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Pupil diversity in teacher preparation curriculum

Abstract

This study focused on the concept of pupil diversity in the planned curriculum of teacher preparation programmes. The professional training of teachers influences the knowledge, skills and attitudes student teachers regarding diversity (Akiba, 2011); however, most research studies have utilised quantitative research focused on planned curriculum or learning outcomes. We chose a qualitative approach to uncover how pupil diversity is implemented within the planned curriculums of selected teacher education programmes. Based on a content analysis of syllabi and conceptual documents from teacher preparation programmes at a selected faculty of education, two conceptual approaches towards diversity within curriculums, one explicit and one implicit, are described. These concepts can be further interpreted in relation to the ideological, content and methodological dimensions of the curriculum.

Keywords: *content analysis, planned curriculum, pupil diversity, student teachers.*

1. Introduction

The faculties of education in the Czech Republic have been undergoing significant change in recent years. The objective of this transformation is a response to problems related not only to the massification of tertiary education but also to political and conceptual decisions made by the government, such as inclusive education support. The phenomenon of inclusive education, that is, working with diverse pupil populations, has been influencing reform efforts towards changes in education in the country for two decades now (National Reforms in School Education, 2021).

Despite the fact that the issue of pupil diversity is considered crucial in teacher preparation programmes (Educating Teachers for Diversity, 2010; Gay, 2002; Sapon-Shevin, 2010), many authors claim that student preparation is sometimes plagued with difficulties in determining whether the teachers are being prepared to work with diverse pupil populations in an effective way or not (Akiba, 2011; King & Butler, 2015). According to the conclusions of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD; Educating Teachers for Diversity, 2010), university curricula often contain a rather (often optional) unique subject/module developing students' professional competences towards pupil diversity in which students

cannot be sufficiently prepared. These findings led us to ask research questions that would examine more closely the concept of diversity at all three levels of curriculum as presented by Akker (2006: 19): the intended, implemented and attained curriculum of selected universities educating future teachers. We understand these curriculum levels as mutually related since studies of curricula, including mandated curricula, have consistently illustrated that they do not necessarily lead to desired learning outcomes (Glatthorn, 1999). This paper, however, focuses on the concept of diversity in planned (intended and explicit) curricula (Eisner, 1994), which influences the teaching process and its results through its objectives and content.

2. The intended curriculum of teacher pedagogical–psychological preparation programmes

The curriculum is a constant phenomenon determining educational activity. The design of the *planned curriculum* – the constitutive phase – relates to the clear structuring of goals, which are achieved through the content and the means of its implementation. The goals, content and means defined in a planned curriculum become the norm for determining the teaching process and its results (Googlad, 1969; Akker, 2006). These have a retroactive effect on the innovation of the planned curriculum. The curriculum is not a fixed and unambiguous phenomenon determining educational activity, but, at the same time, it is a dynamic procedure changing in parallel with educational practice and social requirements that must reflect and respond to them. As Akker (2006) notes, from a substantive perspective, it is necessary to search for a balance between (a) knowledge, in other words, the academic and cultural heritage that seems essential for learning and future development; (b) society, meaning the problems and issues relevant for inclusion from the perspective of societal trends and needs; and (c) the learner, as in the elements that appear to be of vital importance for learning and development from the personal and educational needs and interests of learners themselves.

A universal requirement that significantly enters the curriculum of vocational training for future teachers is the social diversity associated with the joint education of pupils in planned curriculum concerns student-learning opportunities that are overtly taught and stated or printed in documents and on websites, in policy, and in guidelines such as in-course syllabi.

It is perceived as a way of projecting individual dimensions: ideological, content, methodological and organisational (Kelly, 2009; Walker, 1990; Akker, 2006). The ideological dimension mediates target values and educational objectives on different general levels that a specific society aspires to acquire. In the academic curriculum of teacher professional preparation, the ideological dimension is characterised by cross-subject, conceptual documents as well as the objectives of individual courses and the expected outcomes of students. The ideological dimension of the curriculum is a synthesising curriculum aspect and indicates target perspectives and values for learners (*cf*. Wragg, 2002).

