

## ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY PROGRAMS OF PEDAGOGIC FACULTIES IN NORTH MACEDONIA

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### Abstract

Through the analysis of the study programs of the pedagogic faculties in the Republic of North Macedonia, it will be proven how much the descriptors of the pedagogic faculties in the country address the benefit of the competencies that students can achieve, in terms of the application of knowledge in practice and their understanding, communicative skills, and the ability to judge different situations. Furthermore, these competencies are meant to be applied by students as future teachers. Through the analysis of the study programs of the pedagogic faculties, the descriptors of the pedagogic faculties have been included, especially the study programs for Classroom Teaching, including the Pedagogic Faculty "St Kliment Ohridski" – Skopje, Pedagogic Faculty - University of Tetova, Pedagogic Faculty "St. Kliment of Ohrid" - Bitola, and the Faculty of Education Sciences - at "Goce Delchev" University in Shtip.

The analysis of the study program descriptors in the country's pedagogic faculties was carried out in two stages, where initially the descriptors of the four pedagogic faculties were analyzed; and in the second phase the communication between the faculties was carried out regarding the progress of the application of the competences that emerge from the descriptors. It will be shown that the data from the expected scientific contribution, related to the analysis of the descriptors in the pedagogic faculties of the Republic of North Macedonia, in relation to the treatment and placement of teaching and learning, will be satisfactory, for the acquisition of students' competencies as future teachers who will contribute to improving the quality of primary education in the country.

*Keywords:* knowledge, communication, skills, education, learning, teaching, evaluation

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### Introduction

Through the analysis of the study programs of the pedagogic faculties in the Republic of North Macedonia have been included, especially descriptors of the study programs for Classroom Teaching, including the Pedagogic Faculty - University of Tetova, Pedagogic Faculty "St Kliment Ohridski" – Skopje, Pedagogic Faculty "St. Kliment of Ohrid" - Bitola, and the Faculty of Education Sciences - at "Goce Delchev" University in Shtip. In this paper we will list the following characteristics of the descriptors, based on: *application of knowledge in practice and their understanding, communicative skills, and the ability to judge different situation, etc.*

Through this paper, namely the analysis of the descriptors of pedagogic faculties in the Republic of North Macedonia, more precisely the analysis of levels based on knowledge and understanding, application of knowledge and understanding, communication skills, and skills to judge or evaluate, and the treatment of teaching and learning in these descriptors, it is concluded that the descriptors provide opportunities for the preparation and training of students to practice teaching as a profession, with exceptions, which will be mentioned at the end of the paper.

The descriptors of the pedagogic faculties in the Republic of North Macedonia must change and undergo continuous additions, because the teaching methodology or teaching technology is constantly changing, so the preparation of students for their profession and life must be in

compliance with the requirements and market needs. Therefore, the descriptors of pedagogic faculties should be revised and describe the levels based on knowledge and meaning, application of knowledge and understanding, communication skills, judgment skills, in accordance with the opportunities, abilities, and interests of students, which coincide with the general interest in the labor market and society in general.

### **Analysis of the study programs of pedagogic faculties**

In this part, the characteristics of the levels of knowledge will be presented, which must be respected in the practice of teaching and learning, that is, the learning process must flow based on the levels of knowledge, respecting the individuality of the student. Meanwhile, the part of teaching and learning based on the levels of knowledge is closely related to the descriptors that we have analyzed of the pedagogic faculties in our country. The pedagogic faculties of our country, more precisely the direction of teaching or the direction of classroom learning, prepare future student-teachers who will be part of the teaching staff in primary schools. Furthermore, they must be equipped with these skills by also including working skills, communication, skills to assess, and implement learning goals.

As levels of knowledge, such as cognition, understanding of knowledge, application of knowledge in practice, evaluation, etc. Some of the most important characteristics of these levels will be presented as follows:

**Cognition:** Cognition is the lowest level of student results in the field of cognition. According to B. Bloom, it is the reproduction of something without explanation and without connecting it to something else.

