

Teacher Trainers' Self-Reflection and Self-Evaluation

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Abstract:

Introduction: A group of researchers have worked out the Teacher Trainers' Professional Competences in Hungary. The aim of the research was to explore whether there are any differences among certain groups of teacher trainers concerning their self-reflection, self-evaluation and commitment to ongoing professional development.

Methods: Structured interviews were carried out with a sample of 6 teacher trainers whose selection was based on two principles - those who are considered to be teacher trainers in Hungary and those who are available in one of the most important teacher training centres in Hungary – Eszterházy Károly University. The data analysis was done with the General Step-by Step Model of Qualitative Content Analysis supported by MAXQDA 12 software programme.

Results: Self-reflection and self-evaluation are the most important factors in teacher trainers' professional development. Existing standards and criteria to which they compare their achievements play an orienteering role in these two processes, as well as in their self-regulatory learning. However, the levels, the types and the methods of self-reflection can differ depending on what field of teacher training they are involved in and when they were trained as teachers.

Discussion: The results of the study promote deeper understanding of teacher trainers' professional competences regarding their commitment to professional development. It has been clearly stated for which group of teacher trainers scientific research as the highest level of reflection can be a basic requirement, and for which group it should be an expected learning outcome in the future. As research-based teacher training is being introduced in Hungary, parallel to it, all groups of teacher trainers will gradually be expected to carry out scientific research to accomplish the highest level of reflection.

Limitations: The sample size does not cover the whole scope of teacher trainers, as instructors teaching specific disciplines were not interviewed, and the research was done in qualitative design, therefore the results cannot be generalized. A future research of quantitative design should cover more teacher trainers from other universities and regions.

Conclusions: The general step by step model of qualitative content analysis has provided a detailed picture of the driver of the teacher trainers' professional development. The evidence of the acceptance of the position of a role model for their instructed, mentored or supported student teachers, teacher assistants and

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teachers has been given by this research. The need for research-based teacher training in Hungary has been confirmed. Further research should be carried out focusing on teaching strategies, methods and good practices where self-reflection and self-evaluation play a crucial role in enhancing self-regulatory learning.

Key words: self-reflection, self-regulation, teacher trainers, professional development.

1 Introduction

Lifelong learning is a basic requirement in each trade and profession in the European Union. Teacher trainers represent role models for practicing teachers and future teachers. The concept of teachers' professional development in the career system is inevitably linked to education as a prerequisite for professional growth (Tamášová, 2015, p. 3). The ongoing professional development, which can be described as a regulated process, is essential for teachers' renewal. The engine of the process is self-reflection and self-evaluation. The aim of the study is to show the results of a qualitative content analysis which examined teacher trainers' reflectivity, self-evaluation and commitment to professional development. These three factors are the basic components of the Teacher Trainers' Professional Competences which were worked out by a group of researchers led by Falus Iván in Hungary in 2015. The central question of the research is how much the teacher trainers are aware of the fact that they are considered as role models in a lot of fields including self-reflection and self-evaluation for those who they instruct, train, support or mentor, and to what extent they want to fit as role models. To achieve the goals, a quantitative content analysis was carried out. The results of the research and the conclusions make understanding teacher trainers' competences deeper and help their lifelong professional development.

2 Theoretical framework

The starting point of our research is self-regulation which serves as a frame for self-reflection and self-evaluation. To understand the relationship between the two notions, we use two models – Zimmerman's developed Triadic Model and Atanashou's Recursive Social Cognitive Model for Self-evaluation. The Triadic Model (Figure 1) depicts self-regulation as a process, in which the cyclical change of different processes is going on constantly. The key element of the whole process is feedback including self-reflection and self-evaluation.

