

A Teacher's Reward in Teaching at the University Level - "Ups and Downs"

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ABSTRACT

The article analysis an important aspect related to a teacher's reward in teaching at the university level, as the title suggests with "ups and down" throughout one's professional career. The teaching-instructional process and the experience that will be presented is from a personal perspective, that took place during the university period 2016-2017, at the National University of Arts of Bucharest, within the Department of Teacher Training (DTT) with students who wanted to become teachers in "plastic art /visual art education". The design of the paper is based on a theoretical approach (e.g., recent studies, theories, case studies in the field, etc.), together with a "mini" research that includes two main target groups: the students' opinions and perceptions reflecting different issues discussed (respondent who are preparing to become teacher in Art Education) and a teacher's view based on "self-reflection or observations" grasped during the university period. Furthermore, this paper continues the exploration on the topic of preparing students to become teachers, which will be seen mirror wise - student versus personal reflections ("self-reflections method"). If in my previous article "Student's level of satisfaction regarding their "Pedagogy" course training" the main focus was on preparing prospective teachers for teaching in the classroom, this paper will emphasis more on ones' "reward" for being a teacher in higher education; a "reward" which is represented through comparison with a "coin" with two sides - "up and down". The paper plans on investigating the students 'and teacher's view transmitted "directly or indirectly" and "consciously" or "unconsciously" through beliefs, feelings, emotions, etc., aspects that one felt throughout their university development. To this extent, this paper will explore three variables that are interconnected: personal, organizational and professional development, described as an ongoing system of pedagogical inquiry that reflects a number of inputs-processes-outputs.e.

Keywords: Students; Teaching-instructional process; Pedagogy; Higher education; Teachers

INTRODUCTION

They say that in life nothing is arbitrary or by chance in relation to the people with whom you encounter, events that occur in one's life with good or bad events... features that happen at some point in time and out of the blue... and so this paper will begin to unravel with a short introduction about when asked to be an associated professor (teacher) at the National University of Arts of Bucharest, within the Departments of Teacher Training (DTT) during the university period 2016-2017.

One could ask him/herself why I entitle this paper "A teacher's reward?!" The response is not simple, but if we think of the term "reward" which means among others: "something given or received in return for a service or merit" [1] in itself we can then examine the notion that teaching as any other profession could be measure through "ups and downs", that could or not be viewed as a "reward" from an individuals' point of view (in our case a teacher's perspective). According to Ballantine and Spade (2007)

"professionalization was equally a source of frustration and hope for teachers" [2].

Although throughout this paper we will refer to the notion of a teacher's "reward", a "reward" that will be represented by comparison with a "coin", as mentioned in the abstract, with two sides: one "up" and the other "down", a metaphor during the course of this paper.

Asked by a colleague if I would like to be an associated professor for one year at the National University of Arts of Bucharest, in the framework of the Department of Teacher Training, since she was not able-a chance in ones' life for teaching, guiding, grading several courses and keeping seminars on varies topics were my obligations in connection to: "Pedagogy I (Fundamentals of Pedagogy: Curriculum Theory and Methodology)"; "Pedagogy II (Theory and Methodology of Training, Evaluation Theory and Methodology)"; "Class management"; "Design and management of educational programs". As a result, the position was accepted, but as Robert Frost (1949) put it in the poem "A line-storm song",

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I felt somehow alone in this university process, since I had very little experience and some many course and seminars in front of me “The road is forlorn all day” [3]. So, as time passed I started to be aware of what I am getting myself into: “how do I teach!”, “what do I say!”, “do I have the necessary skills!”, pretty much a never ending story of questions were going on into my head, unfortunately, not a good way of thinking, so far, “act on the basis of the absent and the future” [4] a lesson was to be learned.

Another aspect that must be underline at this moment is the importance of my metaphor of “ups and down” sides of obtaining a “reward” from a psychological point of view (feeling complete). Consequently, this idea is adapted personally and is to be reflected as “good” or “bad” experiences which could easily be interconnected and identified with the notion of “being” satisfied with ones’ self or feeling that you receive a “reward” in/for accomplishing the work at the university level as an experience. In this interchange, positive and negative aspects will be pragmatically highlighted by putting them in correlation with the three variables mentioned above: personal, organizational and professional development); variables that describe an ongoing system of inputs-processes-outputs within the university framework. These issues will be developed below, step by step.

