

# The Changing Role of VET Teachers and Trainers

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Education generally goes through the time of great changes in terms of content but in the same time also in methods and forms of didactic aspects. School is no longer the only one source of information and teacher is not always the final instance of knowledge. There is completely new role of students and their encouragement have to make them part of educational process including their responsibility. The paper describes the concept of teachers' competences in the new conditions and process of their development. The concept of 'competency' has been developed recently, as a holistic term for the knowledge, skills and attitudes required in a good educator. Seven types of competencies, which are required, are defined. The Author developed the two models of teachers' acting, which are going to be analysed, demonstrate and discussed. Different approaches of teacher training systems in some EU countries are listed and briefly described. The final ambition is to make the proposition for the possible joint degree study program.

Key words: Education, teacher training, teachers acting, communication and presentation skills, study program

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout most of the 20th century, the concepts of education were based on acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes. Knowledge was described in the curriculum, syllabus and module. Attitudes were generally those pre-dispositions, which were most helpful to increase socialisation within human relationships and society. More recently, attention has turned to identifying competencies as an outcome of educational processes. The skills were both psycho-motory (the ability to perform manual tasks) and intellectual (the ability to think logically and to analyse, synthesise and evaluate).

Competency is defined in this paper as the ability to perform or carry out defined tasks in a particular context, at a high level of excellence. It describes action, and demands that this is at a very high standard. In practice, competency unites knowledge, skills and attitudes into a statement of what an individual, or a class of individuals who constitute a category (such novices at work) or a profession (such as a teacher of various subjects), can do and is expected to do in particular situation. The term can be applied to a range of levels of competency such as from a novice to an expert, and to situations, which range from routine tasks to creative and highly responsible decisions or plans.

It is evident that a high level of competency is essential if educators are to be most helpful to students and, indirectly, to the development of an efficient work force. The implications are two. First, an effective system of training is required

to develop the necessary basic level of competency of educators, and assist the growth of competency during a professional career. Second, and more fundamental, is the need for a mechanism to identify competency and give an assurance of what can be expected from it.

## DISCUSSION

### *Competences towards Professional Standard*

The development of competences continuously leads towards the formation of professional standard. The complex of pedagogical competences can be divided into the following categories:

#### *Discipline and subject competence*

An educator:

Has mastered a systematic body of knowledge of specialisation in an appropriate scope and depth.

Is able to apply practical experience in the specialisation to the educational content of the subject of study.

Is able to transform knowledge of the respective scientific and technical disciplines into the educational content of the subject of study.

Is able to integrate inter-disciplinary knowledge with the subjects of study and create inter-subject links.

Is able to identify and process information in the field of specialisation, and has user skills in the field of information and communication technology (ICT).

#### *General educational competence*

An educator:

Has mastered the processes and conditions of education at secondary vocational school (secondary apprentice training centres) on both theoretical and practical levels, combined with a deep knowledge of psychological, social and multi-cultural aspects. Is able to use the context of education and understands the educational systems, and the trends in their

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development, related to the system of vocational education in particular.

Is able to support the development of individual qualities in the students, in their field of interest and vocation.

Has knowledge of the rights of a child and student, and respects them in educational work.

Has a high level of creativity, flexibility and adaptability for the education process.

*Educational (didactic) competence*

An educator:

Is able to transform the methodology of knowledge of the given discipline into the way of thinking of students in the given subject of study.

Is able to choose the most suitable methods, forms and aids for the teaching process with regard to educational goals.

Is able to use Information and Communication Technologies for the teaching process and for the support of students' learning.

Is able to lead students towards self-responsible learning.

*Diagnostic and intervention competence*

An educator:

Is able to use the methods of educational diagnosis in teaching on the basis of the knowledge of individual prerequisites of students and their developmental specificities, and is able to diagnose social relations in the class.

Is able to identify students with specific learning and behaviour disorders and to tailor the selection of the subject matter and teaching methods to their capabilities.

Has mastered the methods of giving guidance to gifted students.

Is able to recognize in students a social pathological manifestation such as bullying and battering, and knows the possibilities for their prevention and remedy, which he can apply. Has a good command of methods for ensuring discipline in the class and is able to solve educational situations and educational problems at school.

*Social and communicative competence*

An educator:

Has mastered the means of creating a favourable working environment (teaching climate) in class/ at school on the basis of the knowledge of social relations among students.

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Has mastered the means of professional socialisation of students and is able to apply them in practice.