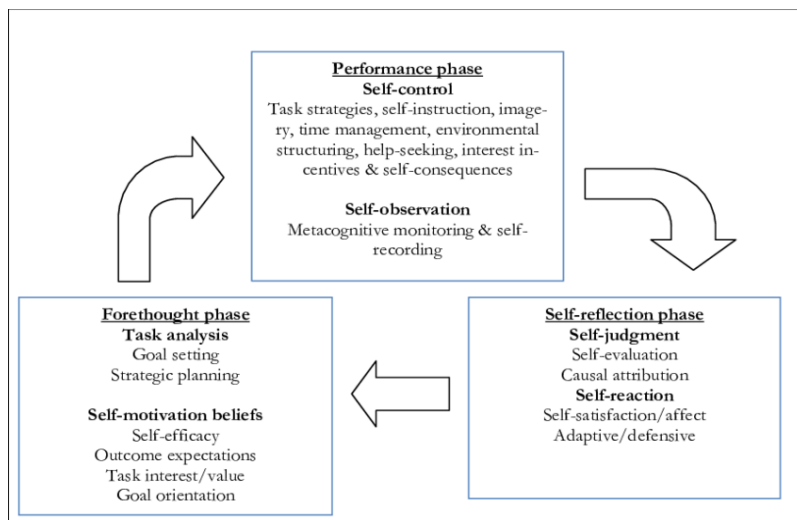


Figure 1. Phases and processes of self-regulation (Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009).

In the Forethought phase, the importance of the task for the person, how effective the person thinks he/she is to complete the task, whether he/she believes that he/she can do it or not are emphasized. In the Performance phase, the person works out a strategy, concentrates on how to accomplish the task while he/she is monitoring himself/herself and is trying to adapt to the changes. In the Self-reflection phase, self-evaluation is done parallel to the Performance phase. The person is not performing self-evaluation at the end of the process but during it. He/she draws conclusions based on his/her judgements and acts in two ways – either performs an adaptive or a defensive behaviour (Zimmerman, 2000; Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009).

According to Judit Szivák, the reflective way of thinking and reflective teaching are self-evaluation techniques which help the person analyse his/her performance consciously and this way self-evaluation functions as self-control (Szivák, 2003).

The Recursive Social Cognitive Model for Self-evaluation gives another aspect of the relationship between self-reflection and self-evaluation (Athanasou, 2005, p. 295). The model is based on Bandura's (1990) Social Cognitive Theory in which the key element is the notion of self-efficacy. In Athanasou's opinion, self-efficacy and self-evaluation are determined by the same factors – social messages, personal factors and situational factors. Athanasou makes a clear distinction between self-assessment and self-evaluation. Self-assessment takes place in the process of learning, which is followed by self-evaluation, judgement about the person's achievements. Self-evaluation can be done in public or it can be private perception of the achievements. These two dimensions make it clear that self-assessment equals to self-reflection. As the cognitive dimension, it provides feedback in self-regulation. It precedes self-evaluation, which contains emotions, judgements about the person himself/herself, therefore, it is the affective dimension of self-regulation.

There are several models of reflectivity giving the types and levels of reflection (Table 1).

Table 1

The types of reflection by Griffith and Tann (1992, as cited in Szivák, 2014)

<u>Rapid reflection</u>	<u>Repair</u>	<u>Review</u>	<u>Research</u>	<u>Re-theorizing and research</u>
Immediate and automatic reflection-in-action.	Thoughtful reflection-in-action.	Less formal reflection-on-action at a particular time.	More systematic reflection-on-action over a period of time.	Long-term reflection-on-action informed by public academic theories.
The teacher gives an answer to the student's question.	After a short period of time of thinking the teacher acts considering the students' reactions.	The teacher is revising the student's or the group's development or problem in his mind or he talks about it.	Based on pedagogical theory, the teacher rephrases his own theory.	

Griffith and Tann (1992) depicted the dimensions of reflection at one time or another. The person can reflect to his/her work during the action and after the action. The other dimension is whether the reflection is done spontaneously or systematically.

