

TOPICAL ACCESSES TO TEACHING STUDENTS OF THE STUDY LINE TEACHING PROFESSION FOR THE 1st LEVEL OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS: PARTIAL INFORMATION FROM RESEARCH

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Abstract

Modern, constructive conception of teaching process presumes adequate choice of teaching methods and learning corresponding to pupil's possibility in the first place. Also the university teachers have to conform with this trend. The contribution shows on the base of research investigation, how the teaching methods and processes are exploited by the teachers, who take part in the preparation of the students of the line Teaching for the 1st level at elementary (primary) at the Institute of primary and pre-primary education, Faculty of Education, University Hradec Králové. An interesting question seems to be perception of efficiency of the separate teaching methods and subsequently their utilization in teaching process.

It could be stated that in teaching the students of teaching profession for the 1st level of primary school, the academic staff uses different teaching methods. Positive finding is that the lecture, even when it is placed among the most employed ones, does not have dominant position as it was in the past. On contrary, activating and complex teaching methods e.g. discussion and group teaching are coming forward. This phenomenon reveals in performance of the students during their pedagogical practice, which is confirmed by the feedback from the teachers at primary schools.

Key words: teaching methods, teaching process, preparation of teachers

Introduction

We meet with the teaching methods in everyday teaching process in the class and out of it, where knowledge and skills are put in touch with pupils and students. The concept of teaching methods is most often understood as reaching the aim determined beforehand by means of wilfully and planned activity or as a way (from Greek *methodos* – searching, way to a certain aim) arranged in such way to lead the cognition.

Teaching methods

According to Maňák & Švec (2003, p. 9) teaching method represents in teaching “a certain dynamic element, which in comparison with the content and organizational forms relatively quickly changes and adapts to new goals and circumstances. Teaching methods are not the decisive factors of teaching, but only one of the elements of educational system and therefore cannot substitute the missing content and compensate unclear aim. On the other hand they are

bound to the concept of teaching and only in its frame they are fully functional and effective. Also Mojžišek (1988, p. 17) speaks in the same spirit about teaching methods – according to him teaching method is pedagogical, specified didactic activity of a subject and object of teaching, which develops educational profile of the pupil and simultaneously acts in upbringing aims and in accordance with teaching and teaching principles. It consists in arrangement of the content, in regulation of the object and subject activity, in adjustment of the sources of knowledge and techniques, in providing fixation or control of knowledge and skills, interests and processes” V. Václavík (1966, p. 10) understands to teaching methods as purposeful, planned way of fulfilment of educational and upbringing process, I. J. Lerner (1986, p. 13, 30) perceptive under the concept” way of activity leading to reach their aims and about constructive activity and its types in such subsequence and such means, which necessarily lead to reaching the set up and planned aim.”

The process cannot manage without teaching methods as they form its main core together with the content and aim of teaching. The course and effectiveness of the method could be disturbed by the environment, in which teaching is realized. We try to form pleasant atmosphere and climate in the class. It is necessary for the teacher to master the widest spectrum of teaching methods and suitably and functionally use them. Only in this way the teaching becomes effective.

How it follows from previous sentences, teaching methods are an important part of educational process. It is the same in education of future teachers on the 1st level of primary Schools. We are of opinion that if demand from the future teachers to know and correctly use certain didactic skills, we should – as their teacher – an example for them. It is the classical principle of imitation, when the students see (and can try themselves), that it is possible and suitable to use different teaching methods in different phases of educational process. Emphasis on didactic readiness, to which the art to choose correctly and use the etaching method belongs beyond doubt, is such an important demand from the side of the leading workers of school, how it confirms present research (e.g. Faberová, Petříková, Skutil, Václavík & Valter, 2007).

Quite often it happens that teaching at the faculty is based on the lectures, or independent work and the teachers often do not use the new methods or in worse case, do not know it. It was the reason why decided to realize at the Faculty of Education, University Hradec Králové research, which should bring a frame answer to our questions aimed to the use of modern teaching methods in university education.

Concept of effectiveness

As we speak here about the effectiveness of teaching methods, it is necessary to characterize this concept. We are aware of the fact, that the concept of effectiveness is a subjective category, which is difficult to measure, but from the point of educational activity it is a case of important element.

Turek (1998) understands the effectiveness of teaching process as purposefulness and economy. Purposefulness he characterizes by the amount of reached aims and economy as an amount of utilization of financial costs on teaching. Petlak (2004) notices effectiveness of teaching as a consequence of searching and employing such regulations, which in concrete conditions of teaching enable reaching of the best results of teaching at minimize of time needed for reaching these results and with minimal effort both on the side of pupils and on the other side – on the side of teacher. Stračár & Milan (1966, p. 8) definite the concept effectiveness as “relation between used mean and reached results, where under the concept means is included time, energy, material, technical means needed for reaching certain quantity an quality of results”.

