

DEVELOPING PEDAGOGICAL REFLECTION IN FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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(Review)

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Abstract

The ability to teach through reflection is one of the main indicators for the level of professional experience. The scientific presentation puts a focus on the forming of pedagogical reflection in the future teachers in the nursery school and the primary school. The presented technology for conscious practice of reflection in the physical education, applied in different educational forms – observation, current practice, pre-graduation training, extra auditory studies, reveals possibilities for optimizing the special training and pedagogical competency of the students for the effective realization of the physical education of children and students.

Keywords: *students-pedagogues, physical education, preschool age, primary school age, motor learning, educational technology*

INTRODUCTION

Being studied in the context of personal development, reflection, a basic psychological phenomenon of the inner activity of the person, has been a topical issue since the first pedagogical publications till today. It is not accidental that in the newest international papers for European education, it has been listed in a position of essential construct of the key competencies which are necessary for everybody in “*the society of knowledge*”, the reasons for that being sought in its various forms and developing the personal potential. Many researches have proved that as a mental procedure, consciously guided by the pedagogue (and reflected upon) towards self-awareness, reflection stimulates the intellectual growth of the student and leads him to major means of activity (Georgieva (Георгиева), 2010); Petrov (Петров), 2007; Pirov (Пиръов), 1985). It creates prerequisites for self development, self education and self perfection, by which means it contributes to its more complete vital realization (Boeva (Боева) & Ivanova (Иванова), 2010; Britton, 1988).

It has been established that reflection,

as an integrative quality of the person of the teacher, includes modules from the intellectual and the personal reflection, the practical reflection and the reflection as a dialogue (Vasilev (Василев), 2006). In the immediate pedagogical activity it is based as a self-analysis of the *retrospective type*, connected with the application and variation of well known facts, skills, etc.; controlling, checking and evaluation of the educational achievements, formulation of conclusions, finding of new decisions, etc, as well as with the self-analysis of the *prognostic type*, aimed towards the projection of the applied didactic technologies on the direction and the parameters of their resultative effect (Bizkov (Бижков), & Kraevski (Краевски), 2007; Petrov (Петров), 2007).

Our long teaching practice has shown us that the lack of professional experience for physical education of the future teachers – preschool and primary-school pedagogues – hinders their reflexive thinking at the stage of their preparation in the university, while the revealing of the pedagogical reflection after getting of the bachelor degree, is at a low level. By our view,

if reflection is not developed at the university level, consistent and systematic as a psychological and pedagogical process, a method and conscious technology, then in the professional field the reflective work of the pedagogue will either be absent or non-effective.

The present publication puts the emphasis on aspects of the development of the pedagogical reflection with students, toward its understanding and studying as a basic component of the methodological competency of a pedagogue. On that basis, we see the reflection as an introspection, performed by the teacher in the real professional situation – “an inner look” with analyses, comparisons, decisions, actions, taking into account the personal qualities, that is, as a constant process of evaluation and self-evaluation of the models of thinking of the teacher and the students, their behavior, feelings, etc., which arise during the pedagogical intercourse.

The aim of the performed scientific and applied activity is: Development of the reflection in the student-pedagogues and mastering of models for professional reflective analysis and evaluation for the effective realization of the physical education in the pre-school and primary school age.

The objects of the observation are students from the third course and the graduates of the specialties *Pre-school and primary school pedagogy with a foreign language* at the Faculty of Education in Trakia University, the city of Stara Zagora, Bulgaria. The presented system of work summarizes a three-year experience and methodology of application.

ANALYSIS

The training in *Theory and methodology of physical education* has been done for two years, in the obligatory curriculum disciplines: *Theoretical foundations of physical education, Methodology of the training in physical education at the pre-school and primary school level* and *Theory and methodology of physical education in 1.-4.class*. By the end of their study the students learn to master the theoretical cycle also at a practical-motion basis – the curriculum contents of the established by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education, Youth and Science programs for physical education in the nursery school and the primary school; develop personal and professional qualities and pedagogical

competency for quality management of the educational process.