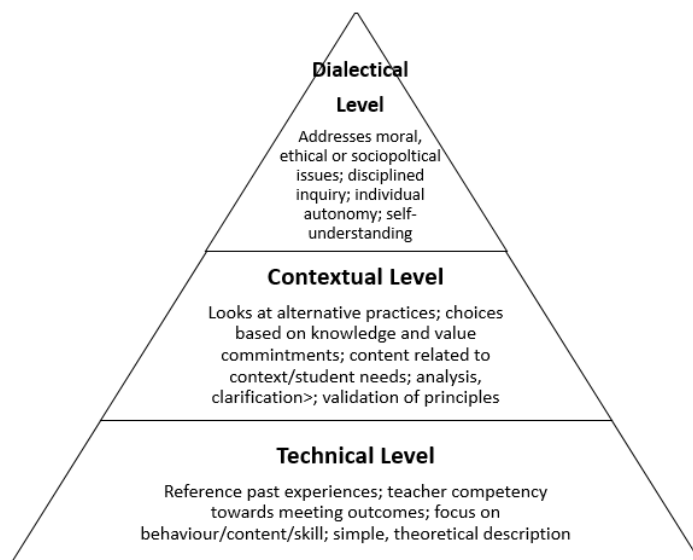


Figure 2. The levels of reflective thinking (Taggart & Wilson, 2005, as cited in Szivák, 2014).

Table 2

The forms of reflection (Szivák, 2014)

Participants of the reflective situation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the teacher alone - dialogue with a mentor teacher, a colleague - dialogue with students, parents - professional discussion in a group, debate in a group of professionals
Form of reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - oral - written

The role of professional communities is exceptional because they provide opportunities for professional dialogues, debates which generate reflective thinking (Szivák, 2014). Mapping the theoretical background can help understand that the basic precondition for teacher trainers' professional development is their competence to reflect to and evaluate their teaching practice.

3 Methodology

The research was conducted applying the general step by step model of qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014) supported by MAXQDA 12 software programme. The corpus of the analysis was the typed form of structured interviews with 6 teacher trainers. The questions were the following:

1. *Do you ever evaluate your teaching practice as a teacher trainer? If yes, what are the criteria?*
2. *What are your professional strengths?*
3. *What do you consider your professional weaknesses?*
4. *How important do you consider self-reflection and self-evaluation in your work?*
5. *How often do you perform self-reflection and self-evaluation?*
6. *What goals do you have as a teacher trainer for the future?*
7. *Which traits of your personality contribute to your professional development and achieving your goals?*
8. *To what extent do you use new professional experiences in your everyday work?*
9. *To what extent do you use your colleagues' advice and recommendations in your everyday work?*
10. *To what extent do you use the students', teacher assistants', supported teachers' remarks in your everyday work?*
11. *How do you develop your own self-reflection and self-evaluation skills?*
12. *How do you develop the students', teacher assistants' or supported teachers' self-reflection and self-evaluation skills?*
13. *Do you take part in research, training, staff meetings, activities developing your institution on a regular basis?*
14. *Do you receive any feedback from your students, student teachers, teacher assistants or teachers about applying knowledge and skills you taught them in connection with self-reflection and self-evaluation in practice?*

The sample consisted of 6 persons. The selection of the interviewees was based on two principles. On one hand, we focused on teachers, instructors who are the so-called teacher trainers in Hungary. Teacher trainers are instructors who teach disciplines, pedagogical and psychological sciences and methodology at universities, master teachers in schools of teaching practice, mentor teachers working in partner schools and educational advisors who train teachers (Falus & Estefánné Varga, 2015, p. 7). On the other hand, we considered those who were available for us in our close environment. Eger is one of the teacher training centres in Hungary. It was the perfect scene to find interviewees for our research.

Five of the participants have strong connections to Eszterházy Károly University. They used to work or have worked there, they are teachers in the partner school of the University or they took part in the in-service trainings conducted by the University. One interviewee works at ELTE University in Budapest.

