

An assessment of student teachers' entering beliefs about the teacher's role

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Absztrakt

Objectives: Research related to beliefs about education has a history of a little more than fifteen years in Hungary. (In this context, the term "belief" is related to opinions, ideas, and systems of such ideas, based on experiences, in opposition with "knowledge" or "attitudes"). Literature suggests that students entering teacher education have solid beliefs about teaching and very often, the modification of such beliefs turns out to be a difficult job, despite the educational effects of teacher education. Previous research revealed that beliefs, which are very often emotionally determined and implicit, are based on the students' 12-year school experience, and are also naïve beliefs and may even be maladaptive. Other beliefs can, however, have a proactive effect on the explicit aims of teacher education. Exploration of the system of such beliefs has an important role in the social representation of the teachers' profession, and may also have an effect on the efficiency of teacher training as well as the professional and social development of the individual student teachers.

The main objective of the present research is the exploration of student's beliefs that they bring with themselves when enter the one-cycle 5-year teacher training programme. The students involved in the study are typically 18-19 years old and have no previous education in psychology or educational sciences. Exploration of the system of their beliefs, e.g. with regard to their adaptivity is another aim. To our best knowledge, no research has been conducted in this field with students of music teachers' programme in Hungary.

Methods: Data collection took place in September 2015. Subjects were first-year students of the one-cycle 5-year "Teacher of Music" programmes and had not taken any course in psychology or education. The students were typically 18-19 years old. They were instructed to draw concept maps in five groups. The central concept of the concept maps was "teacher" and the students' task was to discuss their associations, and, based on their consensus, record their ideas on the concept maps in a structured way. For drawing the concept maps and discussing the concepts, they had 60 minutes.

Results: the concept maps were analysed using quantitative (number of levels, concepts, nodes) and qualitative methods (establishing categories). The results outline a righteous and child loving, in some cases, authoritarian teacher. Concepts related to adaptivity, motivation and success also occurred in several cases. However, some concepts reflected negative experiences ("psychological harm", "apathy", "punishment"). One of the concept maps included only general concepts in a less structured way ("class", "student", etc.) which are less related to the teacher's role or activities.

Conclusions: The research revealed significant information about the beliefs of the students who entered music teacher education. Concepts related to adaptivity may form a good basis for establishing the teacher's identity. However, we believe it is equally important to change counter-identification, based on negative experiences, and the "empty" statements, commonplaces, to a well established interpretation of the teacher's role, based on studies in psychology and education, by the end of their training. We intend to continue our research repeating the assessment with the same students before their graduation so we can analyse the change in their interpretation of role.

Szakirodalom

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