

## EXPLORATION AND MEASUREMENT OF STUDENT TEACHERS' VIEWS OF PROFESSIONALS AND PROFESSIONAL SELF-CONCEPT

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We based our research on the main concepts of teachers' thinking such as the close relationship between theoretical and practical knowledge (*Schön, 1983; Shulman, 1986*), the practical significance of the views and the transformability of beliefs (*Huberman, 1993*). In agreement with the research findings, we think the students' thinking can be explored at the start of the training and can be developed later throughout the training. Our aim was to develop a toolkit for following and developing trainees in higher education.

We explored teacher trainees' professional self-concept and their representations of teachers in a longitudinal research (N=102). It started in 2010, when the students were freshmen, and was performed in two steps. In the first stage we used the method of thematic reflective life interview, in the second we updated *Éva Szabó's (1999)* semantic differential.

Based on the narratives, the life interview revealed those events and effects which were important in the professional identity formation of students. Focused questions constituted the different dimensions of the students' representations of teachers. Our categories were: a) traditional/modern, b) professional calling, c) symbol of the profession, d) identity/reality, and e) relation to well-known models. The data were analysed according to the criteria catalogue of qualitative methodology. In two thirds of the sample the traditional way of thinking was typical, accompanied by interpretations of the profession as art or self-sacrifice and an idealistic teacher representation. Concerning professional self-concept, an idealistic love for children, communication and leadership abilities were important components. During the training, the beliefs of the students were shaped based on constructive pedagogy. The measurement was repeated when the students were in their fourth year.

The second stage of measurement was designed to modify *Szabó's (1999)* semantic differential according to the traits of elementary school teachers, and to place teacher trainees' concept of an average teacher and their own professional self-concept on the same scale. Before the development of the scale we analysed the traits of teachers (the data were collected from the pilot study), and five categories were formed: cognitive, social, ethical, personal and methodological. The concepts of an average teacher and the self-concepts were assessed on the modified semantic differential. According to the paired t-test students' self-concept is significantly more positive than the concept of an average teacher in some dimensions. We got three factors on the data by EFA, and these factors fit Lewin's theory of leadership styles. In the course of training, the trainees' concepts became more differentiated and more realistic.

Our results prove the necessity of guidance for facilitating student development and support the usability of different methodological tools.