The sample consisted of:

- 1 master teacher in a school of teaching practice
- 1 mentor teacher
- 2 university instructors (methodology)
- 1 university instructor (pedagogical sciences)
- 1 educational advisor (Table 3).

Table 3

<i>Description of the sample</i>				
<u>Interviewees</u>	<u>Task as a teacher trainer</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Working experience as a teacher</u>	<u>Working experience as a teacher trainer</u>
1.	mentor teacher: university students, teacher assistants	female	29 years	4 years
2.	master teacher in a school of teaching practice: university students	female	27 years	13 years
3.	university instructor 1 (methodology): university students	male	7 years	2 years
4.	university instructor (pedagogical sciences): university students	female	9 years	6 years
5.	educational advisor: teacher assistants, teachers,	female	25 years	3 years
6.	university instructor 2 (methodology): university students, musicologists, museum pedagogy specialists	female	10 years	10 years

The interviews, having been recorded and typed, were analysed in qualitative design. We used the Mayring's step by step general model of qualitative content analysis. We

carried out deductive coding based on the questions of the structured interviews. The main categories and the questions were formed with the help of three sources:

1. detailed description of the 4th competence of the Teacher Trainers' Professional Competences. The competence is defined in the dimensions of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Héjja-Nagy, 2015, pp. 28-32);
2. scientific literature referring to self-reflection, self-evaluation and self-regulation;
3. models and practices of reflection (Szivák, 2014).

As a result of deductive coding, 8 codes were formed:

1. *perceived importance of self-evaluation;*
2. *frequency of self-evaluation;*
3. *criteria of self-evaluation;*
4. *results of self-evaluation (strengths and weaknesses);*
5. *personality traits contributing to professional development;*
6. *sources of new knowledge and experiences;*
7. *ways of performing self-reflection and self-evaluation;*
8. *development of the supported students', teacher assistants' and teachers' reflectivity and self-evaluation.*

Types and forms of reflection and the levels of reflective thinking were used as sub-codes within the ways of performing self-reflection and self-evaluation. The code system can be seen in Figure 3.

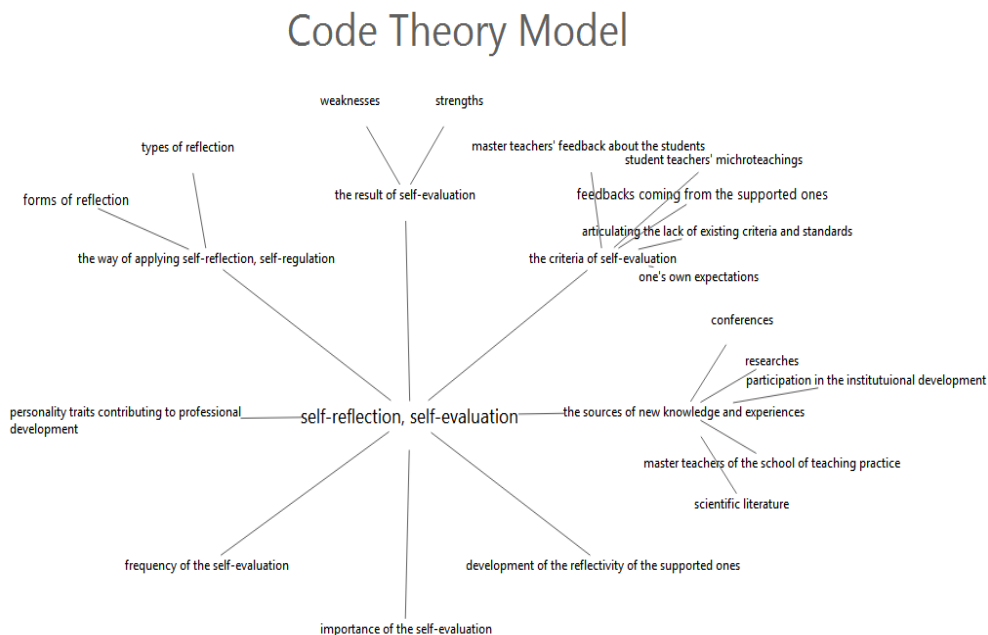


Figure 3. The code system of qualitative content analysis (generated with MAXUDA 12).

