

# Teaching performance in the lessons of practical training during pedagogical practice of IEC students

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The complementary study of teaching of vocational subjects at the Institute of Education and Communication (IEC) at the Czech University of Agriculture in Prague also includes pedagogical practice at secondary agricultural, horticultural and forestry schools. Students of IEC, i.e. future teachers, should acquire experience and skills from their educational activity. During their teaching performance they should prove their pedagogical abilities and knowledge of vocational subjects of their specialisation.

Apart from their teaching performance in vocational subjects, the students also take part in teaching performance in the lessons of practical training. They should prove their pedagogical abilities and vocational skills in the teaching process. Vocational skills (mainly motoric) of some IVP students are not on required level. It seems that the previous studies, both on secondary and university levels, did not equip these students by the skills at the needed level. Although it is quite demanding, it is necessary to retain the lessons of practical training in the timetable of pedagogical practice. The mission of evaluation committee remains the same, i.e. to evaluate and judge most responsibly the final teaching performance in the lessons of practical training.

Key words: pedagogical practice, teaching performance, lessons of practical training, practical skills, teaching analysis

## INTRODUCTION

Pedagogical practice at the training secondary agricultural, horticultural and forestry schools is a part of teacher training courses for teachers of vocational subjects and practical training organised by the Institute of Education and Communication (IEC) of the Czech University of Agriculture in Prague. These schools cooperate with IEC and they participate in the management and organisation of the pedagogical practice.

During the pedagogical practice students make practical use of the pedagogical knowledge and skills acquired during theoretical studies. Students gain the knowledge and skills through model situations at seminars and workshops at IEC and they apply them into practical teaching process at the training secondary schools.

During the pedagogical practice the IEC students should acquire the required experience and skills connected with educational process. The students familiarize themselves with educational process through observations first, later though teaching performance in the classes of their specialisation.

Apart from the teaching performance in the classes of their specialisation, the students take part in the teaching per-

formance in the lessons of practical training. They should prove their pedagogical abilities and vocational skills. It is a challenge for all students, however some students (mainly graduates of "gymnázium") seem to have some problems in the teaching performance in the lessons of practical training. Certain skills are insufficiently mastered and this deficiency manifests itself in the teaching process.

Hence, greater attention should be paid to the preparation of students for the lessons of practical training (both by students and trainee teachers and IEC staff). In spite of some worries or even antipathies of students towards "practical performance", it is necessary to retain the lessons of practical training in the timetable of pedagogical practice.

### *Pedagogical practice of IEC students*

#### *Lessons of practical training*

To complete their pedagogical practice, IEC students deliver two teaching performances to be judged by an evaluation committee. The first one in a theoretical vocational subject, the second one in practical training. The management and realisation of teaching performance (both training and final) in theoretical vocational subjects do not bring any problems.

Nevertheless, they are certain problems when realising teaching performance in practical training. Training schools very often organise lessons of practical training in blocks. Practical training of students at the training schools is planned in coherence with agro-technical terms of spring and autumn field works. However, they do not always overlap with the terms of pedagogical practice of IEC students.

Consequently, the IEC students demonstrate and teach rather simple tasks in a classroom or in a training hall and a

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botanic garden. Less often they have a chance to make use of production apparatuses of a school farm. Demonstration of “simpler” tasks does not show the real abilities and practical skills of IEC students.

Moreover, the facilities of school farms, such as modern technology and machinery, are far from the required level (both in quality and quantity aspects). The machines are very often old-fashioned or not functioning at all. It is rather impossible to demonstrate and later practice certain tasks just for appearance’s sake, without real functioning of a machine.

The IEC of CUA in Prague cannot fully solve the lack of finance at the training schools and their farms. A possible answer would be a closer cooperation and a mutual transfer of information, regular seminars for trainee teachers and head teachers of practical training organised by IEC, a mutual respect of needs and requirements of both partners, and the consistency of IEC staff when choosing the “right” agricultural topics for training and final teaching performances.

