

APPLICATION OF TEACHER COMPETENCES IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

The requirements for the quality of the teacher's pedagogical work and its assessment are constantly increasing. The paper focused on knowledge related to teacher competence. It resulted from research activities in several scientific research projects (e.g. the Slovak Research and Development Agency, Evaluation of Teacher Competencies), implemented at the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra (Slovakia). The team of Slovak experts and teachers monitored (researched) the possibilities of identifying a complex of relevant professional competencies that need to be taken and developed. Overall, the research work within the national survey in the Slovak Republic was determined ten essential competencies of a teacher.

The aim of the paper is to introduce the competence of a teacher - the competence to develop a positive climate in the classroom. The positive climate in the classroom acts to shape the relationship between teacher and pupils. It affects the results of the pupil team and uses not only education but also training. Today (current) school is oriented on the personal and social development of the pupils. It is reflected not only in good school results, but also in the complexity of pupil values.

As part of the research process, the participating experts and pedagogues developed tools and criteria for the evaluation and self-assessment of the teacher's quality and the teacher's applied competencies in educational practice. These competencies were presented through case studies and the use of the implementation of the AAA evaluation methodology model. We consider it important to point out that the teacher should be a professionally qualified pedagogue who is always competent to educate and train. The essential condition for his further qualification growth is, at the same time, focused on attention and his own self-improvement.

Keywords: *teacher, essential competence, a positive climate in the classroom*

INTRODUCTION

Key professional competencies currently play an important role in a teacher's professional work. This area was first addressed by Borich and Fenton (1977) [1],

who point out knowledge, performance and consistency competencies. One of the most comprehensive and up-to-date classifications has been developed by The National Council of Teachers of English (2014), which identifies contextual, conceptual, subject-content, transactional, educational, evaluative, organizational, competence related to the creation of teaching material to work with parents and to work with the community and other organizations. With the current social changes, the requirements for the issue of professional competencies, their identification and evaluation are also changing [2].

An important role in the educational process is the creation of a positive climate in the classroom. The teacher influences his students with his whole personality. Participates in the formation of the student's personality, behaviour, interests, and value orientation. It has an impact on the creation of new knowledge, skills of students. Cultivated teacher expression, trust, understanding, respect, tolerance, good behaviour, freedom of speech and one's own opinion are of great importance for the appropriate (correct) creation of a relationship between teacher and student. A positive classroom climate is, therefore, an integral part of the teaching process.

The modern school emphasizes the personal and social development of the student, which is reflected in good academic results as well as in the whole student values and their external manifestations. Therefore, it is necessary to approach the process of teaching and learning as a complex phenomenon, which includes several factors entering the learning.

TEACHER COMPETENCIES

Based on the results of scientific research on the project *Assessment of Teacher Competencies*, carried out at the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra (Slovakia), we arrived at a complex of ten key competencies: identification of developmental and individual characteristics of students, identification of psychological and social factors of student learning, student development and personality. Competencies, creating a positive climate in the classroom, planning and implementation of professional growth, mastering the content and didactics of subjects, planning the teaching process, teaching methods and organizational forms of teaching, using material resources of the teaching process, evaluating the course and results of teaching and learning.

The key competencies of a teacher represent a set of requirements that must be implemented in the teacher's work and, at the same time, represent a starting point for evaluating the quality of pedagogical work.

The current state of teacher evaluation in Slovakia is the creation of a new evaluation methodology, structured into three relatively separate tools: 1. Assessment sheets, aimed at evaluating the work of a teacher by a selected assessor; 2. A self-assessment sheet that allows the teacher to reflect on the work

itself autonomously; 3. The last tool is the Record of the interview of the evaluator and the evaluator, which provides a space for mutual penetration of opinions and attitudes of both participants [3].

A specific feature is a proposal on how to carry out evaluations of the quality of a teacher's work by evaluators (members of the state school inspection, methodologists, principals and school representatives, heads of subject commissions, teachers) through the application of the AAA evaluation methodology. The implementation of the AAA evaluation methodology represents the application of annotation, analysis and alteration in the evaluation of the quality of selected (selected) competencies of the evaluated teacher.