Is able to handle demanding social situations at school and outside the school and is able to help students.

Knows the possibilities and limits of the impact of out-of-school environment, peers and media on students, and is able to analyse the causes of negative attitudes and behaviour of students and to use corrective measures.

Has mastered the means of communication in education in the class/school.

Is able to apply efficient methods of communication and cooperation with parents and social partners of the school, and is familiar with the issues of family education.

*Management and legislation competence*

An educator:

Has a basic knowledge of the legislation and other regulations and documents related to the performance of his profession, his environment and the profession/employment for which he prepares students and is able to use them in instructional practice.

Is familiar with educational policy, has a good knowledge of the conditions and processes of functioning of a school.

Is familiar with administrative work related to keeping records of students and their educational results, and is familiar with record keeping and reporting.

Is able to develop projects on the level of an institutional cooperation, both domestic and international

*Professional and personality cultivating competence*

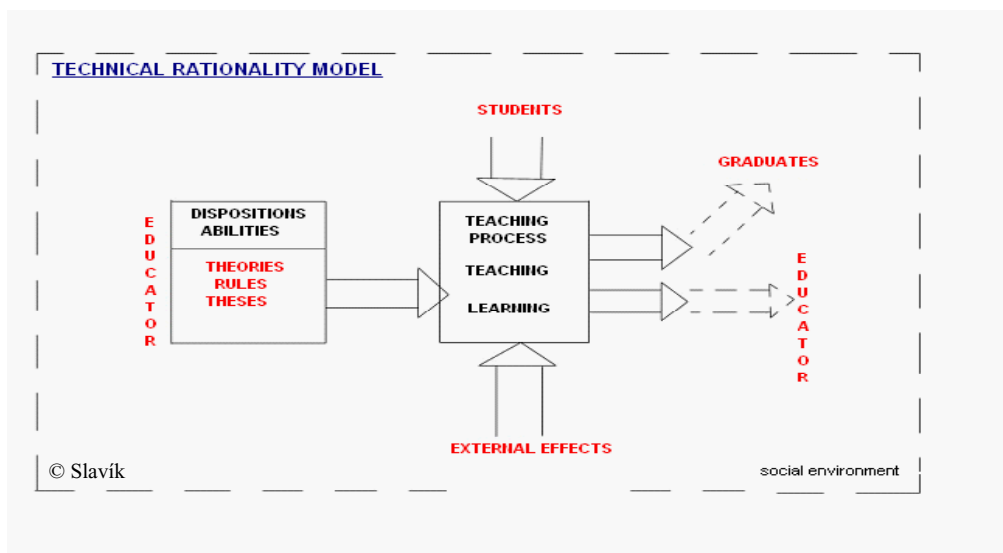
An educator:

Has a general grasp of educational issues in philosophical, cultural, political, legal and economic fields, and is able to apply them to shape attitudes and value orientations of students.

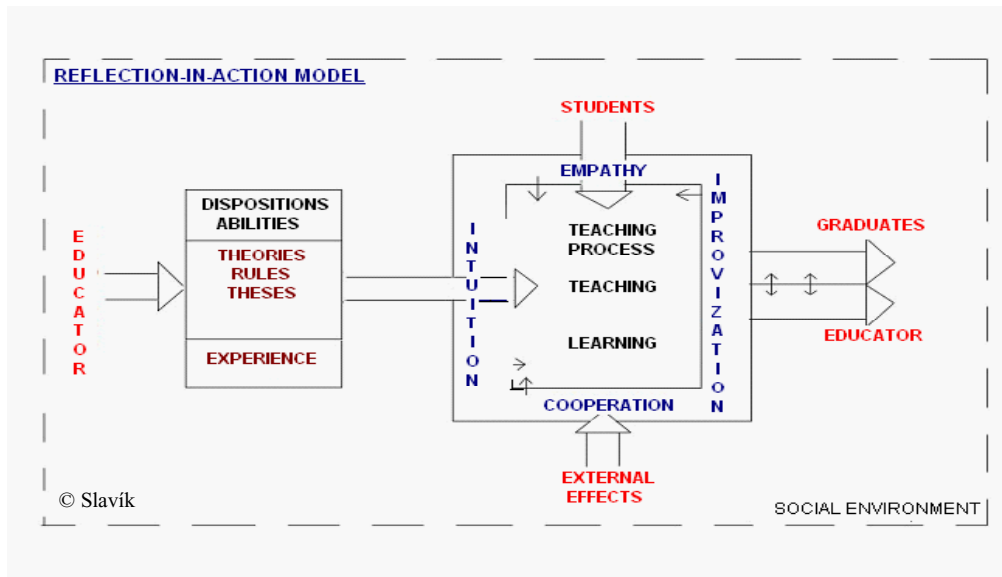
Is able to represent his profession on the basic of mastering the principles of professional ethics, and has mastered the patterns of professional behaviour.