Repetition of names, rules, definitions and explanations as given. They include the knowledge of terminology, the identification of the meaning of notions in the given context, so otherwise the level of knowledge as a lower level indicates the fact that the knowledge is at its lowest level, it is a reminder of what was learned earlier (from separate facts, up to complete theories), knowledge of terminology, knowledge of facts, knowledge of principles, knowledge of methods and procedures, etc.

**Comprehension:** Comprehension is the ability to grasp the meaning of the material. It is the basis of the field of cognition, one step beyond the known. At this level of knowledge, students develop an understanding of the essential meaning of concepts, principles or actions expressed differently, which are demonstrated by giving explanations and examples, conversion and translation from one to another, interpretation and prediction, extracting the main ideas, etc.<sup>8</sup>

Understanding the meaning of the material exceeds the level of cognition only if the questions put the student in a new situation: Questions that measure cognition can be transformed into questions that measure comprehension; by changing the words that are used for description or definition as part of the lesson (teaching/or textbooks) to words that the student has not had the opportunity to encounter during teaching.

**Application:** Application is the ability to use learned material in new and concrete situations. Rules, methods, concepts, principles, laws and theories are applied.

Higher level of understanding based on transfer of learning to situations which have not been taught before in addition to being able to interpret new information by means of what is known (understood), it is also required to use the rules, known principles and strategies in new situations and problems.

The level of application exceeds the level of cognition only if the questions put the learner in a new "situation". The questions must contain new data or information, which the student must work with to reach the answer, create new problems and situations that require the student to use what he knows in a new (unusual) way.

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<sup>8</sup> Conteva. Zh. (2010). Ocenovanje na znanjata i sposobnostite na učenice so primena na Blumovata taksonomija. pp-5

Through the analysis of the study programs of the pedagogic faculties in the country, the way of judgment should also be emphasized as one of the levels of descriptors, which will help future student-teachers to face situations where assessment should be an integral part of the educational work. In this case, we evaluate the work of the teacher, the student, their achievements, the teaching content, the textbooks, and many factors and phenomena that affect the learning process. Also, evaluation is important, because through evaluation we correct ourselves, and we correct the process, where there is a need. Therefore, we can conclude that the descriptors of pedagogic faculties in the country offer opportunities for the preparation of future staff for future teachers, but still that there is always room and opportunity for changes that will correspond to the needs of the market and society.

### Research findings

In the presentation of the results obtained from the survey carried out with teachers of the first cycle of primary schools, where a total of 284 teachers were included, located in several cities in the Republic of North Macedonia, including teachers from the first grade to the fifth grade, who answered the question about descriptors of study programs of pedagogic faculties in North Macedonia which offer opportunities for the preparation of future student-teachers to exercise their profession in a dignified manner.

The independent variables are the teachers' experience, and the grade level that they work with, whereas the dependent variable are the data on the opinions and attitudes of the teachers for the categories included in the research, since they are related to whether the quality of teaching and learning among students depends on the competencies acquired in higher (initial) education. The proposed hypothesis is: in the study programs of pedagogic faculties, in the general and specific descriptors of the defined descriptors as well as in the study programs of study groups according to class teaching, aspects related to the placement and treatment of teaching and learning by the teacher during the learning process.

**Table 1.** Work experience

Alternatives	f	%	valid %	cumulative %
0-5 y	46	16.2	16.2	16.2
6-15 y	90	31.7	31.7	47.9
16-30 y	113	39.8	39.8	87.7
Up to 30 y	35	12.3	12.3	100.0
Total	284	100.0	100.0	

M=2,48 SD=0,90

Statistical data were obtained in terms of the length of the work experience (0-5 years, 6-15 years, 16-30 and over 30 years), from a total of 284 teachers involved in the research, (46 or 16.2%) were teachers with experience from 0-5 years, (90 or 31.7%) from 6-15 years, (113 or 39.8%) from 16-30 years, and (35 or 12.3%) over 30 years of experience. From the obtained statistical values, it resulted with an average of M=2.48. SD=0.90, while the minimum value is 1, the maximum value is 4, while based on the expected average ( $1+4=5$ ,  $5/2=2.5$ ) it results that the obtained result is lower than expected.