A - annotation. It focuses on the overall context of the teaching situation/lesson and didactic mastery of the content of the curriculum.

A - analysis. It is the second stage of the application of the AAA evaluation methodology. The evaluator analyses a specific lesson based on specific evaluation criteria of individual competencies and related indicators.

A - alteration. It is the last part of the AAA evaluation methodology; it expresses the relationship between: (a) assessment/evaluation of teaching quality; and (b) its improvement in the form of evaluator proposals.

Quality assessment means evaluating the degree of mastery of the set goals of pupils' education. The evaluator should monitor mastery of basic concepts and skills, analysis and understanding of content, generalization, and especially application.

We distinguish four levels of quality: 1. Failing quality: teaching does not benefit students, the required competencies of students are not developed, and the quality results from didactic shortcomings of the teacher in education; 2. Undeveloped quality: teaching provides students with the opportunity to acquire basic knowledge but does not allow for more comprehensive development of their competencies; 3. Stimulating quality: teaching leads students to an active understanding of the topic, provides them with stimuli for evaluation, judgment, derivation; 4. Developing quality: students show the ability to generalize knowledge, apply it, understand social relationships in the assigned tasks, and understand the topic in a broader context [4].

The proposal of alterations represents the creation of proposals by the evaluator to improve the quality of educational activities. The alteration is focused on the active search for ways to improve the teacher's pedagogical work quality. In cooperation with the evaluated teacher, the evaluator proposes alternative ways of working, which will result from the realized lesson.

We implemented the practical implementation of the AAA evaluation methodology through case studies. Case studies are processed based on real authentic situations during the lessons of experienced teachers. The lectures were attended by members of the project's scientific team, who assessed the quality of individual key competencies and actively participated in the preparation of proposals to improve the quality of teachers' pedagogical work [5].

CLASS CLIMATE

The issue of climate in the classroom is the subject of professional research, based on which it was found that several factors influence its creation. The positive climate in the classroom supports the performance of students and teachers and their motivation for education and learning. "It is a very multifaceted and complex phenomenon. In the professional literature, it is often mentioned in connection with other terms such as the environment of the class, the atmosphere of the class, the character or ethos of the class" [6].

According to Gavora [7], the term classroom climate expresses the degree to which a pupil in a class is satisfied, whether students understand each other, the degree of competition and cooperation between them, and the degree of cohesion of the pupils in the class as a whole. Pupil satisfaction in the classroom is related to many factors. A teacher as a personality is one of them who knows or does not know how to work with a specific student team. His behaviour affects not only the whole class but also the students who make it up. One teacher may perceive a student or a team of students as problem-free, i. Positively, but another teacher may have a completely different (opposite) relationship to the student team. It can perceive students as unprepared, problematic, undisciplined. We can talk about harmonic or disharmonic relationships during the teaching process [8].

Lašek [9] states that the climate affects the student personally; the student is more or less interested in school, school work, positive or negative relationships in school, etc. In the socio-psychological sense, the student becomes an associate member of the group, participates in individual activities of the group, the student can be favoured by teachers or classmates, or is relegated to the background, etc.

Hanuliaková presents the following selected types of climate (environment):

1. Current and preferred classroom climate, it is essential to be able to recognize these two climates. The current climate is created in the current situation, but it can be very different from the preferred climate, and it is necessary to adjust it based on the requirements of parents, schools and teachers.

2. The communication climate is created as a result of the communication used between the actors. Communication influences the creation of a favourable climate in the classroom.

3. The creative climate induces productive activity among students and also has a positive effect on teachers. In such a climate, the creativity of students, their ideas and observations are emphasized.

4. Organizational climate is an essential aspect of "time management", which considers the degree of creative management, the expectation of creativity, and subsequent cooperation.