As we conducted qualitative analysis, the indicators of quality have been provided by theoretical, methodological and data triangulation.

4 Results

The focus of our research is on the similarities and differences among teacher trainers regarding their self-reflection and self-evaluation. The central issue is to be answered by taking a closer look at the main categories and giving answers to some more particular questions. The first group of questions is the following:

To what extent are self-reflection and self-evaluation present in teacher trainers' everyday practice? How do they perform self-reflection and self-evaluation? Are there any differences between university instructors, the master teacher in the school of teaching practice, the mentor teacher and the educational advisor?

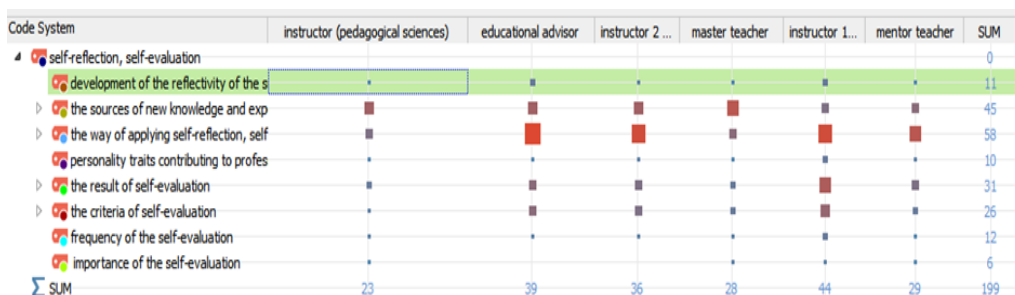


Figure 4. The main categories and their strength in the case of each interviewee (generated with MAXQUDA 12).

The perceived importance of self-evaluation has been detected only in the case of four interviewees, whereas its use in practice has been proved by the fact that the main categories such as *frequency of self-evaluation*, and *the way of self-reflection and self-evaluation are done* have occurred in all interviewees (58 times out of 119). Self-reflection and self-evaluation are the most important for the educational advisor, two university instructors teaching methodology and the mentor teacher. The differences among the interviewees can be seen in the Table 4.

Table 4

<i>Forms and types of self-reflection</i>		
<u>Interviewees</u>	<u>Forms of self-reflection</u>	<u>Types of self-reflection</u>
university instructor (pedagogical sciences)	in mind, written, oral	review, research
educational advisor	written, oral	repair, review, research
university instructor (methodology)	written, oral	repair, review, research
university instructor 2 (methodology)	written, oral	review, research, re-theorising and research

master teacher in the school of teaching practice	written, oral	review
mentor teacher	written, oral	review

All interviewees use review, but the higher dimension of reflectivity research and re-theorising and research were only detected in the university instructors. The mentor teacher and the master teacher in the school of teaching practice did not mention research at all. It can be explained by the fact that both of them have been teachers for more than 20 years. They were socialised in the “old” educational system where research-based teacher training was not in practice, therefore, the competence to do research was not an official requirement for them. They might believe that this component of self-reflection and reflection will not contribute to their professional development.

In order to obtain information about the situation and the participants of self-reflection, the sub-codes of the main category *the sources of knowledge and experiences* were placed in three different groups (Figure 5).