Has the necessary personality prerequisites for cooperation with colleagues and other members of educational staff.

**Thinking before acting.**



Thinking in reflective conversation with the situation.



Is capable of self-reflection on the basis of self-assessment and evaluation, using different entities.  
 Has physical resistance and physical fitness.  
 Has moral integrity.

*Models of teachers' acting*

During the job professional carrier teacher is getting a long different stages of his/her level of competency. The quality of teacher training programs has significant impact along with talent, dispositions and "inborn" abilities. There is also definitive role of working experience in terms of complete understanding and taking in account the entire educational environment around. Most important final effect can be seen from the outcomes of education, which is important for the relations between educator and students. Two models of teachers' acting are design below.

*Teacher training systems in some of EU countries*

Vocational education training in different countries and different periods of advancement has its own, quite often very different history, importance, structure and speed of change. Importance of VET can be seen also from some of the recent documents of EU Commission.

"Priority should be give to the examination of the specific learning needs and challenges of vocational teachers and trainers and of the possibilities of making their profession more attractive including continuous updating of their professional skills. Teachers and trainers should be supported in their essential role as innovators and facilitators in the learning environment. A coherent framework should be envisaged to support the improvement of the quality of vocation teaching and training." (Maastricht Communique 2004) Nowadays endeavour for cooperation in education among EU counties leads into the trends for unification at least some of the parts or modules of study programmes. There are some similarities but still lot of differences. Following tables show some of the aspects.

*Organizational development at the Czech University of Agriculture*

Within the last decade many crucial changes have taken place at the Czech University of Agriculture. The new curricula have been developed, the new study programmes are offered,

red, ICTS has been introduced and an internationalisation of the education and research is one of the main priorities. The faculties have changed their names according to the new content of the offered study programmes.

The development of the Department of Education has recently done a remarkable progress. Together with the significant changes in the whole society, great emphasis is focused on the continuous education.

The Department of Education at the Czech University of Agriculture (CUA) was the oldest educational institution of its kind in the Czech Republic. It has been training teachers of vocational subjects for agricultural, forestry, food processing, veterinary and horticulture secondary schools for more than seventy-six years. Of course, there were various developing stages. It was founded as a "State pedagogical seminar for candidates of teaching at agricultural schools" in the 1930 in Prague and later changed its location around different places in the country until the year 1964, when it was incorporated into the Agricultural University as an independent Department of Education. In the year 2005 Department has been transformed to a teaching and research unit, the University Institute according to the Czech University Law (Zák. č.111/1998 Sb.) (as it happened at some of the universities in the Czech Republic and abroad as well) named the Institute of Education and Communication (IEC). The institute is divided into three departments – i.e. the Department of Teacher Training, the Department of Professional and Personal Development and the Department of Continuous Education with the Counselling Unit for the students with special needs.

Nowadays, Institute functions as a teaching and research unit, which director is directly responsible to the Rector of the University. It is located outside the main University campus, and it is oriented on teacher training and for many years also focusing on the training of young university staff and postgraduate students. Many activities are oriented for the education of agricultural advisors, collaborating with Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic. Institute is traditionally well didactically equipped.

**WHAT KIND OF EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND IS REQUESTED BEFORE THEY ENROL IN TEACHER TRAINING?**

Spain	Master degree in the field of specialization
Czech Republic	Master degree in the field of specialization; eventually are possible concurrent studies of specialization and pedagogical sciences
Poland	Master degree in the field of specialization

**HOW LONG THE TRAINING LASTS?**

France	1 full year
Finland	1-3 years (part time studies)
Germany	3 years for Bachelor degree, 2 years for Master degree and then another 2 years of practical training in schools (Referendariat)
The Netherlands	3-4 years (Bachelor in Education), eventually 1 or 2 additional years (Master in Education)
Spain	2 months + 2 weeks (minimum)
Czech Republic	3 – 4 semesters
Poland	3 semesters