5. The moral climate, through which the moral personality of students is created, supports the creation of values such as empathy, prosociality, altruism, morality and others.

6. The mental climate results from formal and informal classroom relationships. Positive relationships create a favourable climate function and, conversely, a tense situation full of conflicts creates negative relationships and an unfavourable atmosphere [6].

It is essential for students and teachers to work in a climate that will positively affect them. The teacher must know which elements form and influence the classroom climate, how to change the negative climate, keep it positive, get students to actively cooperate, properly motivate them to learn, and effectively organize their learning activities.

It follows that the teacher should know several factors that affect the creation of a positive climate in the classroom: social competencies - characteristic empathic attitudes and behaviours, assertive behaviours and its techniques; communication competencies - communication with students themselves, t. j. communication procedures, to be friendly and to communicate kindly; organizational competencies - construction of the teaching process with the learning process (teaching) of students and relation to the learning process (acquisition of knowledge); the personality of the teacher, who must acquire the required moral and professional competencies; implementation of socio-ethical skills; use of active learning methods; a number of pupils in the class.

Application of AAA evaluation methodology in the teacher's competence to create a positive climate in the classroom

During the lesson, the teacher meets with different subjects, so it is essential that he can communicate adequately and thus create a suitable climate in the classroom. When creating a classroom climate, the teacher should create a relaxed atmosphere, eliminate stressful situations, approach pupils individually, motivate them to work, activity, and help increase students' self-esteem. We present case studies from realized lessons of civics and chemistry, evaluated by the AAA methodology.

CIVIC LESSONS CLASS - 4TH YEAR OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Annotation. The lesson was focused on the Pre-Socratic period and was realized in the form of written and oral repetition. At the beginning of the class, the teacher briefly introduced the topic of the lesson. He immediately asked the students questions about the written word. Pupils worked independently during the written work. The teacher thus created a relaxed atmosphere, which allowed the students to work actively, creatively and without stress in class.

In the next part of the lesson, after collecting the written work, the teacher led the students to open and effective communication with additional oral repetition of the topic and find the correct answers to the questions from the written word. It created a positive climate in the classroom, so students were not worried respectively. Afraid to express their opinion, answer questions and show interest in the issue. In the dialogue, the teacher tried to lead students to logical thinking, problem-solving and creative thinking. He emphasized that mutual respect is essential in every communication, allowing expressing oneself, not trying to have the last word at all costs, perceiving the other as a partner in finding the correct answer, and understanding the other.

During the lesson, there were a few disturbing moments and smiling situations, which the teacher calmly and humorously resolved, calmed the students, and guided them.

The discussion on the topic took place in a friendly atmosphere, but at the same time with respect for the teacher. At the end of the lesson, the teacher evaluated its course and assigned tasks for the next class.

Analysis. Information on the issue was provided suitably. Methods that created space for the student to express himself without fear of correct or incorrect answer supported his creativity, activity, independence, and knowledge acquisition in a non-violent, friendly, and exciting form.

The teacher tried to attract and maintain the student's attention throughout the lesson and through verbal and non-verbal communication to create a positive climate in the classroom, motivating students and getting feedback from them.

Alteration. When creating a positive climate in the classroom, the teacher could pay even more attention to the development of student's communication skills. To teach them to express their opinion in a cultured way, take responsibility for their decisions, respect the opinion of others, evaluate themselves and others positively, and solve everyday situations in interpersonal relationships creatively.

When working with students, the teacher should help internalize prosocial values and attitudes and acquire social skills - empathy and assertiveness. To lead students to adhere to agreed rules of conduct, open communication (truthfulness,

objectivity, accepting the truth about themselves and others), tolerance, and cultivated behaviour. To guide students on how to defend themselves and their rights in a non-aggressive way, to express their opinion.

The teacher could also mediate the topic through video or text reading, working in pairs or groups, didactic games, and thus teach students to cooperate, solve problems and discuss, and at the same time, more effectively implement a suitable climate in the classroom.