Importantly, the content of the planned curriculum of teacher propaedeutics is defined ambiguously by the Czech Ministry of Education in the document *Framework Requirements for Study Programmes,* the completion of which provides a professional qualification for the performance of regulated professions of pedagogical staff (2017). The framework requirements aim to express the balanced relations between the basic components of vocational teacher training – teacher propaedeutics, subject training and subject-didactics – and the practical component of vocational training with reflection. All these components are aimed at providing the graduate with the necessary background (target dimension). While their scope is

normatively specified, their content is left to teacher education institutions. This does deliver faculties of education with some uncertainty but it also provides them considerable freedom. It is important to be aware of the fact the formal curriculum itself does not guarantee the accomplishment of expected outcomes (Glatthorn, 1999).

3. Pupil diversity research in the planned curriculum

In its broader sense, pupil diversity includes respecting otherness and the differences and individual needs of each pupil, which influence the ways they develop and learn. Diversity denotes a neutral concept that is an inevitable reflection of the diversity of human society (Educating Teachers for Diversity, 2010). In addition to demographical descriptors such as culture, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, gender and religion, the pupil diversity concept embraces personal characteristics, abilities and skills (Banks & Banks, 2010; Kaur, 2012; Subero, Vila & Esteban-Guitart, 2015).

The issue of pupil diversity is somewhat extensively represented in empirical research studies on the boundaries of various fields, and attention is also paid to research on pupil diversity in the curriculum of teacher preparation programmes (Taylor & Sobel, 2001; Jennings, 2007; Akiba, 2011; Severiens, Wolff, & van Herpen, 2014;King & Butler, 2015). Empirical studies dealing with diversity in teacher preparation programmes frequently concentrate on research into student attitudes towards pupil diversity (Gay, 2010; Taylor & Sobel, 2001) or on how these change due to newly implemented, special courses in the curriculum which are directly focused on the development of students' knowledge, skills and attitudes towards working with pupils in a heterogeneous classroom. Interesting results can be seen, for example, in Akiba's (2011) research from the University of Missouri, who observed a research sample of 243 teachers. A course in this study directly focused on the development of competences and changing student teacher attitudes towards diversity. The results are characteristics of professional teacher training that influence the knowledge, skills and attitudes of students regarding teaching for diversity and multiculturalism. Using a quantitative content analysis of diversity and multiculturalism in professional training curricula in fourteen teaching education programmes in the United States, King and Butler (2015) veer towards the differences among education programmes and highlight the absence of this issue across the analysed programmes. They conclude that student teachers do not feel prepared to work with diversity in their classes. Likewise, the research focus on teachers' professional preparedness for working with pupil diversity was the aim of an extensive Centre for Educational Research and Innovation project "Teacher Education for Diversity" (2007–2009). The research focused on the readiness of students to implement culturally responsive teaching practices in a diverse classroom (Skepple, 2015). Jennings's (2007) study concerns an analysis of 142 programmes educating teachers of elementary and secondary programmes in seven US states. He points out the representation of curriculum topics concerning racial/ ethnic diversity, language diversity, economic (social class) diversity, gender diversity, sexual orientation diversity and special diversity as well as the extent to which they are prioritised in the curriculum. As mentioned above, most research studies have been of a quantitative nature, focused on examining the influence the introduction of various measures/courses have had in supporting pupil diversity within curricula or on the quantitative content analysis of courses according to established procedures. Research of a similar character has not been conducted in the Czech Republic as pupil diversity and joint education are recent, new social and political phenomena. The curriculum of the selected institution was established

in 2014–16 and came into force in September 2016. At the same time, the Education Act was amended, declaring joint/inclusive education in schools under public jurisdiction. These political and social demands have become a challenge in the Czech Republic for all levels of the curriculum, not only in practice but also in research.

4. Research methodology

Our focus is on research into pupil diversity in the planned as well as implemented curriculum of teacher education within the broader research of the Czech Science Foundation. This complex conception is suitable for the simultaneous study of relations among more related contexts – in our case pupil diversity in teacher preparation programmes at university (planned and implemented curriculum) and in school classrooms, where student teachers have their teaching practice. However, this article only focuses on the question of what aspects of pupil diversity are projected into the planned curriculum of teacher pedagogical-psychological preparation programmes.