From our point of view and on the base of above stated, it could be noticed that the concept of effectiveness (productivity, efficiency) expresses relation among goals, results and costs on education and upbringing. Such teaching methods is most effective by which is reached maximum of results in minimal time at the smallest effort and spent costs.

Research finding was aimed at discovery which teaching methods are used by academic staff at the Faculty of Education, University Hradec Králové, who take part in preparation of the students of the programme Teaching profession for primary schools and in which way they work with it in teaching.

Basic research questions were formed as follows: Which teaching methods are mostly used in the programme Teaching profession for primary schools? Which of these methods are the most effective from teachers' point of view? What is the opinion of changing teaching methods in one unit from teachers' point of view?

As a research method was used a questionnaire of our own construction. We selected quantitative approach due to the aim of the whole findings, as in the first phase of long term investigation of utilization of the teaching methods in practice, at first is to describe the given situation and analyze it (Skutil & Křováčková, 2006; Cohen, Mannion & Morrison, 2005).

The first phase was the phase before the research. On its base the questionnaire was re-examined and then the research investigation started. Coefficient of reliability of administered questionnaires was 0,73 according to statistical programme NSCC 2000. This software was also used for elaboration of the results (Lašek & Chrzová, 2003).

Research sample, on the base of intentional selection, was formed by 30 members of academic staff, whom the questionnaire was distributed. The number of 25 questionnaires was returned, returnability represented 83,3%. The all received questionnaires were evaluated.

There was 60% women and 40% men, who took part in the research. In the Figure 1 is introduced number of the years of practice with university teaching.

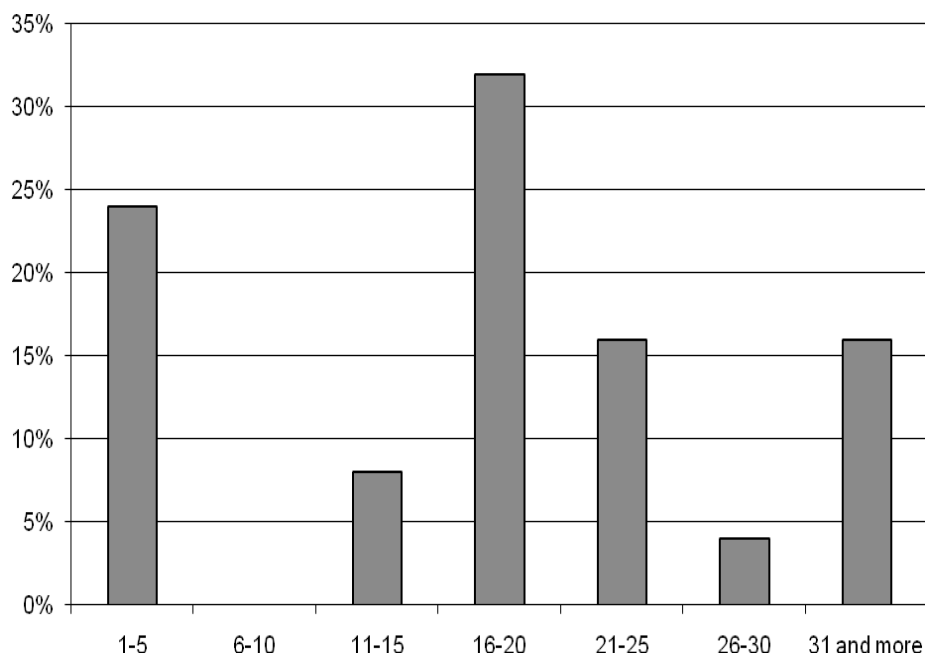


Figure 1. Number of years of teaching at the university.

The questionnaire was answered by the respondents from different departments, who take part in preparation of the students of the study programme Teaching profession for primary schools. Display from the viewpoint of their line of teaching is given in the Figure 2.