Today we could notice that “positive psychology” or the “authentic happiness” theory is very much present, in the sense that it makes us reflect more on our own life, experiences or ones’ level of satisfaction. As well, I could account that in educational systems, in the curriculum syllabus or in different intervention programs (PERMA) used in the school systems, the “wellbeing” construct is more in more a key factor for assuring a positive climate in schools, a wellbeing of the “self”, resilience of teachers or of pupils (see examples from Canada, USA, UK, Norway, Scotland, etc.). The paper will not go into too much depth, since I’m not a specialist in the field, but without neglecting these concepts, somewhat, I intuitively perceived and analysed aspects of the whole teaching process in this sense. On the other hand, the “self-reflection” method which I made use of throughout this paper is a key factor in the analysis to follow. A well-known proverbial phrase used to encourage positive attitudes was at the heart of this paper “when life gives you lemon, you make lemonade” ... On the other hand, in order to feel you earned a “reward” one needs to obtain constant feedbacks an aspect that I received from the opinions and perceptions of the students taught, to this extent, they supported the acknowledgement by weighing the “ups and downs” side rewards of being a teacher in the higher education system.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Methods

The research methods used in this paper were as follows: a theoretical analysis (e.g., recent studies, theories, case studies in the field, etc.) and the “self-reflections or observations” based on the opinions and perceptions of the respondents (students who are preparing to become teacher in Art Education and I, in the position of being a “teacher” in the higher education system).

In this respect, the methodology used plans to undertake a pedagogical approach, but it does not exclude some psychological or sociological ones. As well the paper plans to bring into light the concerns related to the individuals needs of development (challenges or difficulties faced, advantages/disadvantages in

learning to be a teacher, the student-teacher relations developed, etc.) expressed through an ongoing system of inputs-processes-outputs, which convey from end to end an acknowledge correlated with a “reward”.

The following subchapter plans to look into the variables mentioned above, from both perspectives “up and down” side rewards which will be investigated from both target groups: students’ feedback transmitted (“indirectly” or “unconsciously”, “directly” or “consciously”) versus teacher’s view based on ones’ self-reflection or observations”, aspects seen in the “mirror”. More so, I have chosen the following three main variables each detailed with other covariables: individual (personality traits, the impact on ones’ behaviour, the “self”, etc.), organizational (resources related to human, financial and time budget for learning and teaching) and professional development (competencies developed, responsibility, motivation, etc.), described as an ongoing system of pedagogical inquiry that reflects the inputs-processes-outputs of having the experience of being a teacher.

To this degree, the paper we be based on developing a personal analysis observation offered “indirectly” or “unconsciously”, by the students’ perceptions and opinions expressed through my different courses or seminars held at the university mentioned above, in regards to their preparation of becoming teachers in the field of “plastic art /visual art education”. More so, self-reflection remarks will be advanced during the course of the paper, as already indicated until this point. Evidently, this paper will not be able to examine in depth each variable, but it will try to highlight and examine the most important ones that sustain the arguments and assumptions that led me to conclude to some extent that teaching could be a “reward”... even if it has its “ups” and “down” corner stones.

The main two target groups in this “mini” research analysis, as already mentioned were: students whom I encountered during the university year 2016-2017, as an associated professor and myself, through a “teacher’s view (“self-study”, “self-reflection”), where completed through personal observation and investigation of students’ perception and opinions on the bases of which I could provide different arguments reflecting there points of view that were transmitted “indirectly”, “unconsciously” or “directly”, “consciously” throughout this period; aspects as underlined are seen thru a looking glass or in a mirror – where students’ feedback versus personal self-reflection process are the key “quarries” throughout this paper.

When we look into the fact that the students’ “indirectly” transmit in a discreet manner or in a formal manner what they would like to pass on as means of measurement of how, what they felt or what they wanted to express during that university year are aspects we will look into, since the paper did not intend on introducing any other formal form of measurement procedure (interview, survey, questioner, etc.), to this extent, it is limited in this sense. Future conceptions used refer to the idea of “unconsciously” opposite to “conscious”, refers more or less to the individuals’ unconscious determinations or intentions through different influences of thinking or behaviour (up to ones’ details of daily life) [5], “feedback” which is also well known in education, in our human behaviour or in the cybernetics process, etc., in that there is a relation between the inputs-and-outputs of receiving and transmitting information, as a form of applying cues and reinforcement, a “consequence of performance” [6] “self-reflection” denotes a simple form as contemplation, though, introspect and consciousness of the one’s

self. Consequently, according to Burnard this form of research is necessary: “for a researcher self-reflection is an essential part of qualitative research whatever chosen qualitative method” [7].

Perhaps, the “methodology” is unlike other forms of research used through various methods or techniques (samples, questionnaires, focus-group interviews, etc.), but the need to go further with the investigation, in order to obtain more information on the topic of teaching or of the instructional process in higher education. Another aspect just as important, according to other specialists, Supporting teacher competence development for bettering learning outcomes, underline the importance of “reflexivity” in developing professional thinking and discourse, when we think of pedagogical issues and experiences [8]. Although teaching is not my full occupation, one cannot deny the fact that during that experience, I did not find myself facing different instructional problems related to offering the “proper” curriculum design, a valuable classroom management, effective feedback, the use of different teaching strategies accordingly, etc.; issues that make one a teacher after all!

