



<http://LLL21.petrSU.ru>

<http://petrsu.ru>

**Издатель**

Федеральное государственное бюджетное образовательное учреждение  
высшего образования «Петрозаводский государственный университет»,  
Российская Федерация, г. Петрозаводск, пр. Ленина, 33

**Научный электронный ежеквартальный журнал  
НЕПРЕРЫВНОЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ: XXI ВЕК**

Выпуск 2 (34).  
Summer 2021

**Главный редактор**  
Т. А. Бабакова

**Редакционная коллегия**

Э. Ванхемпинг  
О. Грауманн  
С. А. Дочкин  
З. Б. Ефлова  
М. В. Иванова  
А. В. Москвина  
Е. А. Раевская  
Э. Рангелова  
В. В. Сериков  
И. З. Сковородкина  
А. П. Сманцер  
И. И. Сулима  
И. В. Филимоненко

**Редакционный совет**

А. Г. Бермус  
Е. В. Борзова  
А. Виегерова  
Е. В. Игнатович  
А. Клим-Климашевска  
А. И. Назаров  
Е. И. Соколова

**Служба поддержки**

Т. А. Каракан  
Т. А. Кириллова  
А. Г. Марахтанов  
Е. В. Петрова  
Е. И. Соколова

**ISSN 2308-7234**

Свидетельство о регистрации СМИ Эл. № **ФС77-57767** от 18.04.2014

Решением Президиума ВАК журнал включен  
в Перечень рецензируемых научных изданий (с 09.08.2018 г., «Педагогические науки»)

Журнал зарегистрирован в информационных системах РИНЦ (договор 473-08/2013)  
и ERIH PLUS (18.06.15)

**Адрес редакции**

185910 Республика Карелия, г. Петрозаводск, ул. Анохина, д. 20, каб. 208  
Электронная почта: [LLL21@petrsu.ru](mailto:LLL21@petrsu.ru)

**ВИЕГЕРОВА Адриана**

доктор философских наук, доктор педагогических наук, директор Института школьной педагогики гуманитарного факультета,  
Университет Томаса Бата  
(г. Злин, Республика Чехия)

wiegerova@fhs.utb.cz

## **АНАЛИЗ ПРИЧИН ЛИЧНОСТНЫХ ПРОБЛЕМ В ПЕРИОД СТУДЕНЧЕСКОЙ ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКОЙ ПРАКТИКИ (статья публикуется на английском языке)**

**Аннотация:** статья посвящена психологическому шоку, который испытывают студенты во время педагогической практики, сталкиваясь с реальным образовательным процессом. Шок от столкновения с реальностью является достаточно частой темой педагогических исследований. Значительно меньше внимания уделено шоку, который испытывают студенты вузов до начала работы в школе во время их первого знакомства со школьной средой. Предлагаемое исследование касается студентов факультета дошкольного образования и направлено на поиск ответов на вопросы: Как эти учащиеся воспринимают шок реальности во время практики? Каковы его причины? Как можно уменьшить или устранить эти причины?

**Методы:** выборка состоит из 23 студентов третьего курса дошкольного образования в университете в Моравской части Чешской Республики, которые проходили практику в дошкольном учреждении. Использовались следующие методы исследования: (1) анализ дневников студентов, написанных во время их 4-недельной педагогической практики в последний год обучения по программе бакалавриата, (2) анкетирование.

**Результаты:** описана реакция студентов при столкновении с реальностью, проанализированы обстоятельства, вызывающие это явление. Установлено, что основными причинами шока являются непонимание концепций дошкольного образования, нечеткие правила дошкольного образования и вмешательство родителей в образование детей, посещающих дошкольное учреждение.

Как и любое качественное исследование, данная работа ограничена заданными рамками. Это тематическое исследование только одной группы студентов последнего курса в рамках одной учебной программы. Результаты исследования нельзя обобщить, но они могут дать импульс последующим исследованиям. Кроме того, результаты способны повлиять на программу предварительного обучения в плане подготовки учащихся к работе в дошкольном учреждении.

**Ключевые слова:** шок реальности, дошкольное воспитание и воспитание, воспитатели дошкольного образования, практикум.

**Дата поступления:** 04.03.2021

**Дата публикации:** 26.06.2021

**Для цитирования:** Виегерова, А. Анализ причин личностных проблем в период студенческой педагогической практики / А. Виегерова // Непрерывное образование: XXI век. – 2021. – Вып. 2 (34). – DOI: 10.15393/j5.art.2021.6932.