We accept the experience as an indicator regarding the methodological reflection and a basic criterion for efficiency of the pedagogical work. In the performed experimental activity, the construction of the reflective practice of the student is based on the process of studying through the personal experience, as well as through the experience of the others. Within the meaning of the stages of development of the teacher (Britton, 1988), we direct the dynamics from the “*dependency on the teacher*” to “*dependency on the group*” and “*self-confidence*”. The professional experience of the university tutor and the professional teacher is in the role of a mediator between the theory and the practice. The foundations for the creation of “practical theories” and the mastering of the future pedagogue of samples of reflective teaching in physical education are their competences for modeling of the school process through breaking the established stereotypes by integration of innovative elements, application of interactive methods, etc., initiating the active knowledge and conscious participation of the students.

The open observation in a professional media and the teaching by the students / co-students of different forms of physical education in the pre-school and the primary school (a lesson, a situation, parts of them), represents a source of empirical material for reflective analysis and evaluation. The development of reflection is helped by the mastered criteria in the auditory forms for a critical analysis of the pedagogical activity, formed in three directions, as well as their evaluation using certain indicators (Boeva (Боева) & Ivanova (Иванова), 2010):

1. The preliminary preparation of the person performing the form of physical education with analysing: *the quality of the school documentation; provision of the necessary conditions for the lesson/seminar; meeting the sanitary and hygienic requirements; the outer appearance of the tutor and the students.*

2. The educational activity of the person performing the form of physical education with evaluatuin of: *the organization of the work; the micro structure and macro stucture components of the form; degree of realization of the planned educational tasks; the achieved functional effect; the educational and emotional effect; the*

pedagogical mastery shown, such as: style of work in a methodological aspect, professional and personal qualities, personal sports and technical preparation.

3. The activity of the students with evaluation of: *the degree of participation, behavior and success in the context of the educational tasks and the stages of education; the degree of*

satisfaction of the form and the guidance of the tutor; the degree of physical endurance.

It has been proved that, in order to master the skills of the reflective practice by the pedagogue, it is appropriate to coordinate it to the cyclic character and the phases of the process of reflection (Korthagen, 2002).

A key dependency is given to the form-

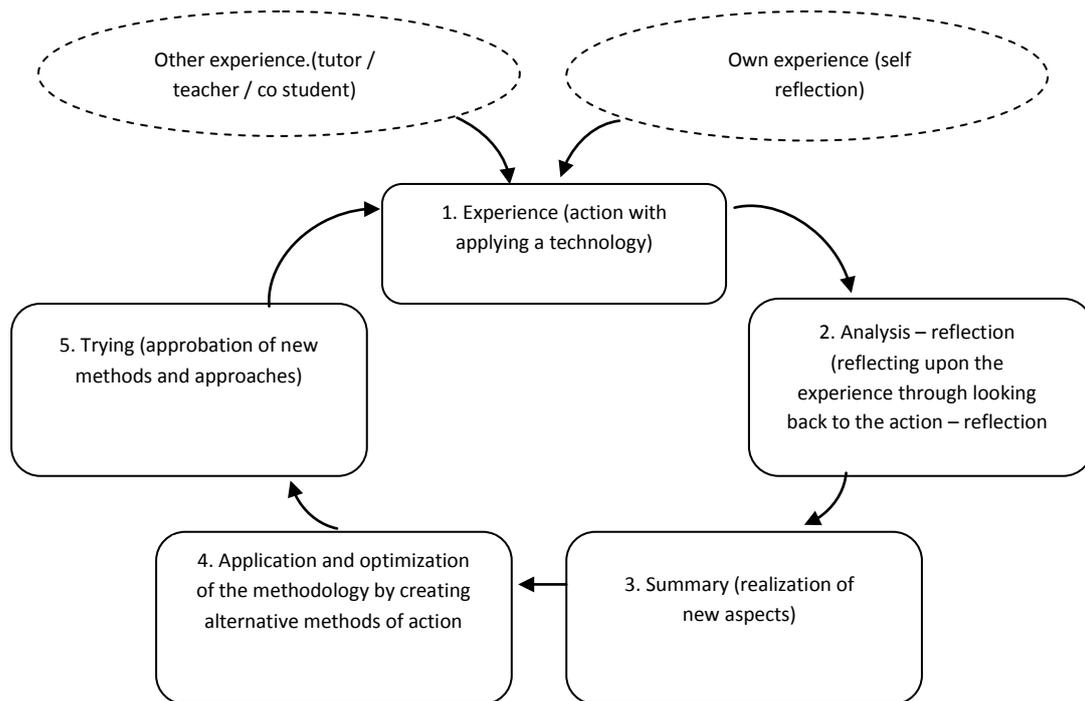


Fig.1. Technological adaptation of the model ALACT (an acronym of the first letters of the five stages)

ing of a skill in the students for compiling of a reflective questionnaire on the basis of tracing, evaluation and verbalization (not obligatory) of the own samples of thinking, pedagogical decisions, effects on the activity of the students, etc., and their juxtaposition with the preliminary idea (fig.1.). In a technological aspect, the directions for the students are about a critical analysis of the theoretical and the practical knowledge in the context of the professional action:

