogical procedure, to diagnose its own activity and to derive knowledge from it for positive influence (In Průcha, 2002, pp. 106-107). Kyriacou includes among the basic pedagogical competences the evaluation of the pupils' achievement and the reflection and self-evaluation of their own work (Kyriacou, 1996, p. 26). It is important that these areas of pedagogical competencies are purposely developed during the theoretical and also practical teacher training, primarily by ensuring good methodical and practical training. These characteristics of reflective competencies are particularly emphasized in order to highlight the requirement for a teacher to compare himself as competent in his profession. Recognizing potential deficiencies is a necessary beginning to remove them. Teachers should therefore develop their own self-reflection or individual self-evaluation as part of their preparation. "Self-reflection is understood as awareness of their own teaching knowledge, experience of pedagogical activity and especially of pedagogical decision-making" (Obst, 2006, p. 175). The self-reflection of a teacher is an indispensable part of the profession. Hupková (2004, p. 43) states that "deliberate, purposeful and planned self-reflection allows the teacher to learn more about their own educational activity and the possibilities of its innovations. The teacher systematically focuses attention on the planning, realization and evaluation of their own work, using various self-reflection methods in order to eliminate the existing deficiencies and to constantly improve their own activity and the educational process." At this point, we would like to emphasize that not only the assessment of pupils, their learning and the achieved results is an important part of the teaching competencies, but also the reflection, self-evaluation and evaluation of the teacher's own pedagogical work. The development of reflective competences of the teaching staff is realized through various activities even during observation pedagogical practice.

Observation practice in the SPS at SUA is realized in groups according to the field specialization of students. It includes: **Orientation practice** includes: Instruction to Educational Practice by Coordinator of teaching practice or teacher of the teaching practice course from Centre of Pedagogy at SUA and training teacher at the training school, continuous observation of the pedagogical activity of teacher of professional subjects by students - during teacher's working day, processing of observation record (4lessons). **Diagnostic practice** includes: - observations of students, processing of observation records and analysis of the observed lessons with training teachers (10lessons).

In addition to the observation of general conditions of the visited school, the student completes assistant activities in the lessons and records the observations of attended lessons to the **activity report** and to the **observation report**.

The output from the observation practice is a portfolio containing an activity report from practice, a report on pedagogical practice and student's records that contain relevant information about the particular elements of the lesson structure - the form of the records is elaborated according to the template (Šeben Začková, 2015). The evaluation and the own reflection of the pedagogical practice are realized by the students especially by filling in the space for analysis of the lessons attended with the teacher and notes in the observation reports, but also by completing the separate **Pedagogical Practice Report**, which contains two parts, namely:

1. The evaluation of the training school and the training teacher: (1. Material-technical conditions of the training school, 2. The approach of the training school to the practice of the student, 3. The approach of the training teacher to the student's practice, 4. Recommendation of the training school for the pedagogical practice, 5. Recommendation of a training teacher for guiding pedagogical practice).
2. Self-reflection of the student (non-teaching activities organized by the school the student participated in; formulation of the pedagogical problem student encountered during the pedagogical practice).

2 Data and Methods

In the study was used text analysis of the theoretical background and descriptive quantitative analysis of the results combined with the qualitative interpretation of data. Empirical investigation was conducted in conditions of Slovak University of Agriculture and provides specific findings in the field of self-reflection and evaluation of teaching practice by student teachers of professional vocational subjects at Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra.

The above-mentioned model of pedagogical practice and its evaluation (chapters 1.1.1 and 1.1.2) is applied at SUA from 2015. In the study is compared the reflection of observation practice by students in the full time study in the period of years from 2015 to present 2018 (3 academic years). Students were placed at training schools in the city of Nitra. Number of students in particular years was different, therefore also the number of training schools varied. In 2015, the pedagogical practice of students was conducted at 4 schools, in 2016 at 3 schools and in 2017 at 8 secondary vocational schools. Overall number of students was 67.

As tool for data gathering was analysis of Pedagogical Practice Report filled in by students in 3 academic years between 2015- 2018.

3 Results and Discussion

Pedagogical practice report consisted of 7 aspects that were assessed by students. 2 aspects were assessed through given answer options and the other 5 aspects were evaluated by filling in own answer. Students assessed material-technical conditions of the training school; The approach of the training school to the practice of the student; The approach of the training teacher to the student's practice; students listed non-teaching activities organized by the school the student participated in and formulated pedagogical problems they encountered during the pedagogical practice.