Code System	instructor (pedagogical sciences)	educational advisor	instructor 2...	master teacher	instructor 1...	mentor teacher	SUM
self-reflection, self-evaluation							0
the sources of new knowledge and exp							0
scientific literature	■						1
master teachers of the school of te				■	■		2
participation in the institutional de	■	■	■	■		■	5
researches	■	■	■	■			4
conferences		■	■	■	■		4
trainings	■	■	■	■		■	5
professional communities	■	■	■	■		■	5
the supported	■	■	■	■	■	■	6
people working on the same field of	■	■		■	■	■	5
SUM	7	7	6	8	4	5	37

Figure 5. The sources of new knowledge and experiences (generated with MAXQDA 12).

Participants in the reflective situation:

1. the teacher alone (reading scientific literature);
2. dialogue with a mentor teacher, a colleague (supported students, teacher assistants, teachers, colleagues working in the same field, master teachers in schools of teaching practice);
3. professional discussion in a group, debate in a group of professionals (participation in institutional development procedures, research, conferences, trainings, the work of professional communities).

Only the university instructor (pedagogical sciences) mentioned self-reflection and self-evaluation. Self-reflection in pairs or in groups appeared in all interviewees. It shows that in social situations, individual beliefs come out. Reflecting to others' actions make the individuals place themselves in the position of the reflected ones. This way they provides opportunities for themselves to perform self-evaluation (Bandura, 1990).

What are the criteria of self-reflection and self-evaluation for the teacher trainers?

Here, the main category of *the criteria of self-evaluation* was analysed (Figure 6).

Code System	instructor (pedagogical sciences)	educational advisor	instructor 2...	master teacher	instructor 1...	mentor teacher	SUM
self-reflection, self-evaluation							0
the criteria of self-evaluation							0
one's own expectations		*		*			2
articulating the lack of existing criteria and standards			*				1
feedbacks coming from the supported ones	*	*	*	*	*		6
student teachers' microteachings					*		1
master teachers' feedback about the students					*		1
university students' feedback					*		1
evaluation of the teacher assistants						*	1
mentor teachers' professional competences						*	1
teachers' professional competences		*					1
SUM	2	3	2	2	4	2	15

Figure 6. Criteria of self-evaluation (generated with MAXQDA 12).

The most varied picture of teacher trainers was shown in this aspect. *The existing criteria and standards (mentor teachers' and teachers' professional competences)* were mentioned by the mentor teacher and the educational advisor. The reason is that there is a set of clearly stated criteria in the form of Teachers' Professional Competences and the detailed description of educational advisors' tasks. The university instructor 2 (methodology) referred to *the lack of existing criteria and standards*. She supported her opinion with the fact that she works in a special field of the discipline where the terminology is not unified. The field is being developed and she is willing to contribute to working out a set of standardised criteria of the discipline.

Criteria formed by the interviewees themselves (one's own expectations) were mentioned by the educational advisor and the university instructor 1 (methodology). We classified the remaining criteria of self-evaluation into the following two groups:

1. direct criteria – feedback from the supported university students, teacher assistants, teachers;
2. indirect criteria – university students' microteaching, feedback coming from master teachers of the teaching practice school, results, grades of the supported ones (teaching exams, evaluation of the teachers).

These results justify the importance of direct feedback coming from the supported ones, the person's own expectations and a list of criteria and standards worked out by researchers which play a very important orienteering role in all fields of evaluation.

To what extent does reflectivity orienteer the interviewees in articulating their goals in professional development? Is it a part of their everyday practice or should it be stated as their future goal, learning outcome? For whom can certain elements (research, re-theorising and research) be a realistic standard? For whom can it be a future goal of professional development?

The answer to these questions can be given after an analysis of the main category *the result of self-evaluation*. There were two sub-codes developed in coding strengths and

weaknesses. We compared weaknesses with the goals of future professional development. All the interviewees mentioned their strengths and weaknesses (Table 5).

