

SOCRATES PROGRAMME
Education, Audivisual and
Culture Executive Agency
European Commision,
BOUR - B-1049 BRUSSELS



Pre-service Teacher Training at Palacký University

Danuše Nezvalová

z

Palacky University Olomouc

Faculty of Science

2007

Models of Training

Teacher training is predominantly at the higher educational level, the only exception being for pre-school education (kindergarden-mateřská škola) teachers.

Primary Teacher Training

The responsibility for initial training of teachers at the first stage of the basic school rests mainly with Faculty of Education Palacký University. The study model for teachers is predominantly a one-stage concurrent programme (i.e. the academic and the professional parts run simultaneously) with elements of integration primarily between the theoretical and practical parts of the training. In addition to traditional methods (lectures, seminars), the "learning by doing" approach is also employed, as well as various theoretical methods, and experience learning through practical exercises, workshops etc. Practical training in schools is a significant element of the course. Teaching practice accounts for between 4 and 6 hours a week over the course of the whole study programme, or in blocks amounting to a total of 10 weeks within the programme. Graduates are qualified to teach all subjects.

The curriculum in concurrent courses of initial teacher training generally consists of five basic modules:

- subject module (the basics of all subjects taught at the first stage of the basic school (základní škola);
- pedagogical and psychological module (including practical training);
- university basics module (philosophy, history, rhetoric, ecology, computer technology etc.);
- didactic module (theory and practice of teaching individual subjects at the first stage of the basic school (základní škola);
- upgrading module.

Every student is obliged to choose one specialisation - music, visual arts or physical education. The studies usually consist of eight to ten terms, each of 15 weeks, and there are, on average, 20 hours of direct teaching each week. Emphasis is placed on the student's own attempts at teaching and their reflection on this practical experience.

Teachers at the compulsory primary level are qualified as generalists and would need further study at the faculty of education to teach at other than the primary level.

Secondary Teacher Training - General Subjects

Teachers at the second stage of the basic school (grade 6-9) are trained at Faculty of Education PU in four to five-year Master's studies, which are mostly concurrent.

Teachers of sciences at upper secondary schools can gain their qualification at Faculty of Science UP Olomouc. The studies at this faculty can be both concurrent (older, but still runs till 2008) and consecutive (newly developed, runs from 2007), and are usually 5 years in duration.

The following components are always present: general education, education in a specific field (education in the field of future teaching), pedagogical education (psychological, pedagogical, didactic) and pedagogical practical training.

Teachers at upper secondary schools are qualified as subject specialists. The subject combination of specialists depends on their choice at the beginning of the study and can be selected from a list of combinations or from a list of individual subjects set by the faculty. Students can study science subjects and math to be qualified as 2 subjects specialist for upper secondary schools. Students can make choice in the following subjects at the Faculty of Science: biology, chemistry, physics, geography, computer science and mathematics.

Students study compulsory or elective subjects in their specific fields (biology, chemistry, physics, geography, computer science and mathematics), general education (English, philosophy of science), pedagogical education (psychological, pedagogical, didactic) and pedagogical practical training. Practical training takes 6 weeks (in two periods, each of 3 weeks) and is realized at cooperating upper secondary school. Each course has certain number of credits. The course usually consists of ten terms, each of 15 weeks, and there are on average 20 hours of direct teaching each week.

Students are assessed through a system of partial and comprehensive exams, credits and classified credits. These can be in an oral, written or practical form or in the form of a seminar paper. After each term the students sit for examinations mostly in subjects taught during that term. (Some subjects are taught over several terms). In order to be allowed to sit for an exam, students must demonstrate that they have completed the relevant course work. Evaluation of the student teaching practice depends only on the report of teachers of school where teaching practice was completed. There are no criteria of the student performance.

Study achievements are assessed by a system of granting points or credits. Students have to get 180 credits to get bachelor degree and next 120 credits to earn master degree. The credit system is compatible with the ECTS as a necessary condition for entry to the European student mobility programme Socrates-Erasmus.

The frequency and methods of assessing the students' achievements differ according to different courses. In some cases a system of partial examinations taken after each semester is introduced, in other cases there is one comprehensive examination after each completed part of the studies - most often at the end of a certain module. Considerable emphasis is also placed on continuous assessment of the students' work, mostly in the form of tests of knowledge or independent work (on computers, graphic work, laboratory work or seminar work) or independent work.

The organisation of examinations is legally embedded in study and examination regulations, which are part of the internal regulations of a higher education institution (faculty) and are approved by the academic senate.

In general, examinations are taken in the course of an examination period at the end of each semester. Examiners are teachers of individual subjects. Relevant examiners declare the dates of individual examinations and the dates of all examinations are declared by the management of the institution (faculty). In justified cases it is possible to take an examination before the agreed official date. A failed exam may be retaken several times. Final examinations are taken in front of boards of examiners. In order to increase the level of objectivity, external

examiners from other higher education institutions or scientific establishments are invited as to sit on the boards. Care is taken to authorise only the most qualified academic staff as examiners.

At the end of a three-year Bachelor's programme the student sits for a final state examination, a defence of Bachelor's thesis is usually part of it. The content is set by the faculties. It consists mostly of an oral examination in licensed subjects. Students continue in Master's programmes for next 2 years. In the end of studies the students sit for a state final examination, which consists of an exam in subject field(s), subject didactics and the defence of a thesis. The content is also set by the faculties. On passing the state final examination, he/she receives a certificate and a diploma, which acts as a qualification for the upper secondary schools and gives them the right to use the title Magistr (Mgr.).

Sources: www.msmt.cz www.eurydice.org; www.csvs.cz