When they linked, rather than being separated. To sum up, the present article will examine the variables related to: personal, organizational and professional development, described as an ongoing system of educational inquiry that reflects the inputs-processes-outputs of having the experience of being a teacher.

These variables are interconnect on the one hand, and on the other, the sum of “ups or downs” sides coving ones’ “rewards” in the journey of being a teacher with the hope of bring into light different pedagogical, psychological and sociological aspects, as grasped, and so the “coin” with the sides “ups” and “downs” was casted-off...

TEACHERS’ TRAINING PROGRAM: FACTS AND FIGURES

In Romania, preparing students in psycho-pedagogical training programs and certifying them with specific competences for the teaching profession is empowered by the Departments of Teacher Training where they exist (as stated in each universities regulations). In our case this department is represented by an autonomous university structure within the Faculty of History and Art Theory (a state faculty). In this sense, the department organizes initial and continuous training for the teaching career. Initial training is carried out with students and graduates who select plastic arts training through the two levels of study: First level of initial training for the teaching profession (Level I-3 years and Compressed 1st Level-1 year) and Second Level (Compressed 2nd Level-1 year of study) in-depth training for the teaching profession. Their age group varied from approximately 20-45 years, maybe older, an age considered most likely, an adult; with an artist preparation or background (most of them have a vocational school background). In addition, all the study programs are adapted to foster and develop student-centred training and skills for becoming a teacher. The activities, courses and seminars are designed to meet the students’ needs for

intellectual enhancement, personal development, participation involved in their own development, deep respect for human nature and its values which may be accomplished collective (class/group) or individual and mostly, delivered face-to-face, basically, in the classroom environment.

Looking at the changes in the higher education system adopted along the way through the Bologna process at the international level in which Romania makes no exception, we can note a change of teaching methods and approaches. The teachers adjusted the traditional teaching-instructional process to one focused on the student-centralized learning (SCL) process [9] an adjustment that were found to be emphasised in this university - a “ups” side reward by having many implications for the flexibility of the curriculum, the design of the course prepared, course content and at the end, the interactivity of the learning process together with the students. As mentioned in the “Introduction”, the scepticism about teaching to students, since most of the “traditional” instruction is predominant in our schools, while SCL changes the way of teaching students, obliges one to learn the necessary competences, and its’ role in the instructional-learning-evaluation process, facts which eases the teaching process altogether.

Another positive aspect that we can note according to a recent Romanian report on higher education, translated Report on the State of Higher Education indicates that there is a relatively constant conservation of the teaching staff in public education [10] (Table 1). This aspect could mean that certain measurements have been taken to assure the number of human resources in the system and perhaps, a requisite to attract young people interested in the university environment, thus-an “up” side reward for the education system. Source: Data calculated on the Statistical Yearbooks on Higher Education, INS, 2009-2016.

At the European level another report Education at a Glance shows us that across OECD countries the percentage of female teacher has increased by 4 percent, between 2005 and 2015, on average for countries with data for both years, at the tertiary level (universities, colleges or other institutions). In addition, for all education levels, the largest share of women is found among the new generation of teachers (below the age of 30) [11]. Although measurements have been taken at the national and the international level, one reports shows us that we cannot be too positive, yet, because overall, it’s also about having qualified teachers in the system. To this degree, according to the report Key Data on Teachers and School Leaders in Europe some concerns are related to the number of qualified teachers which are insufficient: a “risk of not having enough appropriately qualified teachers and the relatively low status of the profession are among the problems confronting some education systems” [12,13].

These facts show us, nevertheless, the need for qualified teachers in universities around Europe, aspects that are already underlined in the Europe 2020 strategy were the target for the EU leaders’ benchmark show the need for an average number of adults

Table 1: Evolution of Teaching Staff in Higher Education, 2009-2015.

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	Difference 2015/2009
Total staff employed	56887	54003	51419	49706	50807	50272	49692	-1.2%
Total teaching staff. out of which:	31103	29746	28365	27555	28211	27772	26949	-3.0%
Public property	26757	25618	24372	23805	24342	24467	23978	-2.0%
Private property	4346	4128	3993	3750	3869	3305	2971	-10.1%
% Teaching staff	54.68	55.08	55.16	55.44	55.53	55.24	54.23	-1.01

participating in lifelong learning (at least 15%) and 40% of 30-34-year-old should attain tertiary education [14].

DATA ANALYSIS

Discussion related to “ups” and “downs” rewards-variables questioned

In the following subchapter, the plan is to look into the variables mentioned above, from both perspectives “up and down” sides rewards which will be investigated from both target groups: students’ feedback transmitted (“indirectly” or “unconsciously”, “directly” or “consciously”) versus a teacher’s view (“self-reflection” observations) seen in the “mirror”.