Table 5

Overlap of the weaknesses and goals of future professional development (learning outcomes)

<u>Interviewees</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Goals of future professional development (learning outcomes)</u>
university instructor (pedagogical sciences) D - level	-	-
educational advisor D - level	+	+
university instructor 1 (methodology) C - level	+	+
university instructor 2 (methodology) D - level	+	+
master teacher of the school of teaching practice C - level	+	+
mentor teacher - C level	-	-

An overlap between the weaknesses and future goals was detected in the case of the educational advisor, two university instructors (methodology) and the master teacher in the school of teaching practice. As for the levels of reflective thinking (Taggart & Wilson, 2005), the mentor teacher, the master teacher and one of the university instructors 2 (methodology) reflected to their practice on contextual level. It means that they prefer reflecting to pedagogical processes:

One of my goals for the future is that, as the two-semester long teaching practice (for students) is going to be introduced in the near future, I would like to make a detailed plan for two semesters distributed in months. It is the same with the teacher assistants who have to do a two-year programme. To plan what they will do on a monthly basis. I should work them out by the beginning of next September. It is one of my goals. I would like to make them this year (mentor teacher, 13).

My goal is to conduct the students' teaching practice in the most successful way, so that they would come to our school with pleasure and they would feel that they learn a lot (master teacher, 13).

I would like to read more scientific literature on methodology. When I was a student at this university, I read some of the literature and I tried to teach considering some good points from it. Now, I would like to explore the wider scope of it in order to help my university students' work. I know that they should have a deeper view of methodology (university instructor 1 – methodology, 21).

In the case of university instructor 2 (methodology), educational advisor and university instructor (pedagogical sciences), the dialectic level was detected. It means that they

consider moral, ethical and political issues of their profession and observe it with a critical point of view.

Now it is the theory that I work out for my colleagues, but I would rather work on the Hungarian concept of Children's Museum (university instructor 2 – methodology 2, 32).

If you consider the present Educational Advisory System, you can see that we (advisors) visit teachers, give very good pieces of advice to them, and then we do not see them for a while. I would like to visit the same teachers regularly, it means the teacher "belongs" to somebody (advisor), we could provide them with regular feedback. It is useless to visit them and leave them alone. There is a need for a constant dialogue between us. We should see their professional development (educational advisor, 19).

I would rather integrate my research into my teaching practice (university instructor – pedagogical sciences, 13).

These differences make us draw the conclusion that the highest level of reflection (research, re-theorising and research) cannot be articulated as basic criteria for certain groups of teacher trainers (mentor teachers, master teachers at schools of teaching practice, educational advisors), just as a possible future learning outcome. It is resulted in the formerly mentioned time factor. For the future teacher trainers, who will graduate from universities where research-based training will be achieved, it can be a formally expressed criterion.

Do teacher trainers intend to develop self-reflection and self-evaluation on the side of those who they support? Are there any differences among teacher trainers in this aspect?

As the most important function of the Teacher Trainers' Professional Competences is to depict a role model, it is necessary to explore how they develop their self-reflective and self-evaluation skills of those who they support. Most teacher trainers do not know the theoretical description of a self-regulated learner, but on the basis of their personal experience, they are able to identify them and to provide a role model for students (Simándi, 2016, p. 39). All the interviewees expressed their intention to develop these skills. Some differences appeared in their methods.

According to scientific literature, the methods can be divided into two groups: non-structured and structured methods. The non-structured methods mean that the supported university students, teacher assistants, and teachers get a minimal amount of instructions on how to reflect to their own practice. Their self-evaluation is more emphasised in these cases. The structured methods mean that the supported ones are directed by questions such as: What has happened? What does it mean? How have my beliefs changed? Description, interpretation and conclusions referring to the future are the basic components of structured methods (Szivák, 2014). There are several ways of developing reflectivity, but we are not going to describe them now. The above explanation has been relevant to give the evidence of the existence of these methods in the interviews. Some examples of the non-structured methods:

I like working with teachers face-to-face because we can develop a deeper personal relationship through effective communication. When I meet them for the first time, we have a warm up conversation and I can make a friendly atmosphere. They open to me and reveal their problems from their teaching practice. I like having a friendly conversation with them and finding solutions together, finding the roots of their problems. Sometimes, it is only a lack of knowledge or insufficient security (educational advisor, 13).