The objective of this article is to analyse the planned curriculum of a selected institution's teacher preparation programme with an emphasis on student teacher preparation for working with pupil diversity at lower secondary schools. Our concentration is on the way pupil diversity is represented in the student teacher curriculum.

4.1 Research sample

In terms of the sampling strategy for the planned curriculum analysis, the syllabi of teacher propaedeutic subjects across a three-year Bachelor's programme and two-year follow-up Master's programme were selected at the chosen teacher educating institution. This selection covers an entire five-year education programme to become a teacher. We selected pedagogical subjects and integrated pedagogical-psychological subjects as well as teaching practice for analysis. This choice was informed by the character of the subjects as these subjects prepare students for the teaching profession as opposed to subjects in a field of knowledge. In accordance with recommendations by Zeichner *et al.* (1998), during text selection for analysis, documents forming the contextual frame of the study programmes were included in the sample. Three conceptual documents were also embraced: the characteristics of pedagogical-psychological preparation, where the intention of teacher professional preparation and its principles are defined; a graduate's profile; and, last but not least, a (standard) competence framework. These documents reflect requirements for teaching quality in the international and Czech contexts (Delaney *et al.*, 2010; Hativa & Stanley, 2013; Standards, 2015; etc.) as well as in the inclusive education context (Meijer, 2010). The research sample consisted of 23 subject syllabi and the three conceptual documents mentioned above. Due to anonymisation, the analysed subjects are divided into three groups in this paper: theoretical (11 subjects); practical, which are used to gain practical experience with the tutoring of pupils, assistant work in schools, tandem teaching and students' own teaching (8 subjects); and reflective, which are used concerning the experience students gain in their teaching practice (4 subjects) and are related to the practical subjects.

4.2 Analytic process

Curricular documents are political texts (Iversen, 2014), which determines their form. The syllabi are characterised by their normative character; their structure formally responds to the requirements of institutional accreditation. The syllabi compactness is ensured by the

interconnectedness of categories such as course objectives, learning outcomes, content, teaching methods, evaluation methods and other information provided by the teacher.

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) was selected as a data analysis method because QCA can combine elements from qualitative and quantitative research traditions, especially the use and the combination of inductive, data-driven and deductive, concept-driven categories. This makes the method especially suitable for educational research (Gläser-Zikuda, Hagenauer & Stephan, 2020) and for efforts to find not only where pupil diversity is implemented in the curriculum but also how it is implemented. Moreover, it is a content analysis prerequisite that data be reduced to concepts describing the research phenomenon by creating categories; concepts; a model, conceptual system or a conceptual map (Elo *et al.*, 2014). We used the qualitative approach, namely the open-coding procedure derived from grounded theory, to ascertain where pupil diversity topics occur in the curriculum and what kinds of diversity are preferred. To uncover these issues, an inductive data-based approach to developing codes (Schreier *et al.*, 2020) seemed most suitable. This contrasts with content analysis, where a quantitative methodology predominates over the qualitative (Prasad, 2019).

In our procedure, the statements from the syllabi were open coded in Atlas.ti, version 7. The codes were categorised and named as discourses. However, several codes did not fit these categories. For this reason two higher-level areas were designed: an explicit approach to pupil diversity in the curriculum and an implicit approach.

5. Results

Based on QCA, pupil diversity in the curriculum has been interpreted using two approaches – explicit (obvious) and implicit (hidden) (Eisner, 1994).

The **explicit** approach detects unambiguous terms in the planned curriculum, such as diversity, otherness, variety and inclusion as well as teaching approaches and strategies related to these terms (inclusive education, individualisation, differentiation, etc.). This reveals the discourse in which these terms are used. **The hidden** conception of diversity, by contrast, does not explicitly operate with the abovementioned terms. It does however transmit these phenomena to students, most frequently through the model of the university's stated teaching methods (*cf.* modelling behaviour in Lunenberg, Korthagen & Swennen, 2007; Ruys *et al.*, 2013).

5.1 Explicit pupil diversity in the curriculum

The explicit approach to diversity in the teacher propaedeutic curriculum can be especially found at the ideological and content levels of the course syllabi. In its explicit form, the syllabi work with terms such as diversity, variety, otherness and inclusion as well as strategies on how to implement them in pedagogical practice (*cf.* areas of expertise in Severiens *et al.*, 2014). In the ideological dimension, these terms are most frequently related to educational results and objectives formulated within each syllabus. In the content dimension, at the individual syllabus level, different discourses of diversity were identified.