Recommendation of the training school for the pedagogical practice and recommendation of a training teacher for guiding pedagogical practice were answered by selection of the appropriate option.

Tables 1 to 3 show the students' evaluation of material and technical conditions of the training schools.

Table 1 **Material and technical conditions of the training school 2015/2016**

2015/2016	
Excellent (notebooks, interactive boards, tutorials, internet)	8
Excellent, each classroom has a dataprojector, an interactive board. The pupils confirm their arrival electronically using the card, the registration in the electronic classroom book	1
Very good	4
The school is well-equipped with ICT, dataprojector, interactive whiteboard, but light curtains make it impossible to see anything at whiteboard	1
Adjusted to lessons, functional tools in the classrooms, the most often used was data projector	1
Dataprojector, interactive whiteboard	1
Suitable	3
Satisfactory	2
Classrooms, blackboard	1
Classrooms without an interactive whiteboard, lack of ICT (few photocopiers, computers), equipment of laboratories at a good level	3
Unlisted	1
Total	26

Source: Author's calculations.

Table 2 **Material and technical conditions of the training school 2016/2017**

2016/2017	
Excellent	4
At high level	1
On a very good level, specialized classrooms have computers, interactive boards, dataprojectors, ecological boards, Internet	1
Very good	9
Pc, interactive whiteboards, dataprojectors	1
Classrooms for vocational subjects, classrooms for teaching informatics, rooms for practical training, gymnasium, sports grounds, dining room, buffet,	1
Good, some classrooms were without a data projector	3
Total	20

Source: Author's calculations.

Table 3 **Material and technical conditions of the training school 2017/2018**

2017/2018	
Excellent	4
Very good: textbooks, interactive whiteboards, computers, laboratory aids	4
Good: new laboratory, well equipped	4
Good, interactive whiteboard, PC, dataprojector, models	7
Good	11
Dataprojector, notebook, internet, TV with videorecorder, combined whiteboard (chalk, fixa) in each class	4
Textbooks, dataprojector	3
Average equipment	1
Sufficient, laboratory very well equipped	3
Total	41

Source: Author's calculations.

From student assessments, we can summarize that training secondary vocational schools are equipped with adequate technology and material tools. Positive evaluations prevailed among students, although in the year 2015/2016 three students stated that some classes did not have interactive boards and in 2016/2017 the same number of students said some of the classrooms lacked data projectors. At present, training schools are equipped with the appropriate teaching technology,

and students had the opportunity to be acquainted with it according to the needs of their individual practice.

Table 4 Non-teaching activities organized by the school I participated in

2015/2016		2016/2017		2017/2018	
Pedagogical supervision in the hallway	6	Pedagogical supervision	7	Pedagogical supervision	5
				Pedagogical supervision and lesson about educational problems	1
				Pedagogical supervision and guard in PC classroom	5
Practical training	3	Practical training	1	Excursion	2
Meeting of the parental association	2			Educational concert	4
No	9			No	5
Unlisted	6	Unlisted	12	Unlisted	19
Total	26	Overall	20	Overall	41

Source: Author's calculations.

In the table 4 were listed the activities in addition to the observed lessons in which students took part in their practice. In summary, at each year, the over-majority of students did not engage in other activities (we assume that the blank items meant that students did not attend other activities beyond the prescribed lessons). The activities attended by students included mainly pedagogical supervision, it was followed by participation in practical training, excursion, meeting of the parental association and in 2017 four students took part in the educational concert.

In the table 5 are shown results of students' evaluation of the approach of the training school to their pedagogical practice and in the table 6 subsequently, the approach of the training teacher. The specific formulations of the students' assessments and their numbers in each year are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Approach of the training school to teaching practice

2015/2016		2016/2017		2017/2018	
Excellent	7	Excellent	13	Excellent	13
Very good	4	Very good, helpful	1	Very good	8

2015/2016		2016/2017		2017/2018	
Very helpful	3	Willingness and patience in every direction	3	Good with friendly approach	1
Accommodating to the needs of the student teacher	6	At high level	1	Good and helpful	8
Everyone tried to help, to advise	1	Pedagogical practice has been organized so that I have the opportunity to observe teaching practices and situations in class as well as to teach professional subjects out of classroom environment	1	Responsible and willing	4
Positive approach to practice	1	Management of the school showed interest in student, they willingly provided information about possibilities of graduates' employment in the field, they provided information on school education program, curricula, and pedagogical documentation	1	Kind and helpful	5
Willingness to help, explain, advise	1			Professional but helpful	1
Unlisted	3			Positive	1
Total	26	Total	20	Total	41

Source: Author's calculations.

