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## Subjective Responsibility of Primary Teacher Education Students in Pedagogical Preparation Context

**Veronika Pecivova**<sup>a\*</sup>, Faculty of Humanities, Tomas Bata University in Zlin, Mostni 5139, Zlin 760 01, Czech Republic

**Hana Lukasova**<sup>b</sup>, Faculty of Humanities, Tomas Bata University in Zlin, Mostni 5139, Zlin 760 01, Czech Republic

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### Abstract

Teacher subjective responsibility for pupils is a crucial part of teacher identity. The purpose of this paper is to expose subjective responsibility of primary teacher education students in the context of pedagogical preparation. It presents and analyses results of existing research on subjective responsibility of primary teacher education students in the Czech Republic. The researchers applied questionnaire method; and the results revealed a descending tendency in teacher subjective responsibility for pupils among the respondents. The study describes theoretical approaches to teacher subjective responsibility, perceptions of the concept of pupil's success and the main principles of reflective teacher education. Finally, the study sets a goal for further mixed methods research, which is to examine mutual interaction between teacher subjective responsibility for pupils of teacher education students, their motivation for choosing primary teacher career and their view of pedagogical preparation.

Keywords: Teacher subjective responsibility, teacher student concept of pupils' success, motivation for teacher profession, reflective teacher education, developing student for teacher profession.

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\* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Veronika Pecivova**, Faculty of Humanities, Tomas Bata University in Zlin, Mostni 5139, Zlin 760 01, Czech Republic.

E-mail address: [vpecivova@fhs.utb.cz](mailto:vpecivova@fhs.utb.cz) / Tel.: +420-604-963-748

## 1. Introduction

Responsibility attribution is a significant factor in the educational process affecting both teachers and students. This paper first presents the concepts of teacher responsibility for pupils, school success and student results. Next, it provides a review of existing research into teacher responsibility and process of professionalisation, in particular in the Czech Republic, but research examples outside the Czech Republic are also provided.

At last, the present paper prepares ground for further extended quantitative–qualitative research. Our goal will be to investigate student outcome focused responsibility of primary teacher education students in context of their professionalisation process. Apart from subjective responsibility for pupils, we will focus on primary teacher education students' motivation for becoming primary teachers and their opinion of pedagogical preparation at university. The interest of our study is in finding whether results of our investigation reflect ongoing changes in teacher education. The methods of our future research – the questionnaire of subjective level of responsibility for students outcome (Mares & Kantorkova, 1991), content analysis of students' essays describing their motivation for choosing education training and finally interviews with students that is designed to examine student evaluation of education training – share self-reflective characteristics and thus, correspond with reflective approach in progressive teacher education.

## 2. Theoretical basis

In this part of the paper, we will introduce key concepts, i. e., teachers' responsibility for pupils and school success and student results.

### 2.1. *Teacher subjective responsibility for pupils*

The key concept of the paper is teacher subjective responsibility for pupils. Czech researchers Mares, Skalska and Kantorkova (1994) use the term to describe inner responsibility which is a part of professional responsibility.

Lukasova (2015) highlights the connection between teacher self-concept and teacher subjective responsibility for student. Mares (2013) places the results of teacher responsibility for student among the skills perceived in a broader contexts, and associates it with his or her personal teaching competence. Cherniss (1993) includes the results of teacher responsibility for student in one of the three forms of teacher self-efficacy. Thus, self-reflection and self-efficacy are considered as key indicators in concerning teacher RSA.

Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) use the term personal responsibility and define it as 'a sense of internal obligation and commitment to produce or prevent designated outcomes, or that these outcomes should have been produced or prevented'. According to Lauerman and Karabenick (2013) associations between teacher responsibility and self-efficacy depend on the type of educational outcome, but responsibility does not mean the same as self-efficacy, in other words 'I can' does not equal 'I should'.

### 2.2. *School success and student results*

Mares (2013) sets the concept of school success and pupil results in the background of specific types according to which teacher classifies students, and tends to keep them in. Lukasova-Kantorkova (2003) claims that results cannot be reduced solely to knowledge and activity from cognitive sphere, and an important role is attributed to the teacher-pupil relationship and self-regulation.

Obviously, school success is closely related to assessment procedures. These two concepts are examined in Guskey (2003). According to Guskey, success depends on how teachers view assessment

and interpret students' results. Rather than the correct guessing of what the teacher will ask in the test, he views success as a process of learning from one's mistake. Instead of outwitting students with surprising questions in the test, he advocates letting students know what to learn for the test, and also, providing students with a second chance. Thus students can prove that they learn from their mistakes, which is perhaps even more beneficial than an immediate success. He calls for 'fair measures of important learning goals'.

Guskey (2003) attributes responsibility to both sides, i.e., to teachers as well as to students, however, he stresses that if a considerable number of students fail in a test, the teacher is to reconsider his or her performance.