5.1.1. The ideological dimension of the curriculum, or how pupil diversity is observably covered in study programme objectives

The analysis of the objective curriculum dimension demonstrates that significant attention was paid to the issue of pupil diversity. Similar results were found in a university curriculum analysis by Severiens *et al.* (2014). From the conceptual document analysis, it is apparent that

the study programme is aimed at the recognition of pupils' educational needs (learner-centred approach and personalised learning) (Prain *et al.*, 2013) and at support for their learning. Differentiated teaching is not only emphasised during the lessons but attention is also paid to planning differentiated teaching in relation to pupils' individual needs.

At the individual course level, the ideological dimension is especially associated with lesson objectives defined in the course syllabi. The explicit conception of pupil diversity in course objectives is related to specific subjects, where knowledge and skills are aimed directly at comprehension of the teacher's work with pupil diversity from the very beginning of the study programmes. Two introductory classes, Theoretical Subjects 1 and 2, in the first year present the diversity issue in the school environment. Their aims are to *point out the significance of multicultural education and education that affords respect, tolerance and constructive cooperation, that reflects on one's own attitude towards diversity and its influence on one's own pedagogical practice* (Theoretical Subject 2). Theoretical Subjects 4 and 10 in other years aim *to prepare teachers-to-be for work with pupils of various abilities and needs in the inclusive environment of the school classroom, to explain the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of educating pupils with special educational needs*. The objectives of the mentioned subjects are conceived of as being complete with Theoretical Subjects 5 and 11. These direct students to gain knowledge and skills essential to a deeper understanding of pupils' individual needs. *Based on the pedagogical diagnosing of results, the students should be able to use data for differentiation, individualization and personalised learning in lessons as well as to communicate the results appropriately* (Theoretical Subject 11).

Considering the explicit conception of pupil diversity in the target categories, the sub-objectives in the subjects can be assumed to be consistent with higher objectives, which are stated in the conceptual documents (1, 2, 3). The subject objectives are defined as being directed towards the support of student teacher competences in personalised learning, differentiation and individualisation in lessons: *student teachers take it upon themselves to gain the knowledge and skills required to support a deeper understanding of pupils' individual needs; to select appropriate methods in relation to pupils' needs; to implement suitable arrangements in their lessons; and to reflect upon them.*

The ideological dimension of the curriculum is followed by the content and methodological dimensions. The explicit approach of working with pupil diversity is further described in the content dimension of the subject syllabi.

5.1.2 Content dimension of the curriculum, or how pupil diversity is observably covered in syllabi content

The explicit definition of pupil diversity in the planned curriculum, with terms such as variety, diversity, otherness, inclusion and inclusive education, is most frequently found in the content component of the syllabi, hence why it is called the content dimension. Our interest lies in the contexts these terms are set in, the discourses they are mentioned in as part of the planned curriculum. Here, we identified the following discourses of pupil diversity: personalised pedagogical-psychological discourse, multi(cultural) and social discourse, special-pedagogical discourse, diagnostic discourse and methodological discourse.

Individual discourses are connected not only to a selected field that their name can refer to, but they also come up in pedagogical propaedeutic subjects. In the following samples, however, citations are selected only from chosen subjects that represent the specific discourse best.

Personalised pedagogical-psychological discourse

As its name implies, this discourse is set across all subjects covered in pedagogical-psychological training. Its focus responds to one of the five (pedagogical) areas that Severiens *et al.* (2014) identify as very significant for the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes towards diversity. The discourse is typical for its orientation towards the perception of pupils' various characters, values, knowledge, skills or family background and, consequently, the possibilities of an individualised and differentiated approach to pupils in lessons. The students are supposed to learn about pupil diversity and to learn to accept it through the basic content of the pedagogical and psychological fields.

In this discourse, otherness is perceived as natural, and students are encouraged to perceive self-diversity, the diversity of their fellow students and that of pupils. Otherness is not connected only to problems and disorders. On the contrary, it is represented as an emphasis on the uniqueness of each pupil and a range of positive characteristics. In addition, attention is also drawn to gifted pupils.