We can conclude that the approach of the training school has been positively evaluated by all students. No negative evaluations have appeared. Prevailed characteristics of the school approach to the students practice such as excellent, very good, helpful and friendly.

Table 6 Approach of the training teachers to teaching practice

2015/2016		2016/2017		2017/2018	
Excellent	8	Excellent	12	Excellent	13
Very good	2	Very good	1	Very good	9
He was willing, familiar and informed me about the whole school and teaching	3	At high level	1	Helpful	5

2015/2016		2016/2017		2017/2018	
Willing, helpful	5	Helpful, willing, kind, open	4	Willing and helpful	5
He was open, trying to surrender his experiences, problems that we might encounter	2	Teachers 'approach was beneficial for me, as it allowed me to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and experience necessary for the profession of a teacher	1	Positive, willing to advise	4
The teacher has contributed both quantitatively and qualitatively to make the teaching practice more effective	2	Lovable, empathetic, friendly and willing to explain or help anything	1	Humanistic approach	1
The teacher contributed to the effectiveness of the practice and was the example of ideal teacher through the whole practice	1			Friendly and helpful	1
Very positive, trying to teach me as much as possible	2			Responsible, helpful	3
She tried to help and show us the most she could	1				
Total	26	Total	20	Total	41

Source: Author's calculations.

When evaluating the approach of the training teacher, listed in Table 6, no negative evaluations were found in the students' assessments as well. Assessments contained predominantly characteristics like excellent, very good, prudent, willing, and helpful.

A similar survey was also carried out by Dytrtová (2017) at the Czech University of Agriculture, which states that guidance by training teachers seemed to be a stimulant for students, with emphasis on expertise, organization of teaching, discipline of pupils and pedagogical skills.

In Tables 7, 8, 9 are presented the formulations of the problems encountered by students during their pedagogical practice.

Table 7 Pedagogical problem encountered by students during the pedagogical practice 2015/2016

2015/2016	
Weak discipline of some pupils	2
During the didactic game, one pupil was unnecessarily active- she attracted attention and unnecessarily delayed the teacher and the class	1
The disobedience of some pupils; the problem for me was also subject for animal production-based practice, as my focus is rather on plant production	1
Unpreparedness of pupils to teaching	3
Differentiated approach of the school and the teacher to the disabled pupil	2
The deficiency and obsolescence of textbooks	1
Changing and moving from classrooms, so pupils and teachers have shorter breaks and lessons are starting about 5 minutes later	3
The ongoing reconstruction of the building, which sometimes disturbed the teaching process	2
In the case of internet failure there was a problem in the instruction, the teacher should also be prepared for such situations	1
No	4
Unlisted	6
Total	26

Source: Author's calculations.

Table 8 Pedagogical problem encountered by students during the pedagogical practice 2016/2017

2016/2017	
The smaller pedagogical problem occurred in the 4. A, when one pupil repeatedly interrupted during the lesson	2
Some pupils did not have books or were unprepared to lessons	1
Weak motivation of pupils	4
Pupils' discontent	1
Weak activity of some pupils, they were not interested in the subject and teaching, lack of discipline, inattention, discontent, insufficient preparation for lesson and non-fulfillment of the homework	1
Work with integrated pupils	6
Integrated pupil in the class needs special attention what disturbs pupils at work	1

2016/2017	
Missing textbooks, even if they are available, they are outdated, teachers have to replace them by their own exercises, etc.	1
No	3
Total	20

Source: Author's calculations.

Table 9 Pedagogical problem encountered by students during the pedagogical practice 2017/2018

2017/2018	
Frequent disturbance of students, inattention	1
Occasional disturbance of students	2
In higher grades was lower respect to teachers' authority	1
Despite the effort of the teacher, pupils were unconcerned or exhibited problematic behavior	7
Insufficient interest of the pupil in education	5
Sometimes weak motivation, low activity	4
Inattention on subject matter and repetition. The pupil was not disciplined and understanding while another pupil has been examined	1
The fear of pupils to show their knowledge among others (inactive pupils or active in bad direction)	1
Large inequalities in pupils' knowledge in class	1
In the classroom was a pupil that requires a special approach, classmates and teacher helped him	1
Small numbers of pupils (when they were split into groups) what causes inadequate activity (even passivity) of pupils.	2
Combined class consisting of several joined lessons is not appropriate. The activity of pupils and their attention decreases, the teacher has to focus on ensuring the fluency of teaching process (It is not always simple) at the expense of the thematic plan.	1
Breaks are not enough long for teacher to prepare, inappropriate placement of the cabinet because of the need to pass through the class	1
In some classrooms there were not enough places for pupils	1
The diversity of the lesson, I see as a problem. The teacher must be flexible and adapt to the various activities of students. Whatever is the preparation for the lesson, it will always end different	1
No	1

2017/2018	
Unlisted	10
Total	41

Source: Author's calculations.