**WHAT KINDS OF DISCIPLINES ARE THOUGHT?**

France	- didactics of special subject- general pedagogy, psychology, ethical issues, creativity, ICT use, self documentation, and pluridisciplinarity - relationships between school and land, school and enterprises, integration of pupils as workers, international relations
Finland	- basic studies in education- studies in vocational pedagogy: *teacher as a torchbearer, *teacher as a pilot, *teacher as a fisherman
Germany	- respective vocational subjects- educational sciences (didactics of vocational subjects)
The Netherlands	- respective vocational subjects- communication and analysis- professional or technical expertise development - activating didactics, self responsible learning- guiding situations of students- learning and behavioural problems- profession oriented situations and study career guidance, ...
Spain	- didactics- methodology of training and learning- didactic tools and materials, school books- planning of activities- respective vocational subject (deepening the knowledge)
Czech Republic	- didactics of special subjects- pedagogy- psychology- didactic technic and technology- language and rhetoric skills- environmental education- biology of young people and school hygiene- ethics of profession- didactics of practical training- school management
Poland	- pedagogy,- educational psychology, - didactics,- methodology of teaching, - ICT in education,- voice production

**WHAT IS THE PROPORTION OF PRACTICAL TRAINING?**

France	50 % - there is a regular rotation of 5 week practical training in schools and 5 week theoretical lessons at University
Finland	15 from 60 ECTS
Germany	practical training is partly included in the didactics of special subjects (Bachelor degree: 30 from 180 ECTS; Master degree: 46 from 120 ECTS), but not fully covered until “Referendariat”
The Netherlands	
Spain	at least 1 month
Czech Republic	3 weeks + micro-teachings within didactics of special subjects
Poland	360 hours of theoretical lessons + 180 hours in schools

**IS IT TEACHER-TRAINING COMPULSORY FOR THE FULL VOCATIONAL TEACHERS' QUALIFICATION?**

France	YES, without this successfully passed teacher training you could work as teacher's assistant, not having a definitive job....
Finland	YES
Germany	YES
The Netherlands	YES
Spain	?
Czech Republic	YES
Poland	YES, unconditionally

**WHAT ARE THE MAIN ISSUES FOCUSED ON THE TRAINING OF NEW TEACHERS?**

France	improvement of the competencies of adaptation and pluriactivity; relevant teaching of acute social problems connected with respective discipline; internationalisation of training, and cooperation with partners abroad
Finland	knowledge and skills needed in guidance counselling and in the teaching of different learners, pupils with special educational needs and immigrants, and to the use of ICT in teaching
Germany	preparing the students for the planning, preparation, execution and evaluation of professional lessons
The Netherlands	preparing the students for professional situations
Spain	see the subjects taught; course contents are adapted and reworked according to actual needs very often
Czech Republic	adopting changes in information knowledge, self-responsible approaches, competence based learning, Internationalisation, change in teaching methods and styles, use of ICT in vocational subjects
Poland	„learner centred education" → teacher as facilitator, humanistic psychology, socio-cultural theories of teaching and learning, personal development

**CONCLUSION**

Competency has been defined as the ability to perform or carry out defined tasks in a particular context, at a high level of excellence. It is more than only knowledge and skills. It includes personal attitudes connected with social and moral appropriateness. An analysis has then been made of competencies in seven categories of the characteristics of good educators. Such an analysis gives a framework to both teachers and their trainers with which to assess personal goals and perceptions. A progress can be later monitored during the training and afterwards in professional experience as an educator.

Teachers, like other professionals, have to respect the fact that they will not have enough knowledge from their formal education; even it was the “best one”. They have to continuously develop their knowledge and teaching techniques, and not only in the subject matter. It is absolutely essential to achieve the balance among all kinds of the above-mentioned competences. The development of self-reflection and thinking in terms of students leads to the questions like: “And what about students?” “Do they understand me?” “If not, isn't my fault?” How will I teach next time, what am I going to improve?” These and many other questions he/she has to ask not to disbelieve themselves but to create better and valuable feedback, which on contrary leads to higher self-confidence and satisfaction. People are partly “born” with the presumption and potency of being a good educator but let give them opportunity to achieve pedagogical mastery through a proper education, not only through life empiricism.

The ambition for some of European teacher training institutions, members of ENTER (European Network for Lear-

ning and Teaching in Agriculture and Rural Development) is to develop some of the joint degree study programs in VET teacher training. It is the time to improve strong coordination and cooperation but realistic for the current situation to work out on the joint modules which can be studied during the students' mobilities at different institutions in different countries. It can be a real challenge for ENTER.

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