More so, I have chosen the following three main variables: individual (personality traits, the impact on ones’ behaviour, “self”, etc.), organizational (resources related to human, financial and time budget for learning and teaching) and professional development (competencies developed, responsibility, motivation, etc.) for my means of analysis. All variables are described as an ongoing system of educational inquiry that reflects the inputs-processes-outputs of having the experience of being a teacher.

First variable–individual-inputs: For the first variable, “individual”, we will examine the inputs, aspect that suggests and looks into the portrait of what the individual is born with, what he/her represents in report to/with others. As a result, the inquiring about the distinct personalities or traits with whom personally I came in contact in this teaching experience. Likewise these reveal among others, one’s temperamental trends or his/her personality structures, which are very important in ones’ career, as a teacher. The paper does not plan on going into depth; in that it is complex and that there are subtle interdependencies with other factors that are not mentioned. What could be highlight herein is that the development of the temperament, as research shows depends among others on the parents who have some powerful implications on their children, characteristics that have an impact for their future development as adults (well-adjusted individual prepared to enter into the labour market) [15]. In this sense, many of the students are very active, friendly and fearless of speaking their mind during different courses and seminars, characteristics that are very well welcome for future teachers. From this point of view, the openness from their part made the instructional-evaluation process all the facile, since it is not easy to convince a person (a student) that what they are doing is going to be done well. This variable could be linked to the last one, which implies “professional awareness”, “know-how” competences or a “conscious expertise” of the teacher. Aspects which are recommended by the European Commission [8] and which brings us to another variable: the “affirmation of “level of satisfaction”.

What could possibly underline here, but may be evident, is the need of affirmation of the “self”. The literature developed by different authors in the field (Descartes, Locke, Kohut, Freud, Jung, etc.) shows us that this “self” emerges progressively during different stages from early childhood (infancy) to adulthood and importantly, the transition from adolescence to adulthood complicates the relationship between parents and children, in general, between adults and children in defining and understanding this “self” in life. Typically, the individual tends to analysis itself, and generally to grasp his/her identity [16]. Consequently, it is easy to understand that the need for “power” and “prestige” (the “self” in relation with

others) strongly correlates with the refusal of anonymity and the desire to differentiate from colleagues by “self-affirmation”. In this sense, some of the students felt the need to “control” the discussions as a form of “grasping” all the conversations almost all the time and finally-a “down” side reward - of having to restrain some students’ needs of manifestation (communication). Evidently, if one is shy or “self-conscious”, even if a student wanted to say something, they would still continue as if they were the centre of attention. From one side, no one denies that fact that it is all right to stand up, to be outspoken in relation to your own opinions, but on the other side, this aspect shows disrespect and impertinence for a future teacher, aspects that should not be in the detriment of other traits. From another personal point of view and maybe an “indirect” or “unconsciously” one, this could be connected to the lack of experience, which made it difficult to manage some of students’ inputs - a double “down” side reward in that initial training could have not been as efficient as one might expect... Certainly, if we as teachers incline to isolate those students from the rest of the group because they are inconvenient to others or us, it would not be considered “good pedagogy”. According to their response tendency if we were to isolate them could be manifested through aggressive behaviour, an aspect that evidently should be avoided [15].

Undoubtedly, the attitude towards education or life is conditioned by the way pupils or students perceive and place themselves among their peers in relationship with the process of social comparison. According to the way they design their lives, they optimise their resources, the comfort of learning, level of implication in wanting to become a teacher (projecting themselves as teachers), as well as positive thinking are at most significant in their situations. Opposite to this situation, would be to some degree the manifestation of suspicion expressed by low trust in others, closure, etc., issues that are not desired in schools’ or in a university’s ethos: “... deep respect for human nature and its values” (see the Department’s presentation) – another “up” side reward as means as of elevating the universities’ community. Somehow the idea of developing coping strategies in these situations is useful and constrained in all aspects: psychologically, sociologically and pedagogically.

As we can come about again, the notion of “reflection” used by the individual, in our case the teacher, is related to ones’ “self-esteem”. Components of the “self” is constituent out of words, for instance, “self-representation”, “self-confidence” and “positive valorisation” which are, also, emphasised in literature. According to Carl Rogers to develop the real “self” the individual has to discover him/herself through experiences, which “is something that is comfortably revealed in your own experiences, not something that is imposed on them” [16]. In other words, we see the things that match differently, positive or negative, so that the “self” is a construction that sometimes integrates with the evaluations of the person. In general, the agreement of the “self” could lead to a “total self-esteem”, which depends on the persons’ situation in a range of evaluative dimensions and values, set by each dimension (positive or negative, valuable or invaluable). In addition, since, in two of the seminars held, “Pedagogy II (Theory and Methodology of Training, Evaluation Theory and Methodology)” and “Classroom management”, evaluation or giving feedback accordingly were very imperative, especially for developing positive valorisation for their pupils as an example; a key factor in developing his/her self-esteem, characteristics which were emphasized even upon themselves. Doubtfully, we can express that this process does not happen immediately, more so, progressively, aspects that will support

the future students to know and understand their forthcoming pupils better or as Allan Bloom stated: "Education in our times must try to find whatever there is in students that might yearn for completion, and to reconstruct the learning that would enable them autonomously to seek that completion" [17].