Students during their practice identified pedagogical problems relating to the behavior, discipline, motivation and activity of pupils in educational process. Followed problems like work with integrated pupils, respectively pupils with special needs, lack and out-of-date textbooks for vocational subjects and also organizational and spatial problems at the level of individual schools such as low or on the other side high numbers of pupils in classrooms, frequent transfers within the school premises and this is associated with demanding time requirements, short breaks, etc.

We agree that problems with discipline are the most often. In accordance with the findings of the international TALIS study was proved, that "an average Slovak teacher loses about 4.6 minutes to keep the order in the classroom. The average young teacher loses about 6.5 minutes to maintain the order in the classroom. Up to two-fifths of young teachers make order in classroom during the lesson on average for more than 10 minutes. An even more serious finding, in terms of the OECD TALIS study, is the lower self-confidence of Slovak teachers (-0.30). Young teachers have it statistically significantly lower than the Slovak average (-0.41) and up to 62% of them believe they are not respected (In Koršňáková, 2009, p. 200). Similarly, Koršňáková (2009, p. 199) notes that "beginning teachers work with ICT at a higher level than their elderly colleagues, but they have a greater lack of information on the education of pupils with special educational needs, having problems with pupil discipline and classroom leadership. These areas deserve the attention of institutions preparing future teachers."

The results on recommendations of a training school and a training teacher for pedagogical practice can be summarized as follows. Students recommended both the schools and teachers for the guidance of students during pedagogical practice. Students had to choose from answers (Yes/ Rather yes/ Do not know/ Rather no/ No). Even though in 2015/2016 one student gave the answer "rather yes", but the rest of answers were "yes". In 2016/2017 all the students gave answer "yes" both for recommendation of training school and also for recommendation of a training teacher. In 2017/2018 five students reported the answer "rather yes" for the recommendation of the teacher and nine answers were "rather yes" for the recommendation of school, the rest of answers in both categories were "yes".

4 Conclusion

Teaching practice is a linkage between theoretical education of students and their future profession. We understand it as a set of structured pedagogical situations taking place at a training school under the guidance of a training teacher. It is an integral part of the system of pedagogical, psychological, professional and practical training. The portfolio and diary serve as useful tools for student learning and also as output of practical training.

Based on the reflection of the observation practice of the future teachers, it can be concluded that the students were satisfied with the approach of training schools and training teachers to them and to their practice. They positively assessed the equipment and material and technical facilities of the schools and recommend the training schools and the training teachers for the guidance of students during pedagogical practice in the future. However, some problematic aspects and suggestions for improving teacher training indicate us the problems that students have encountered during their practice.

Based on students' indications, the following suggestions can be recommended:

- To focus in the theoretical and practical preparation of teachers on strengthening the issues related to behavior problems solving and discipline of pupils in teaching, raising and maintaining motivation, attention and activity of pupils.
- As another pedagogical problem, students indicated the work with pupils with special needs, which in practice can interfere with the smooth process of the teaching and requires individual approach to such pupils. In line with the above mentioned, we recommend to strengthen the teacher preparation for work with integrated pupils.
- As a problem, students see also lack of textbooks and outdated textbooks in vocational subjects. Of course, this issue is within the competence of the school authorities, but excellent professional training is important to help the novice teacher to cope with the challenging situations, prepares them for work with various teaching materials, didactic aids and, last but not least, teacher preparation should develop their skills in creating new text documents and learning supports. Preparation for the creation and development of a learning text is more challenging even for teachers of professional vocational subjects, as it is known that many of these subjects are the weakest covered with adequate textbooks, and the scientific knowledge in these disciplines is the fastest subject of obsolescence.

In conclusion, this survey is only a small probe in the field of pedagogical practice of students, but it is an important element that can contribute to the

effectiveness not only of practical but especially theoretical training and requires constant attention in the future.

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