- Evaluation of the applied pedagogical technology using helping questions, such as: What particularly did I want to achieve?; Whether the used didactic models were effective (or they were missing) for the solving of the educational and the recovery tasks?; Whether the organization of my work provides an optimal thickness and the necessary functional

influence?; Whether the choice of the applied means was appropriate?; Whether the educational media motivated the conscious physical activity?; Was there a positive emotion created for group and individual creative performances and collaboration?; What was the participation of the students (active, passive, indifferent or other)?, and so on.

- Identifying the differences that arose when juxtaposing the realized and the planned activities with the answer to the question: Where is the problem?

Our working model takes into account the preliminary experience and encompasses in a greater degree the professional changes. Our expectations are not connected with the reproduction on the part of the students of cognitive “samples”, but a well-thought creative interpre-

tation.

Phase 3. Summary (realization of basic aspects of the applied pedagogical technology), which are revealed with the questions: What was important to me? What is important for the students? The self-awareness is performed through:

- reflection over the behavior, the activities of the students, as well as over the personal pedagogical work (What is the reason for lack of interest?; What method would be more appropriate to change the negative reaction?, etc.

- reflection over the qualities of the

person (teacher, student). How does the classroom experience change my self confidence as a teacher? And how does the applied technology influence the students – is it boring, traditional or other? The conclusions at the end of phase 4. gives orientation to the student for a transition to the phase 5. – search of didactic intervals, that is, a new moment, a new technology is reached, which is approbated in the next activity – the beginning of phase 1. from the following cycle of the reflective practice. As an important factor in the upgrading of the reflective practice of the students, we focus upon the applied vari-