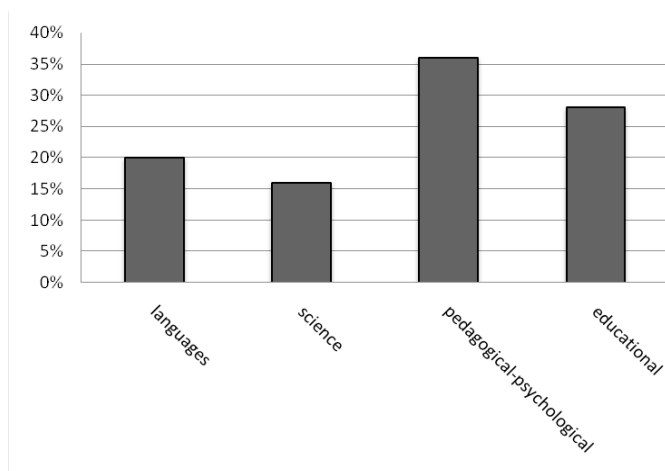


Figure 2. Structure of the respondents from the viewpoint taught subjects.

Results of Research

One of the items of the questionnaire followed subjective evaluation of effectiveness of given teaching method. A total number of 14 teaching methods were offered to the respondents. They evaluated separate teaching methods on the scale from 1 (the least effective) up to 5 (the most effective). Evaluation of subjective evaluation of effectiveness is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Subjective evaluation of effectiveness of separate teaching methods

| Method | Mean | Standard deviation | Mode | Minimum | Maximum |
|----------------------------|------|--------------------|------|---------|---------|
| lecture | 2,92 | 0,76 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| instruction | 3,12 | 1,36 | 4 | 0 | 5 |
| method of problems solving | 1,48 | 0,65 | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| project teaching | 4,16 | 0,85 | - | 2 | 5 |
| brainstorming | 2,92 | 1,47 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| blended learning | 2,72 | 1,60 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| work with text | 3,32 | 0,85 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| discussion | 3,52 | 1,01 | - | 1 | 5 |
| mikroteaching | 2,80 | 1,32 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| didactic game | 3,60 | 0,71 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| group teaching | 3,64 | 0,76 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| excursion | 2,96 | 1,17 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| teaching supported by PC | 3,24 | 1,23 | 4 | 0 | 5 |
| manual work | 3,00 | 1,68 | 4 | 0 | 5 |

From the results given in Table 1 the most effective methods seems to be projection method of teaching (mean 4, 16, standard deviation 0, 85). Next to it follows group teaching (mean 3,64, standard deviation 0, 76), didactic play (mean 3, 60, standard deviation 0, 71), and discussion (mean 3, 52, standard deviation 1, 01). Group teaching and didactic play have corresponding modus 4 and this fact place them among very effective teaching methods. Higher than average effectiveness shows manual work (mean 3, 00, standard deviation 1, 68). It is a surprising result with regard to the fact that this method is used only in limited form at institutes of higher education (only in some subjects).

If we follow the teaching methods, which have the lowest evaluation of effectiveness, we will find in Table 1 as the least evaluated method problem solving (mean 1, 48, standard deviation 1, 60) and microteaching (mean 2, 80 and standard deviation 1, 32). Last two methods are evaluated comparatively low, probably that they are less known and so less used.

The next item of the questionnaire was aimed at the investigation of separate teaching methods at the own teaching of the respondents. They carried out evaluation on five point scale, 0 = do not use at all and 4 use in interval 100 % – 75 %.

Table 2. Exploitation of separate teaching methods at own teaching.

| Method | Mean | Standard deviation | Mode | Minimum | Maximum |
|----------------------------|------|--------------------|------|---------|---------|
| lecture | 1,96 | 1,02 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| instruction | 1,56 | 1,04 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| method of problems solving | 1,88 | 0,83 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| project teaching | 1,24 | 1,14 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| brainstorming | 1,13 | 0,24 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| blended learning | 0,84 | 1,11 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| work with text | 1,88 | 1,17 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| discussion | 1,96 | 1,21 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| mikroteaching | 0,92 | 1,04 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| didactic game | 1,28 | 1,15 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| group teaching | 1,96 | 1,10 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| excursion | 0,64 | 0,82 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| teaching supported by PC | 0,84 | 0,81 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| manual work | 1,08 | 1,38 | 0 | 0 | 4 |

From the results given in Table 2 is visible that among the most often used teaching methods are ranged lecture, discussion and group teaching. It is interesting that discussion has modus 3, it means that is used by the respondents most often (25 % – 49 %). Then the work with text follows and method of problem solving. At least in one quarter of teaching appears project teaching and didactic play. None from the introduced methods reached the borderline of 100 %.

On the other hand the lowest evaluation is in case of excursion, its exploitation varies from not used to 1 % of use. Interesting are also reasons, why excursion is not exploited. According to the information from respondents its preparation is time demanding, the welcoming institution are, in many cases, uncooperative and last but not least economic viewpoint plays its role.