We start a kind of game of microteaching activity. While we are doing it, everybody is a partner in it. I do not conduct these activities as an instructor. I am a colleague of theirs. We have a democratic conversation, everybody can reflect to the activities, make comments. There is no good or bad solution. I think it is a good practice in these games (university instructor 2 – methodology, 21).

Some examples of the structured methods:

...I try to promote my students' development by teaching them some techniques, approaches supporting reflectivity (university instructor – pedagogical sciences, 25).

... during microteaching, we do things as they do them in the school of teaching practice. First, a student performs self-reflection then other students reflect to his/her activities and thoughts, and I do it as well. He/she is sitting opposite us. I usually make them take notes about the strengths and weaknesses. They can use these notes later. I always ask them to reflect to the activities in written or oral form (university instructor 1 – methodology, 34-36).

I ask them (students) to reflect to the things happening during lessons each time. When they observe a lesson, they do it in written form. Then we discuss it. They can learn a lot from it (master teacher, 25).

When we analyse the lessons conducted by my students, he/she starts talking about his/her opinion regarding the lesson. He/she should tell what he/she thinks about the lesson, whether he/she could achieve the goals. I do not ask questions, I try to motivate him/her to share his/her views first. Then at the very end, I tell my point of view. I try to make my student find the solutions by themselves. Of course, when the teaching practice is over, I have to evaluate their work in a more detailed form (mentor teacher, 26).

Both non-structured and structured methods are evidently present in the interviews. If we refer to Athanasou's Recursive Social Cognitive Model for Self-evaluation where self-reflection and self-evaluation are clearly separated from each other, we can draw the conclusion that the 6 teacher trainers mainly focus on the processes of learning during their supporting activity, they intend to accomplish directed development of the supported ones. It has been justified in the case of university instructors. University students, teacher assistants or teachers at the beginning of their career need such a kind of structured and directed support. However, the use of non-structured methods can be fruitful for those who are on the higher level of self-regulation. It would be worth considering a balanced use of non-structured and structured methods paying attention to

individual differences. Therefore, more studies of international good practices could contribute to improving the teacher trainers' methodological repertoire.

5 Conclusion

The purpose of the qualitative content analysis of six interviews was to answer the questions whether self-reflection and self-evaluation as the key elements of self-regulation can be detected in teacher trainers' beliefs, whether there are any differences among the interviewees in this specific field of interest, and to what extent and how they intend to transfer these skills to those who they support. Although we cannot make generalizations, the conclusions drawn may deserve some consideration.

Self-reflection and self-evaluation are the engines of teacher trainers' professional development. Differences have been shown in types, forms of reflection and the levels of reflective thinking. Research, re-theorising and the dialectic level of reflective thinking are among the possible future learning outcomes in the case of mentor teachers, master teachers in schools of teaching practice and educational advisors. The complete introduction of research-based teacher training will make it a basic professional criterion for all participants of the teacher training system.

The fact that self-reflection and self-evaluation are mostly done in pairs or groups has revealed the need of higher level of reflective thinking among the interviewees.

Direct feedback coming from the supported students, teacher assistants and teachers takes priority in self-evaluation. For some teacher trainers, the existing criteria and standards of the professional development have strengthened the orienteering role of these criteria in self-reflection and self-evaluation.

All the interviewees are aware of the importance of being a role model for the supported students and teachers. They believe that the development of the reflective skills of the supported ones is very important and they serve as role models for them in this aspect as well. Mapping and working out non-structural methods which focus on self-evaluation is a possible field of future research. It would contribute to the development of the methodological culture of teacher trainers in Hungary.

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