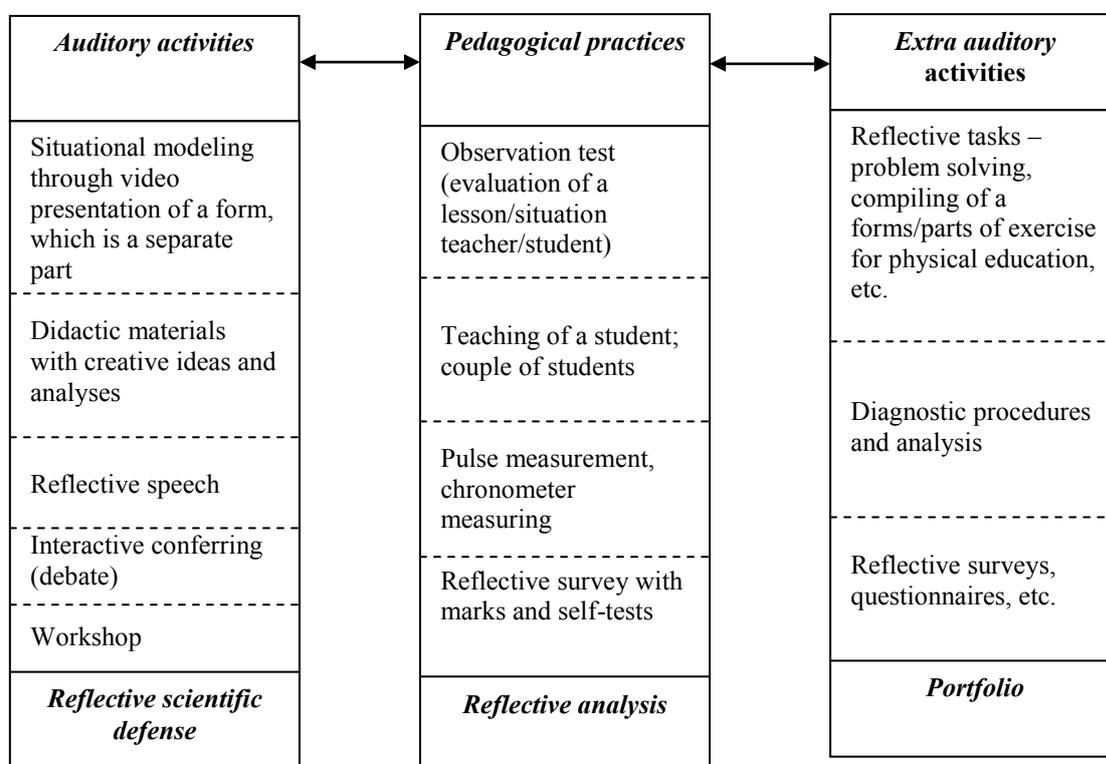


Fig.2. Methodology for developing of reflective pedagogical practice

ous models (fig.2).

Problematic-situational modeling (solving of reflective practical problems) is used in the theoretical and practical exercises. The forms we have used for realization are: situations-illustrations (video presentations in the lecture material with explanations of separate theoretical points); situations-marks (analyzing and marking of students of by the teacher presented concrete situation); situations-exercises (solving of problems, creating of a form / parts of tasks for physical education, etc.). G. Piryov outlines the stages through which in a prob-

lem situation through reflection a decision is reached: *the realization of the situation as problematic; readiness of the subject for solving the situation; looking for a solution through understanding of the conditions; experimenting with hypotheses, premonitions and guesses; finding of a solution, formulation of an answer; reaching the “discovery”* (Pirov (Пиръов), 1985). We directed our attention to the situational tasks because the contents of the curriculum in physical education allows for transformation in problematic situations. Practice shows that a problem situation can be created at all stages of

education – when studying, consolidating and perfecting the exercise; in the motion and sport games; in the choice of the best exercises for developing separate physical qualities, etc. It has been proved that in education the problem solving is an effective approach for increasing the interest of the students to the study of the physical activity; for finding out new facts through activation of thinking and imagination; for the summarizing of the experience, the evaluation, etc. The existing individual differences in the psychological development of the adolescents, from the deepening of these differences in their physical and psychological development, requires a creative input and the skillful application of the problem solving in the professional work of the pedagogue.

After the acquaintance of the students with the didactical materials and their discussion in the seminar, their practical solution was realized through the self preparation (a written paper with summarizing analysis of the diagnostic procedure, solving of problems, etc.). Putting the students in a situation of exploration and research of peculiarities, qualities and processes of the physical education directs them to their profound analysis, reconsidering of their essential characteristics, formulation of conclusions, etc., which are presented in an oral form (in the form of a reflective report). Our observations show that at the beginning of the experimental work, the reflective report is too hard to accomplish when the requirement is set for a creative decision, beyond ready-made structures (for example, the choice of the most rational variant for organizing the physical activity in a small sized gym and with a large group of students, with an insufficient equipment and facilities; performing of the exercises outside, etc.). The problem solving activity which we stimulate in our work guides the students to do consultations, to work with special literature and to perform other tasks. Being bound to the credit marking system, the extra auditory occupations are yet another step towards the effective pedagogical integration and generating of experience, which

prepares the future teachers for the role of facilitators in the educational process.

CONCLUSIONS:

The model of reflective teaching provides contemporary methods, didactic means and organizational forms of work, while at the same time a suitable curriculum is looked after, which develops the reflective abilities of the students-pedagogues in accordance to the educational process in physical education in the kindergarten, the primary school and its realities.

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РАЗВОЈОТ НА ПЕДАГОШКАТА РЕФЛЕКСИЈА КАЈ ПОТЕНЦИЈАЛНИТЕ ОДДЕЛЕНСКИ НАСТАВНИЦИ

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(Прегледен труд)

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Апстракт

Способноста за предавање со рефлексija, е еден од основните показатели за нивото на професионалната работа. Трудот е фокусиран кон формирањето на педагошката рефлексija кај потенцијалните педагози за предучилишна работа и одделенска настава. Презентираната технологија за совесна примена на рефлексijата во физичкото образование се применува во различни форми во наставата – набљудувањето, тековната практика, искуството во обуката и слободните активности, создаваат можности за оптимизирање на специјалната подготовка и педагошката компетентност на студентите за ефективна реализација на физичкото воспитување на децата и учениците.

Клучни зборови: *студент-педагози, физичко воспитување,
предучилишна возраст, основно-училишна возраст, мошорно учење,
образовна технологија*

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