### **3. Research findings**

#### ***3.1. Teacher responsibility***

Mares, Skalska and Kantorkova (1994) carried out a research focused on primary, secondary and university teachers, and also, on primary teacher education students. The research method applied was a standardised questionnaire of Guskey (1981) Responsibility for Student Achievement (RSA). The results reveal that teachers perceive two types of responsibility for student, i.e., responsibility for student success and responsibility for student failure. Teachers tend to claim the credit for student success, while they tend to blame students for their failure. The authors of the study came to the conclusion that teacher subjective responsibility depends, apart from student results also, on teacher's gender and duration of teaching practice. Women and teachers with a longer teaching practice exhibit stronger tendency to take the credit for student success, and in case of failure, put the blame on students.

The aim of the research of Kantorkova and Mares (1992) was to investigate teacher subjective responsibility of primary teacher education students. The research implies that the level of teacher subjective responsibility decreases to the level comparable with practising teachers. In our future research, we want to repeat the research procedure; and find out if and how the subjective responsibility level of pre-service teachers has changed.

In order to include, also, the researches outside the Czech Republic, we present examples of results of non-Czech studies. The study of Lauermaann and Karabenick (2013) provided a critical review of existing teacher responsibility measures and introduced a new scale (Teacher Responsibility Scale). The research samples were German pre-service teachers and American in-service teachers. The research was based on outcome-based responsibility, selecting five domains of teacher responsibility: student motivation, student achievement, students' self-confidence, having positive relationships with students and providing the best possible instruction. The study focused on relationship between self-efficacy and teacher responsibility.

The study of Frumos (2015) demonstrated that teacher efficacy and teacher responsibility for student's outcomes are in a positive relationship, and put emphasis on significance of teacher's self-efficacy and its influence on teacher responsibility. The conclusion of the research does not contradict the research of Mares, Skalska and Kantorkova (1994) that teachers generally assume responsibility for student's success and tend to attribute responsibility for failure to other factors.

#### ***3.2. Process of professionalisation of teacher education students***

Lukasova-Kantorkova (2003) presents a teacher preparation research focused on pedagogical component of the Teacher training for Primary Schools program and its student evaluation. One of the outcomes of the study demonstrates that the relationship teacher–students is an absolutely crucial element in evaluation of qualities of the training and organisation of studies. The curricular innovations were positively evaluated by students. This research was carried out with Czech and

Swedish students (Kantorkova & Malinova, 2001), and proved promising prospects of constructivism and self-reflective techniques.

Svatos (2013) reviews in his paper, the existing research focused on student–teacher development in the Czech Republic. Acknowledging an intensive research on novice–expert teachers, the research review indicates a lack of research of pre-service teachers’ education; particularly, the research of teacher education in early stages is scarce. The author further calls an attention to the absence of research-based theory related to the teacher education process. Existing research focuses on content knowledge, instructional skills and reflections of graduates of their education; however, there are areas not yet covered, especially the first half of pre-service education.

The outcomes of the research, first, lead to the perception of teacher–student as a human being and next, to prepare grounds for ‘authentic and individualised interventions into students’ professional development at faculties of education’ (Svatos, 2013). The purpose of future examination is to describe the stages of development during teacher pre-service education.

The paper proposes a model of development stages and respective indicators of professional development, and socialisation as a possible basis for further investigation. It also explains why a research focused on beginner student teachers is necessary. The reason is changing composition of students which requires different strategies and approaches. According to Lukasova, Svatos and Marjercikova (2014) one of the possible tools for research into student professionalisation process is also the student portfolio.

#### **4. Future research**

Encouraging development of teacher responsibility is challenging, but it is important to strengthen pre-service teachers’ responsibility, in order to prepare them for their practice. Therefore, it is vital to stimulate self-reflective competencies of pre-service primary school teachers during their studies, and in their own teaching. The research goals and methods that we will use share self-reflective principles. Spilkova (2006) views self-reflection as an essential tool for influencing student’s perception of education, and according to her, the construction of education perception is the crucial aim of pedagogical preparation of teacher education students. We will conduct our research of teacher responsibility in context of pedagogical preparation to gain broader perspective. Our aim is to review existing research results of the problem over the past twenty-five years; and to examine whether the development of subjective responsibility of teacher education students for pupil’s success and failure is evenly distributed over the whole observed period of their studies.

The first goal of our future research is investigation of level of development of teacher subjective responsibility for pupils. We will use quantitative research questionnaire of subjective level of responsibility for student outcome (Mares & Kantorkova, 1991). Each item presents a pedagogical situation – positive or negative one; and respondents are to divide 100 percentage points between two given options, reflecting responsibility attribution. Our research group will consist of student teachers from two-Czech universities.

The second aim of the research will be examination of students’ motivation for choosing primary teacher career. We will use qualitative method of content analysis to examine essays written by the students, describing motives for their study choice.

Finally, our last goal will be discovering students’ view of their pedagogical preparation at faculties. For this purpose, we will conduct qualitative interviews with the respondents.

The level of teacher subjective responsibility for pupils of teacher education students, their motivation for choosing primary teacher career and their view of pedagogical preparation are interrelated. The purpose of our future research will be also to find connection between these concepts, and perceive them in the context of pedagogical preparation.

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