We were also interested in opinions on effectiveness of separate teaching methods and their exploitation in teaching is different with regard to the number of teaching at the institutes of higher education. We are aware of the fact that the research set was small, but we tested it and the results of this test are for us only orientation ones. As data separation did not show full normality, parametric Student's t-test was used for testing and its results were faced with the results of non-parametric Mann Whitney test. Without dependence on the practice duration, opinion of the teachers on effectiveness and exploitation of teaching methods did not differ considerably in any from the introduced methods.

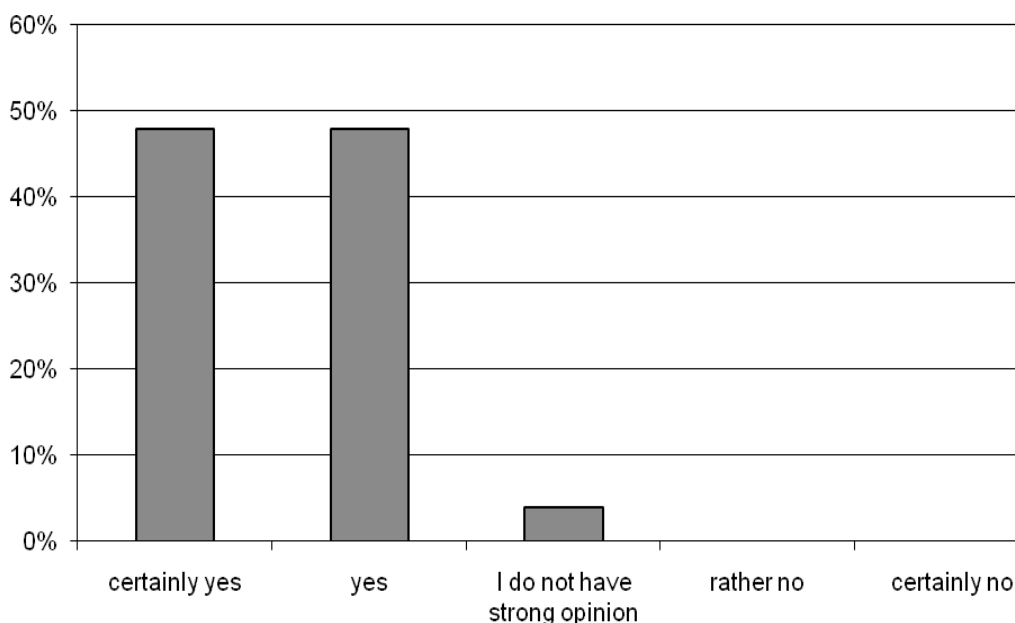


Figure 3. Suitability of the teaching methods changing.

What concerns of changing of teaching methods, most of the respondents inclined to the opinion that it is suitable to change greater number of teaching methods during one teaching unit (see Figure 3). A question remains, how it is in real practice.

If the teachers pronounced for changing of teaching methods, nearly half of them answered (11) that some objections exist for realization of some methods. As a main objection they spoke about the space limits, number of students, time demanding preparation and equipment of the classes.

From the next item of the questionnaire concerning popularity of teaching methods, it followed that students according to the teachers, consider discussion, group teaching and project teaching as the most favourite ones. It is interesting that this result closely corresponds with the methods, which are most often used by the teachers in their practice and at the same time they consider it as the most effective one.

Conclusions and Discussion

Research investigation mapped subjective evaluation of teaching methods effectiveness, exploitation of these methods in teaching and opinions on changing and popularity of separate teaching methods. What concerns teaching methods effectiveness, the results

Of investigation correspond with international research that among the most effective methods is included project method and group teaching. These two introduced methods come to the fore even in pedagogical practice on the 1st level of primary school, where its effectiveness is also ensured by a certain “ritualization” in the use of teaching methods, e.g. at the beginning and in the end of the teaching unit (Skutil, 2005).

It could be stated that the academic staff use in the teaching of Teaching profession for primary school programme different teaching methods. A positive finding is that lecture even it is still among the most often used methods, does not have dominant position as it was in previous years. It is other way round, activating and complex teaching methods as discussion and group teaching come to the fore. It could be seen during students’ practice and is supported by feedback from the teachers in primary schools.

It would be interesting to carry out similar research at the academic staff who take part in preparation future teachers for teaching profession for the 2nd level of primary school and secondary schools. We suppose that at the school levels, compared with the primary schools, activating and complex teaching methods are used in limited extent. One from the reasons could be even the different work with children in the age from 6 to 11 years. But is it a main reason?

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