**Table 2.** The grade level that teachers lead

Alternatives	f	%	valid %	Cumulative %
I	49	17.3	17.3	17.3
II	65	22.9	22.9	40.1
III	59	20.8	20.8	60.9
IV	51	18.0	18.0	78.9
V	60	21.1	21.1	100.0
Total	284	100.0	100.0	

M=3,03 SD=1,39

The statistical data obtained regarding the grade level led by the surveyed teachers are as follows: with the 1st grade, they lead (49 or 17.3%), with the 2nd grade (65 or 22.9%) , with the 3rd grade (59 or 20.8%), with the 4th grade (51 or 18.0%), and with the fifth grade (60 or 21.1%). From the obtained statistical values, it resulted with an average of M=3.03. SD=1.39, while the minimum value is 1, the maximum value is 5, and based on the expected average ( $1+5=6$ ,  $6/2=3$ ) it shows that the obtained result is higher than expected.

The question from the interview conducted with teachers related to: Does the quality of teaching and learning among students depend on the competences acquired from the teacher's higher (initial) education, or on other factors?

From the received responses, the teachers emphasized that: a completed higher education is only a starting point or a sufficient amount of competences for a teacher to start their teaching practice, but every teacher must be alert and actively follow educational changes, changes in society, to constantly improve and prepare for the application of continuous changes necessary for successful and effective learning and teaching of students. In short, they must follow and implement modern trends in education. Also, the teachers stated that in the university, students get very little practice to work on the learning process and practice is the most important, so what is learned and acquired can be practiced.

Some characteristics that were mentioned by some teachers, that in order to have quality teaching and learning of students in the teaching process, the teacher must be able to keep up with the daily challenges, as well as the practice gained in the classroom, their work dynamics, monitoring modern trends, creativity and mental readiness, in order to contribute with good results and qualities to the improvement of teaching and learning of students in the learning process.

According to the study programs of the pedagogic faculties, in the general and specific descriptors of the defined descriptors as well as in the study programs of the study groups according to lower elementary teaching, the aspects related to the placement and handling of teaching and learning by the teacher are addressed during the learning process. This hypothesis is partially accepted. For the open question from the survey carried out with 284 primary school teachers of our country: "What really worries you when you have to carry out teaching and learning during the teaching process, we have the following answers: Lack of interest and motivation for acquiring new knowledge and expanding their personal capacities for more knowledge from the various fields being studied. Planning and carrying out activities should always aim at developing critical thinking in students and encouraging them to explore learning not factual learning. Students with special educational needs and the large number of students in the classroom were drawn out as challenges, and the fear that the duration of the lesson is not enough to devote time to all students was worrisome to many teachers. This also shows the need for the presence of a special education teacher in schools, who would help teachers to overcome this problem, which directly affects successful teaching and learning in the learning process.

Moreover, the teachers spoke about the excessive and unnecessary administrative work that was taken up at the expense of the time devoted to the design of teaching contents, which reflect on successful teaching and learning in the teaching process. Teachers also expressed concern about the fact that our schools do not have many tools and spaces that affect the success of teaching

and learning of students, that affect learning in the educational process, and that schools should work to ensure better conditions for the qualitative realization of the teaching content and the achievement of the learning-educational goals.

## Conclusion

Based on a qualitative analysis of the study programs of the pedagogic faculties of the country, we can conclude that in the study programs and the subjects taught, there are descriptors through which the aspects of teaching and learning of future student-teachers are included. In particular, there is a very good proportion between the theoretical and practical training of future student-teachers, which contributes to the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for the profession. This approach enables the professional training of future teachers who will be able to implement all the new requirements and challenges of pedagogic science through the mastery of didactic competencies related to the new requirements for successful teaching and learning of students in the learning process. Such attitudes of teachers should serve for a further comprehensive analysis of the purpose, suitability and quality of the descriptor of pedagogic faculties in the country, especially when it comes to teaching and learning of students during the learning process and the preparation of the future student-teachers.

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