The "empathetic capacity" of an individual is just as central for a teacher and vice-versa, aspect which were highlighted when discussing the fact that it applies in their own work as artist or as students, aspects which they pointed out on various occasions through their different arguments during the courses or seminars (students' perception or opinion). Actually, the current school syllabus or curriculum on Art Education for Classes V-VIII stresses on aspects related to preparing the individual for society and "aims to cultivate sensitivity" [18]. More so, surprising enough was that the Council of Europe has included in the Competence Skilled Model the awareness surrounding "empathy". In this sense, the document *Competences for Democratic Culture Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies* has anticipated the term "empathy" differently by integrating it into a model that denote "the set of skills that are required to understand and relate to other people's thoughts, beliefs and feelings, this being a crucial set of skills for participating in a culture of democracy" [19]. It is composed of several elements distinguished by the relationship between the passive hypostasis and the active one, while their combination is in relation with certain categories of incentives. In other words, empathy requires on the individuals' part the ability to understand the other person, in our case, teachers, where their thoughts, beliefs and feelings are transformed in their way of thinking, acting and communicating through their subjects' "eyes" (pupils, students); characteristics that the students are aware of and are, somewhat, intrigued of the fact that the teachers do not do the same thing when they overload their students without taking into consideration, sometimes, their own needs, or that the educational system may not always be consistent between demands and deliverability (see the reforms in the Romanian education system which are undergoing various changes)-this could constitute the individual's-inputs-with both "ups" and "down" side rewards with the emphasis on reflections assuring the teaching-instructional process. However, one is theory and the other is practice.

The final aspect that we could not exclude relates to one's personal history or biography that fit into this equation, since it puts or leaves a mark on an individual, even for a future teacher. More so, one's personal history or biography is used as a research method to this regard, aspect underlined by Roberts where it "has the important merit of aiding the task of understanding major social shifts, by including how new experiences are interpreted by individuals within families, small groups and institutions" [20]. So, it was no surprise to want to find out as much as possible from each of my students, evidently, to the extent that they let me. As mentioned above, most of the students were very open and willing to share their personal experience related to: what parts of Romania they are from, why they choose this particular university or field as opposed to other faculties, how they would describe the concept of "education" and which, obviously, meant that they would have to look into their personal up bring/ home and so the list of questions posed could go on. Evidently, one could observe that some of the questions expressed or the topics related to: "how they see themselves in the next years"; "what kind of strategies would they prefer in teaching and why?!", etc., suppose it had a lot to do with the need to open up, the teacher-student relationship developed throughout this year from what could be observe and

perceived ("directly" or "indirectly"), but without this being a "must" on their part - so another "up" side reward for developing a positive student reliability relationship.

Second variable-organizational-processes: Regarding the second variable, "organizational", it refers to as the variable might suggest, aspects associated to certain resources existing within the university/institution: human and financial resources, time budget for learning and teaching, curricula, etc. - the processes. To some extent, one needs to inquire more about how this university operates as an institute, basically with the aim of knowing how it functions "indirectly", "or "directly". For the first part, by means of support of human resources, "indirectly" certain aspects were established, such as the fact that this department has an accentuated level of engagement formed by the teachers with whom I interacted during this period by assuring the successfulness of this university. The behaviour approaches surrounding this idea of "engagement" or "attitudinal" behaviour were developed by different authors [21] such as: Howard Becker the "side-bet theory" (ensuring certain continuity in an organization, which may not be connected to labour-related, but it is an investment made by employees), Porter et al. "attitudinal approach", which refers to the emotional attachment towards a certain organization; an engagement that is identified as a result of the individual's recognition with organizational goals and values. What could be highlighted in this respect, still, and although, my presents at the university was for a short period of time, one could see for a fact that the teachers have been working there for some time now (without naming names) just by looking at their Curriculum Vitae. As well some of the teachers are working in the department since 2013-an "ups" side reward for the department for assuring stability. One may argue that this is not conclusive or convincing, which may be true, the only argument would be, would anyone stay in an environment or a working place if something, even minor, was not there to keep you?!