(Multi)cultural and social discourse

A typical representation of multicultural discourse is Theoretical Subject 2. Its educational content presents the issue of otherness in the school environment and highlights the significance of multicultural education as education towards respect, tolerance and constructive cooperation. It introduces the possibilities of applying multicultural education in the education process. Within this discourse, demanding situations in the teacher's job are pointed out as being associated with pupils' social disadvantages as well as with the teacher's cooperation with assistants.

The discourse is especially represented in practical-oriented subjects (Practical Subject 1 and 2) and reflection upon them, during which the students are supposed to share and consider their experience with otherness. Practical Subject 1 is based on the student *teaching practice throughout the whole semester (60 hours in total counting lesson plan preparation), which consists of individual tutoring of pupils from lower secondary schools including socially disadvantaged pupils. The student teaches either within the pupil's family, on the school premises or in another institution.* This subject also contributes to raising student awareness of pupils' social and cultural diversity, and, through integration in the curriculum, work with these pupils is set as an inseparable part of the teacher's profession.

In conclusion, the discourse can be said to highlight socio-(multi)cultural diversity, social interaction and identity in specifically oriented subjects where work with attitudes and knowledge is stated and to stress the levels of experience with diversity and reflection upon it (*cf.* culturally responsive curriculum in Gay, 2002; 2010).

Special-pedagogical discourse

As its name already implies, this discourse is specifically focused on work with pupils with special educational needs (in relation to valid legislation). Its content orientation is connected especially to the objectives of Theoretical Subjects 4 and 10, and it aims to support students' work in the heterogeneous classes of mainstream lower secondary school. The content is focused on work with individuals, with respect to their individual needs, and the heterogeneous group. The main issue is the education of pupils with special educational needs and the desirable kind and level of support, including a reference to the relevant legislation: *Students are encouraged to understand the specifics of educating pupils based on their special*

educational needs (Theoretical Subject 4). In these specifically oriented subjects, diversity is understood in its narrow special-pedagogical sense.

Students gain their own experience in special educational needs during the second year of the Bachelor's programme while doing their assistant teaching practice over two semesters. The teaching practice is focused on tutoring a selected pupil or taking on the role of a teaching assistant in a selected classroom. Special-pedagogical discourse strategies emerge in both practice types; in one-to-one tutoring, social and multicultural discourses are implied as these tutoring lessons are conducted within socially disadvantaged families, including Roma families.

Diagnostic discourse

This represents the development of students' diagnostic and interventional competences, which is essential to working with pupil diversity. The significance of getting to know pupils' individual needs and their position in a group is proved by the fact the subjects can be found in both the Bachelor's and follow-up Master's programmes.

The subjects are oriented towards student understanding of teacher diagnostic activities, which is fundamental to the individualisation, differentiation and personalisation of teaching (Bray & McClaskey, 2015; Burden, 2017: 115). The content shows the subjects are focused not only on a specific group of pupils (pupils with special educational needs, gifted pupils) but, through them, how diversity is perceived as the otherness of everybody and their individual educational needs as well. *With its content, they develop future teachers' diagnostic competences, which enable them to cooperate with professionals in discovering pupils' abilities, knowledge, skills, needs and special features. Attention is drawn to the implementation of adjustments in lessons that can encourage pupils' learning* (Theoretical Subject 5). Furthermore, the following Theoretical Subject 11 develops student diagnostic and interventional competences with group or class diagnoses. These discourses connect the professional, general pedagogical and the special pedagogical preparation of students for diversity (see Cochran-Smith & Dudley-Marling, 2012).

The students can apply their acquired experience by implementing suitable adjustments in their teaching during their assistant or teaching practice: *The students choose objectives and methods appropriate for one-to-one tutoring with respect to a specific child and communicate with a teacher considerations concerning the planning, implementation and evaluation of educational activities in the classroom* (Practical Subject 1 and 2, similar to Practical Subjects 6, 7 and 8).