Well-provided final teaching performances in the lessons of practical training and corresponding conditions at school farms of the training secondary schools, close cooperation between IEC students and IEC staff and trainee teachers might eliminate certain worries or even antipathies towards the lessons of practical training.

Marks given in vocational subjects and practical training

The IEC of CUA in Prague organises for its students the pedagogical practice at the training secondary schools in autumn and spring terms. The results show that the season time does not significantly influence the conditions for pedagogical practice. There is no difference either between final teaching performances in vocational subjects and practical training. There is certain difference by individuals; however, the overall confrontation of a group of students shows an accordance of the both teaching performances. Both teaching performances, in vocational subjects and practical training, the results are quite favourable. The mark 3 in teaching performance has been given only three times in vocational subjects and only once in the lessons of practical training out of total number of 81 students. The marks of final teaching performances of IEC students are shown in a table 1 and 2.

**Table 1: Pedagogical practice (autumn 2005)**

Marks	Vocational subjects		Lessons of practical training	
excellent	23	63.9 %	24	66.7 %
very good	11	30.6 %	12	33.3 %
satisfactory	2	5.5 %	0	0 %
unsatisfactory	0	0 %	0	0 %
total	36	100 %	36	100 %

Marks given in the lessons of practical training in a two- and three-week pedagogical practice

Students with an acknowledged previous teaching experience and certified “pedagogical qualities” take part in a two-week pedagogical practice, students with no teaching experience take part in a three-week pedagogical practice. There was not any great difference between the marks in final teaching performance in the lessons of practical training

**Table 2: Pedagogical practice (spring 2006)**

Marks	Vocational subjects		Lessons of practical training	
excellent	28	62.2 %	27	60.0 %
very good	16	35.6 %	17	37.8 %
satisfactory	1	2.2 %	1	2.2 %
unsatisfactory	0	0 %	0	0 %
total	45	100 %	45	100 %

in a two- and three-week pedagogical practice. This applies for both autumn and spring terms, with only slight difference caused by a little group of three students taking part in a two-week pedagogical practice. The marks of final teaching performance in the lessons of practical training of IEC students are shown in a table No. 3 and No. 4.

**Table 3: Pedagogical practice (autumn 2005)**

Marks	2 weeks		3 weeks	
excellent	9	69.2 %	15	65.2 %
very good	4	30.8 %	8	34.8 %
satisfactory	0	0 %	0	0 %
unsatisfactory	0	0 %	0	0 %
total	13	100 %	23	100 %

**Table 4: Pedagogical practice (spring 2006)**

Marks	2 weeks		3 weeks	
excellent	2	66.7 %	25	59.5 %
very good	1	33.3 %	16	38.1 %
satisfactory	0	0 %	1	2.4 %
unsatisfactory	0	0 %	0	0 %
total	3	100 %	42	100 %

The results of the long-term observation and survey in the marks of final teaching performances show that students with no teaching experience sometimes achieve better marks. It is evident that IEC students pay considerable respect to the experience and advice given by trainee teachers and IEC teachers, while students with previous teaching experience get rid off their bad teaching habits less easily or willingly and they less respect experience and advice of IEC teachers.

## CONCLUSION

Pedagogical practice is during the whole history of the Department of Education and later the IEC of CUA in Prague an indispensable part of the teacher training course for teachers of vocational subjects and practical training. Observations and training and final teaching performance in the lessons of practical training are parts of pedagogical training. There is no tendency of the IEC of CUA in Prague to chance this frame in the near future.

It is necessary that IEC students understand that teachers of vocational subjects at secondary agricultural, horticultural and forestry schools pass not only theoretical knowledge but they are simultaneously very often teachers of practical training.

Teaching practical skills to students means that teachers themselves master these skills perfectly. Moreover, teachers

of practical training apart from mastering these skills, they have to know how to explain and present the skill and finally how to teach it to students. On this account, it is necessary to retain the lessons of practical training in the timetable of pedagogical practice of IEC students.

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