CHEMISTRY CLASS - 9TH GRADE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Annotation. The lesson was focused on cosmetics, in which students were to get acquainted with the distribution, properties, and content of cosmetics in a discovery way.

The didactic goal of the lesson was to consolidate and expand knowledge and expertise in the field of chemistry, focused on the topic of Organic Substances in Everyday Life. The teacher had various teaching aids at his disposal, and similarly, the students brought multiple cosmetics for the lesson. In the motivational part of the lesson, the teacher used the method of storytelling and conversation, during which he ascertained the students' knowledge of the topic. A stress-free atmosphere was gradually created in the classroom, the pupils' interest in the issue of cosmetics and daily hygiene was active.

In the exposition part, the teacher devoted himself to information about the historical development of cosmetic products as a way of protection against weather conditions and insects; he introduced the role of decorative cosmetics. As part of the group work, students prepared and presented the composition and properties of cosmetics.

The fixation part was devoted to summarizing the acquired knowledge and pointing out several problems caused by chemical substances contained in cosmetic products. The teacher pointed out the chemical processes related to the production of selected cosmetics. Subsequently, the students summarized the properties of cosmetic products using the method of questions and answers. After evaluating the lesson, the teacher assigned the homework.

Analysis. The chemistry class was conducted in a friendly atmosphere. During the classroom class, the following situations were disrupted: the teacher spilled water on the floor, in which case it is important to pay attention to safety; one pupil sprayed perfumed water on a classmate's hair, the situation resulting in a disturbance of the working atmosphere in the classroom; when detecting the smell of hair shampoos, one pupil got the product in the eyes, the teacher had to deal with the situation promptly; even after the time limit of the lesson, the teacher answered the pupils with questions that were evoked by the interest in the topic.

Alteration. The following suggestions emerged from the analysis of the lesson: the need to increase teacher respect; observance of the principles of safety in teaching activities; quality organization of the teaching process; focus on improving classroom communication,; respect for each other.

The teacher demonstrated the pedagogical ability to create and maintain a positive climate in the classroom, creating a relaxed atmosphere and thus orienting students' interest in the topic. Pupils were creatively involved in the activity and were not afraid to express their opinion, the teacher gave them a space to discuss their discoveries, which he then corrected and presented their general statements. He led students to independent discovery, created a positive climate in the classroom, tried to lead students to independent logical thinking and creative thinking.

In the context of changes in teaching, the teacher should be aware that creating a positive climate in the classroom is one of his core competencies. This means implementing the teaching process with the intention of deepening and strengthening the creative thinking of students, developing and implementing communication skills in various interactions such as teacher - pupil or pupil - pupil.

The presented evaluation model considers systematic, it contains all the components involved in the construction of the competence structure. Within the model implementing the AAA assessment methodology, we have the ambition to direct evaluators to the real possibilities of assessing the work of the evaluated teacher through a relatively comprehensive analytical approach.

CONCLUSION

The result of the project activity is a lot of information obtained, which is related to the selected key competencies of the teacher. An irreplaceable role in creating a positive classroom climate is played by the teacher's personality and ability to diagnose influences that negatively affect the classroom climate. This means monitoring the factors, resp. Implement activities that are important in creating a positive climate in the classroom [10]. It represents a positive attitude of the teacher (patience, interest, smile, emphasis on the student's individuality), respect for the personality of individual students, mutual acceptance of teachers and students, time and organizational management.

These requirements are related to changes in the context of school reform in the Slovak Republic. They reflect current needs, where the school is understood as a variable educational space in which teachers accompany pupils in their learning and learning process, developing their competencies and creating them comprehensively, individual personalities.

The teacher must be a professionally qualified pedagogical worker to create a positive educational environment, organize and plan the activities of students, influence them with their personality, be empathetic, creative, and humanistic. He must be competent enough to be able not only to teach and educate effectively but also to improve his pedagogical activity. The key competencies should focus not only on the student and the educational process but also on their professional self-development, which is never completed and requires increased attention and commitment.

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