

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN TEACHER TRAINING: 'ACTIVE LEARNING' AND NON-TRADITIONAL EVALUATION

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'Times change and we change with them': is this true in our schools? In all higher education institutions we have to think so because of expansion processes: there is an ever-growing social and cultural heterogeneity among students. Several researchers tried to find solutions for decades (e.g. *Schmidt; Bargel; Elias; Gorbachyk*; etc.). Among the good examples we find competence-assessment and developing programmes; tutor-programmes; pedagogical and didactical changes in teaching (in teaching style, methods, techniques and assessment). The idea of active learning (*Bonwell & Eison, 1991*) and assessment for learning seems the most popular all over Europe, but in Hungary research shows their unpopularity and negative attitudes against them. The key of positive change is the teachers of the future. We know that changing minds, beliefs (and practice) of a student teacher may be effective if they have lots of enjoyable and successful own experiences either in learning or in assessing situations.

The aim of our research is mapping first year teacher trainee students' 'folk-pedagogical' (*Bruner, 1996*) model of mind and pedagogy, then forming these towards the paradigm of constructive pedagogy in a planned and well-structured way. I want to create and pilot a system of lectures and seminars based on active learning and assessment for learning. I hypothesize that freshmen have traditional beliefs, but their own experiences and active reflections will transform them. I assume that cooperative and active teaching methods and new assessment forms have a place in Hungarian higher education because they help students to be successful. I am sure of a big influence of teaching practice, but its direction is one of the biggest questions. I plan a longitudinal research project lasting 10 years with 100 teacher trainees. I'd like to follow their beliefs and practice through college and in the first years of practice. The sample consists of 195 students: (1) N=53 from 2011; (2) N=50 from 2012; (3) N=42 from 2013; (4) N=50 from 2014.

The present paper focuses on: (a) the freshmen's 'folk-pedagogical' beliefs focusing on didactics; (b) the system of shaping their thinking (methods and techniques in lectures, seminars and exams year by year); (c) the results of assessments of the first group.

I use mixed methodology with four qualitative and one quantitative method, but in the present paper I focus on the results of questionnaires (based on *Thackway, 1997*; Cronbach's alpha=.82; 70 items,).

The results of freshmen showed by Bruner's category: (1) they see children as learning most from didactic exposure (76%; diff. between gender; social status); (2) they hold externalist theory, traditional educational pedagogy (82%). I found traditional thinking with an idealistic picture about oneself as a pedagogue, too. Over the 4 years of the study, most categories and beliefs show significant differences, and in practice by all odds assessment methods. Our system based on new methodology had very good learning results both in climate of lessons and in exams.