Alternatively, one other aspect taken into consideration is the financial aspect; a point which needs to be improved, but it may not necessary depend on the department in itself?! Another report conducted in 2010, translated Quality Barometer - 2010 shows that the strategies related to the funding of universities are determined, among others, by the number of students enrol [22]. So, in other words, the number of students in a university is the key determination for financing?! Unfortunately, from a non-specialists point a view, as a general-empirical opinion on the topic, the question at hand is how do we improve the quality of our education system without proper finance, is there no correlation between variables?! If we look into another article Romania, last in the EU for education spending per capita merely from the title we can deduce the indication that Romania does not have enough fund for spending per capita [23] - if that's not a double "down" side reward for the whole education system. Somehow the financial aspect in relation to certain "classroom characteristics" necessary, could be essential versus namely having to bring from home, asking someone within the department to let you "borrow" this or that to assure the teaching-instructional process, such as: chalk, laptop, projector, etc., naturally, this process should be easy-going, one would think?! But then again, what does classroom management mean after all?!

According to my previous paper Student's level of satisfaction regarding their "Pedagogy" course training this aspect related to the lack of proper conditions was not an impediment in the

teaching-instructional process overall. Thus, the results showed us that a few students were satisfied despite the conditions: “30% of the students questioned were “very” and “very satisfied” of the conditions offered during the “Pedagogy” courses” [24]. Although these situations may provide a teacher with a certain level of stress or anxiety when faced with challenges or difficulties, the data shows us, again, how important it is to secure, affiliate and have a positive “self-esteem” (Maslow’s Motivation Theory); matters that underline two aspects in this sense. On the one hand “engagement” in an institution may seem somewhat insignificant to other aspects without proper conditions, and if so, would the teachers have remained at the university despite all the “downside rewards” ... something is there to keep them?! Or on the other hand, having both experiences in mind, it also depends on the teacher to make good use of all resources available, or how Gagne sustained: “... the fundamental ration of the education system is to organize the instruction so that learning is achieved as efficiently as possible. In most conceptions about the educational system, the teacher “is the organizer (manager) of the learning conditions” [25].

The last two resources we will look into are interconnected to the organization of the budget time for instruction-learning process in higher education and which “indirectly” reflects the professional development. The organization of the budget time is in no doubt, different from the pre-university level. In addition, one could say that it comes with the territory, since, a student is an adult (over 18 years of age), more responsible for his/her own learning, while the teacher is more liberated from having to give all the knowledge to the student by putting them to discover more on their own (student centred-learning). If for the older students (from ages 20 to 25) we could observe or remark a better level of independency towards their own learning process – an “up” side reward aspect which made the teaching process easier. Likewise, the same aspect cannot be said for the younger students in their 1st or 2nd year of university preparing to become a teacher—a “down” side reward for their own personal development, lack of interest, communication or implication. This matter could be linked to my final variable “professional-development”, where the level of motivation plays an important role, an aspect in which we will go into later on in this paper. Aspects that related to the fact that the younger the students are somehow not as responsible for their own learning, perhaps, because they are still connected to their school up bring in correlation to the older students. This aspect, should not come as a surprise, since, the World Health Organization (WHO) acknowledges that adults’ roles and responsibilities are assumed later on by young people [26].

In addition, without going into too much depth, because it would mean another never-ending story, is that one should attend a course because they want to, with all its implication and not because they feel they have too. But how do we as teachers assure this fact?! How do we make those students go to courses or seminars because they want to?! I don’t think that there is too much philosophy behind it; after all, teachers should be prepared to set time limits for themselves and for their students. How much could one student acquire on a certain subject or topic?! A teacher is faced with two situations, metaphorically speaking, one–“positive” side in that the students who want to learn the material, no matter how much he/she has to assimilate, work for it, and evidently, the mark will, most likely, reflect the outcome, because they know that they could accomplish the task (s) and one – “negative”, where if the teacher transmits too much information or overloads there students