Legislative discourse

Legislative discourse could be included in the abovementioned discourses; however, here it is defined separately as it represents the normative character of pupil diversity in addition to its significant representation across subjects. Pupil diversity is accepted not only axiologically but also legislatively in valid legislative documents: *Students learn to work with current legislative and curricular documents and to use them in their everyday teaching practice* (Theoretical Subject 8). *They are familiarised with the legislative framework of inclusive education* (Theoretical Subject 4 and 10).

This discourse offers students an orientation of conceptual and legislative documents where attention is especially paid to common/inclusive education. Students become familiar

with specific paragraphs of the Education Act; with Decree No. 27/2016 Coll., about the education of pupils with special educational needs and gifted pupils (2016); the amendment of Decree o. 72/2005 Coll., about providing counselling services in schools and school counselling institutions; and with supportive materials that enable a teacher to work with a pupil when their education requires that the education process be adapted to varying extents. The legislative discourse does not consist only in a the theoretical introduction to documents and legislation but also in the application of knowledge while creating educational support plans for pupils that the students tutor as well as in their assistant work and teaching practices (Practical Subject 1 and 2; Practical Subject 6, 7 and 8).

Didactic discourse

The didactic discourse represents the fulfilment of the abovementioned discourses in educational practice as it emphasises inclusive-didactic approaches. Students are encouraged to apply their diversity training in lesson planning and the management of heterogeneous classes in individualisation as well as to differentiate in lessons and apply adjustments for pupils with special needs in their lessons.

This discourse is represented by Theoretical Subjects 7, 8 and 10. In conformity with OECD recommendations (Schleicher, 2012), the discourse supports personalised learning (Bray & McClaskey, 2015; Prain *et al.*, 2013) and lesson modification with respect to pupils' needs in the classroom: *Students consider the different perspectives of agents in educational situations, evaluate them critically and verify the suitability of selected methods from the viewpoint of a pupil's learning style, a teacher's teaching style and the requirement to transform content didactically. Students formulate learning tasks with various cognitive difficulties and demonstrate various ways of evaluating pupils with examples. They consider their advantages and disadvantages*. The domain of didactic discourse is teaching practice, whose content is the student's own teaching. It therefore requires the adjustment of inclusive-didactic approaches in practice (Practical Subject 6, 7 and 8). The students' own teaching is preceded by tandem teaching, which is considered to be a significant indicator of inclusive education (Silverman, 2007 as cited in Parker, McHalton, & Diedre, 2012: 167; Parker *et al.*, 2007: 167).

5.2 Implicit pupil diversity in the curriculum

Regarding the implicit approach to diversity in the curriculum, the term student diversity is more suitable than pupil diversity. Student diversity is embraced in syllabi as a condition for future work with pupil diversity including student self-knowledge, which should be helpful in this case. Student teachers are encouraged to work with diversity while the teachers of teacher preparation programmes consciously model lessons in a way that reflects the required condition (*cf.* modelling behaviour in Lunenberg *et al*., 2007).

5.2.1 Methodological dimension of the curriculum or how hidden diversity is embraced in teaching methods and lesson organisations according to syllabi

If specific educational content is to be implemented within professional training, it must be conducted under specific conditions and in a specific way (Bauman, 2006). These conditions and ways are influenced not only by the objective and content dimension of the curriculum but also by a range of other determinants, for example, the number of teachers involved in syllabi

conceptions (up to 12 teachers) or their images of teaching conceptions. This stems from the results of a curriculum analysis that suggested the following strategies be applied in lessons:

1. Support safety in lessons

Most subjects focus on students getting to know each other, on formulating their expectations as well as the needs and rules of mutual sessions. According to syllabi, the seminars are devoted to all study majors, which implies a varied spectrum of students meeting in the sessions who differ not only in their knowledge, skills, interests, motivation, gender, age, physical capabilities, personalities and history but especially the study major connected with their interest and motivation to study too. Working with diversity within a study group can be utilised. Students may perceive the pedagogical phenomena from different perspectives depending not only on personal characteristics but also on their study major determinants. For example, the introductory Theoretical Subject 1 creates space to *get to know each other, hear the students' expectations and needs, watch a motivational video and have a follow-up discussion*. It is a matter of supporting a learning culture based on respect, which is purposefully used as part of working with diversity within a study group. In the seminar, the learning procedure is based on respect for all agents in the education process with an understanding of their individual specifics. Therefore, the subject is used as an opportunity to work with diversity within a study group, which the students can experience and apply later in their own school teaching.