maybe even unnecessary and which may be time consuming for him/her to learn, in the end, the risk is that they might abandon everything even before getting started, and thus, we go back to the first variable. It’s more about the individuals’ readiness to learn with all its implications (from listing, participating, etc. to attain results). Going back to Maslow’s theory where, evidently, this depends, also on the individual’s level of motivation, roughly and subjectively, by keeping in mind, partially, his theory through the whole teaching-instructional process based on the students’ needs as individuals and as future teachers. If we give them too much to accomplish, of course, would they learn substantial or, most likely, would they return to the next course or seminar, despite the fact they would be marked at the end?! Alternatively, if the teacher let’s say presents less, he/she does not overload their students, then what would the educational objective be at the end of that course or seminar or could they still lose interest?! Most certainly that all of us have proclaimed at one point in our learning process, “that teacher is very sever”, that “he/she gives a lot to read/study” or that he/she gives only low marks”, aspects that make the determination to learn all the more difficult (is it not as opportune to turn these aspects into internal needs of learning). Somehow my insight was to provide an equal balance between the two extremes in order to assure an “acceptable” work load, so that they would still be interested. One might articulate the idea that teachers should let them grow/mature no matter the consequences—a “down” side reward for the students, partially, since one should have faith in their students’ success. As John Dewey stated the “profession”, relates to any kind of continuous activity that serves others and engages personal power in the scope of obtaining results [27]. “Indirectly”, the learning process depends on the individual, the level of maturity, when he/she is prepared to do so, in the meantime, assist them if you do not want them to abandon. Again, we could note that the younger the students are the more likely for them to look at their watches, to see when the course or seminar would be finished. Of course, a number of other factors could be analysing here, such as: level of satisfaction, level of knowledge to achieve the course, interest, values, etc., in one’s defence, give or take, could be that it’s not easy to be a teacher if we look at the whole picture with–“ups and downs” side rewards since it depends on each individual how they perceive themselves with respects to others and how they could accomplish what needs to be achieved.

Third variable–professional development–outputs: As for the last variable, “professional development” brings up issues associated, mostly, to outcomes: competencies, responsibility, level of maturity, etc. – output. In this view of “professional development”, one could grasp those the–outputs–results that look into a certain level of “professionalism”, a prerequisite as of developing understanding, knowledge, capacities, aptitudes, values, responsibility, skills in one’s teaching career.

To this degree, the competencies foreseen to be developed in this department through the different courses or seminars allocated from what can be perceived and recognized “directly” or “indirectly” as being positive is the fact that this department is keen on sustaining and nourishing a professional approach, both on the students’ part, alongside with its staff – a double “up” side reward where a good part of learning could be accomplished through examples. According to the psychotherapist and the Director of Departments of Teacher Training within the faculty, when referring to an optional course delivered to students, competencies, interest, abilities play an important role in their personal development:

Each graduate can design his or her own course according to their own preferences and abilities, specific competences [28]. But, this process depends, likewise on the level of emotional-maturity of each individual in which each person understands those certain competence that need to be developed at a certain age in order to gain experience.

The concept of developing competencies should be brought into the discussion, briefly, since we always deliberate the awareness of having or not skills in a certain domain or field in schools or in the labour market. Consequently, the notion of acquiring “competencies” has many understandings, according to different authors or institutions. Consequently, the European Commission who has also been working on this topic for several years in order to assure that the EU countries have in mind the same agenda in strengthening the main key competences: knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will help learners find personal achievement in life and in their work as they take part in society [29]. In this matter, we can figure out that all learning institutions (pre-or-higher) should assure the development of these key competences that deliver the understanding, abilities, attitudes, etc., in order to prepare the individual, in our case teachers, teachers that will be working in gymnasiums, high schools or universities in the field of Art Education (Figure 1). In connection with developing competences, which are somehow “indirectly forced” upon in order to develop abilities related to the Art Education (art contents, art curriculum, art history, etc.). Moreover, any artist creates, designs and leaves a “mark”, whether we are talking about drawing, painting, restoration, inventing or reinventing something, characteristics that throughout ones’ teaching career – can be a real “reward” in that the learning was overturned, because they were open and keen on doing so – an “up” side reward where learning by doing is just a fulfilling.

Acutely, in connection with what was mentioned above, with developing competencies, we can debate if it derives into the suggestion of assuming “responsibility”, which creates another analogy towards “trustworthiness” or “reliability”. From this point of view, these two ideas are very imperative, even if one is at the beginning of his/her career, in the developmental stage of professionalism/personal development, and if they are not quite there, at an inter-stage of development, this is acceptable until a certain point. Even an adolescent or a teenager needs time to develop into an adult depending on his/her previous experience, habitus, emotions, etc. However, as teachers, how can we expect our students or pupils to be “competent” and “responsible” if we ourselves are not as teachers?! Do we not set an example/a model for them?! Equally, Farca posted on her blog, stating that: the success of artistic education depends greatly on the freedom of those involved (teacher and pupil), inner motivation, interest,

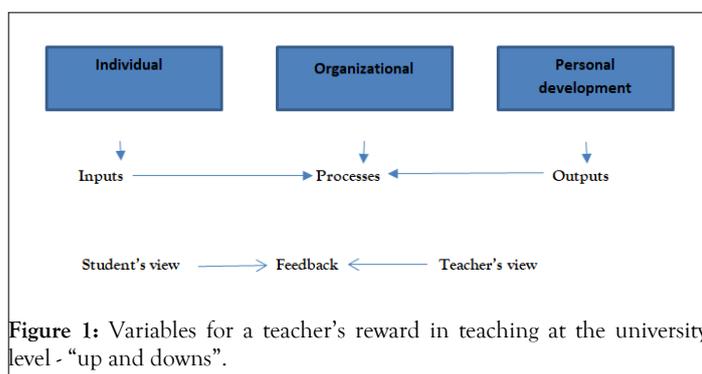


Figure 1: Variables for a teacher’s reward in teaching at the university level - “up and downs”.

breakthroughs that only just fit into school discipline (timing, compulsion, topics, notes, catalogue, and study subjects) – an “ups” side reward for the comprehension of developing a personal achievement in which this university thrives.

Other two aspects that we will discuss, relate to the motivation and satisfaction level of becoming a teacher. Surely, other factors or aspects could be highlighted again and which could relate to another imperative, such as the level of preparation that could divide the teachers into two categories that in the long run could prevent an individual from becoming a teacher or, even worst, not accomplish its job satisfactory. To this extent, there are those who “really like being a teacher”-an “up” side reward for their concern of “self-professional development”, apart from those who are “just teachers” which could mean - a “down” side reward for its pupils or students. This is where the variables are interconnected to “personal development”, where one is motivated to assume the position with/ by assuming those abilities, competences and responsibility that need to be acquired for becoming a teacher. Certainly, we could deliberate on this topic on how different reasons sustain ones’ motivation or satisfactions’ level of why students want to become a teacher or not: they could not find anything better, they have long breaks, it’s a sure job versus the salary is smaller in comparison with other professions, the level of demands, stress are also more than one can handle sometimes etc. in comparison with a reversed “down” side reward of becoming a teacher, aspect that can depend on other factor that we may not be aware of. However, we could emphasize at this point that other categories fit into this equation of an ongoing system of pedagogical inquiry in that it is continuous and persistent when reflecting on the need of offering positive or, even, negative feedback, “influences for achievement” [6] by posing trust to your students throughout the whole development of “building positive relationships” [30] and communication “a teaching style”, “an ability” [31]. This could all amount to a win-win situation in the end, if we know how and want to approach the teaching-instructional process in this sense: we as their teachers are winning, because we can really get involved in the training of our students (if they are not hundreds like the Department). We have the satisfaction of collaborating with the students we learn with them alike [32,33].

CONCLUSIONS

The title of the article suggests the possibility of considering the correlation between the different variables analysed (personal, organizational and professional development) described as an ongoing system of pedagogical inquires where we can note that the teachers in higher education, as well those in the pre-university level without exception, face different challenges that make their teaching -instructional process easier or harder, with “positive” or “negative” educational events. A simple mathematical calculation will show us, that more “ups” sides rewards were argued within this paper, just to mention a few - students within the university - participate in the learning/teaching process actively, are friendly and fearless of speaking their mind, aspect that were present; teachers within the university- are keen on assuring respect for human nature and its values, empathetic capacity of an individual; the level of cooperation between teachers for the better approach of the university (university’s ethos), consistency among the teachers working in the university, etc., were mentioned throughout the paper. In contrast to the “downs” side rewards: teaching strategies – certain classroom management competencies should be developed

continuously, if one does not have the necessary experience, in order to not jeopardize the whole teaching-learning-evaluation process; assuring a balance between the instructional and learning process (learning methodical strategies, independency, etc.); the financial aspect – higher education is just as important as any other levels of preparation; the acknowledge and assuming of the students' responsible carelessness of his/her age, are also not free of debates, difficulties and tensions. The paper only examined and analysed certain aspects related to higher education within one university; it means much more than what has been highlighted. At the same time, teachers employed in the university do not contradict the fact that they have a huge role in providing for its students the transit to the labour market (to become a teacher in Art Education). Other findings from what was analysed above, will be presented in order to offer additional conclusions:

- At the national level, training students to become teachers in universities are present in various fields: arts, sciences, techniques and other universities which are being carried out by different specialized Departments of Teacher Training throughout Romania;
- At the university level, topics related to the acknowledgment that students are important for their university, as well as how they are preparing their students, reflect the future development of teachers and the philosophy of the university, aspects that were present;
- At the teachers' level, the following characteristics, such as: teacher collaboration alongside their students, emphases if nothing else, that teachers' are dedicated to reach their students' needs;
- At the students' level, it is gratifying to see that undergraduates want to participate in these courses and maybe go into teaching, which is encouraging, even though they are aware that they may encounter "ups-downs" side events. Although, this was not the aim of the paper, we can note that according to the universities website 38 of the students were admitted into the 3 year program (without tax fee), while approximately 78 were admitted for different levels of training (with tax fee). In other words, students seek such a career for various personal motives.

To complete this paper, as the title of the article suggests, "A teacher's reward in teaching at the university level – ups and downs" sides tried to examine various variables and portrait an ongoing system of educational inquiry that reflects the inputs-processes-outputs of having been a teacher for one university year ... "it always seems impossible until it's done".

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