2. Use a variety of teaching methods and forms

The application of various teaching methods and forms is appropriate given the requirements for teaching in a heterogeneous school classroom environment and is closely related to the principle of personalised learning, differentiation and individualisation in lessons (Bray & McClaskey, 2015). Consequently, it is desirable for students to come across similar teaching strategies within their university studies as well. The syllabi analysis indicates a wide range of methods using (a) student cooperation at different levels, from pair work to cooperating group work (*students discuss specific topics and their current expression in schools and education; various forms of group discussion, cooperative learning and pair work learning are applied; and group facilitated reflection is implemented*); (b) various possibilities of getting feedback (*students receive peer feedback in the final evaluative session and assess each other's portfolio task; group work with a pedagogical (reflective) diary is also applied*); and (c) various teaching methods (*experiential learning activities, independent learning of the assigned texts from a selection of texts, mind map creation and the presentation of examples of good practice*).

3. Support individualisation and differentiation

At the methodological level, individualisation and differentiation consist of experiencing these approaches during one's studies. According to the planned curriculum, the students experience the individual approach through definition and discussion of their own expectations and needs in a group; the possibility of one-to-one consultations with the teacher, a mentor teacher or specialised didactics teacher; self-study; and the setting of their own personal and professional objectives as well as an action plan for their implementation in Reflective Subjects 1 and 2 and Practical Subjects 6, 7 and 8. According to Bray and McClaskey (2015), the students manage their own learning by identifying the aims of their professional development as well as their

evaluation and reflection under the supervision of teachers (academics and mentor teachers), and they select suitable methods and technologies for learning. The students' otherness is reflected in their individual aims as well as the ways in which they learn and develop.

6. Discussion and conclusion

The pupil diversity concept is central in teacher propaedeutic subjects from the Bachelor's programme to the end of the follow-up Master's programme. Similarly, as stated in Jennings's (2007) research, diversity is planned into curricula that are mentioned in the general introductory named pedagogical courses, courses focused on teaching methods and classroom management, courses specifically focused on practical student preparation and reflection, and diversity is a part of the training, practice, feedback and follow-up support (2010).

While searching for an answer to the question of how pupil diversity is perceived in the planned curriculum of pedagogic propaedeutics, we started by revealing its hidden and obvious dimensions.

In a similar way to Evans's (2002) description of the British context, our analysed curriculum also contains significant differences in the conception of diversity in the case of subjects that are explicitly focused on work with heterogeneous classes and subjects which covertly support work with diversity. Diversity in the planned curriculum is explicitly obvious especially in the objectives (ideological dimension) and content (content dimension) of the syllabi and conceptual documents. In the subject contents, diversity is present in multiple discourses included in both Bachelor's and Master's studies, for example, multicultural and social discourse, special-pedagogical discourse, pedagogical-psychological discourse and so forth. The normative element of diversity is significant in these discourses. Diversity is something that should be accepted either through the field content itself or, for instance, through legislative documents that normatively implement the acceptance of pupil diversity in teaching. Likewise, the abundant representation of diversity topics in the curriculum both vertically (spanning the ideological, content and methodological components) and horizontally (across discourses) demonstrates that this topic is significant for teachers-to-be.

In its implicit form, diversity in the curriculum takes place especially in the methodological dimension, where the stated teaching methods function as a model example of differentiation in university lessons. The implicit diversity of student teachers and, alternatively, pupils might thereby be implemented with experience into the planned curriculum.

A significant research finding is that pupil diversity is an inherent component in the planned curriculum. However, this is not only regarding various disadvantages or talents among pupils but also concerning a wide conception of learner individualities too. In conclusion, the planned curriculum does not have to be in line with the implemented curriculum (*cf.* Gurin *et al.*, 2012: 333). Consequently, further analysis is necessary. Finally, the achieved curriculum may differ from the planned and implemented curriculum. This factor is considered in student teaching practices, where what they have learnt about pupil diversity and how they work with it in real classrooms becomes obvious. Consequently, the proposed text is only one part of the complex mosaic that is the teacher preparation programme curriculum.

7. Dedication

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