**Adriana WIEGEROVA**

Doctor of Pedagogy, Doctor of Philosophy,  
Professor, Director of the Institute of School  
Pedagogy of the Faculty of Humanities  
Tomas Bata University in Zlin  
(Zlín, Czech Republic)

wiegerova@fhs.utb.cz

## **THE ANALYSIS OF REALITY SHOCK: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS EXPERIENCING PRACTICUM IN PRESCHOOLS**

**Abstract:** introduction: Reality shock is a frequent topic in teacher research. This research topic focuses on analysing the reality shock experienced by beginning teachers, and seeking its antecedents and consequences. Relatively fewer studies are devoted to the reality shock experienced by pre-service teachers during their first encounter with the school environment. This study is focused on university students of preschool education and seeks answers to the questions: How do these students perceive reality shock during practicum? What are its causes? How can these causes be reduced or eliminated?

*Methods:* The sample consists of 23 third year preschool education students at a university in the Moravian part of the Czech Republic. The students undertook practicum at the faculty preschool. This preschool was established as a company and serves the purposes of student training as well as education and care of children.

The following research methods were used: (1) Students' diaries written during their 4-week long full-day practicum in the last year of their bachelor's programme, (2) questionnaire.

*Results:* The study describes the perception of the students' reality shock and analyses the circumstances that cause this phenomenon. It appears that the key reasons for the reality shock are misunderstanding of the preschool educational concepts, unclear preschool rules, and the interference of parents into the education and care of children attending the preschool.

*Limitations:* As is the case with any qualitative study, this study is limited by its range. It is a case study of only one group of last year students in one study programme. The results of the study cannot be generalised, but they may inspire follow-up studies. Furthermore, the results may influence the pre-service programme to pay more attention to preparing students for the reality of preschools.

**Keywords:** reality shock, preschool education and care, pre-service teachers, practicum.

**Received:** March 04, 2021

**Date of publication:** June 26, 2021

**For citation:** Wiegerova A. The analysis of reality shock: pre-service teachers experiencing practicum in preschools. In: *Neprerývnoe obrazovanie: XXI vek [Lifelong education: the XXI century]*. 2021. № 2 (34). DOI: 10.15393/j5.art.2021.6933.

### **1. Introduction**

In recent years, pedagogy publications have given information on how students and also beginning teachers accept their professional identity, how this is shaped and what limits it or develops it (Eckerman, D., Lukas, J., Wiegerová, A. & Gavora, P. [4; 14; 23]. In contrast to Czech pedagogy publications, for example, in medical fields they describe the shaping of professional identity more during the phase of so-called professional start, i.e. during the period of study at university. The preparation of nurses and medics is a subject of analysis for profiling the professional identity of students during the period of their clinical practice, or in the period of practicum (Castledine, G., Walsh, K.). Some studies imply that there are very few differences

between students and beginning teachers, and that the worries with which they examine and perceive everything that happens at school are very similar [28].

The move from studying teaching to working as a teacher is often described as the hardest period in a teaching career. It is often accompanied by reality shock arising from the chasm between the secure and safe position of a teaching student and the position of a teacher, who bears full responsibility for his or her acts (Eldar). This reality shock is often caused by the conflict between idealistic visions acquired during study, and the divergent and unruly situation within the classroom. Teachers may find themselves feeling that they have chosen the wrong career, or that they are entirely alone within the school system [24].

The ambition of this study is to show that even during the period of a student's professional start during their time studying at university, situations can arise which are significant for reality shock. For the purposes of this study, we define reality shock as a situation which a young person experiences and is unable to deal with. Reality shock expresses dissonance between conception and reality of the working world. It is part of a young person's entry into the environment of real institutions. Gaining one's first work experiences puts the young person into a vulnerable position within their profession [20]. Reality shock is the stress which is experienced when employees perceive discrepancies between the expectations they had prior to entry into employment and on-the-job reality [17].

Reality shock can manifest itself in somatic aspects (fatigue, headache), emotional aspects (mood changes, disillusion, sadness) or in cognitive aspects (insecurity, doubting one's working practices). Reality shock can result in disillusion with work and the student deciding not to become a teacher.

In 1978, Muller-Fohrbrodt, Cloetta, & Dann identified two sources of reality shock. The first source is *personality* and this is an incorrect choice of occupation, negative approach to it and unfavourable personality traits of the student. Here, the problem is clearly at the start of the choice of career path. Even studies undertaken in recent years (Wiegerová & Deutscherová), make it clear that becoming a teacher is sometimes a "replacement" choice. In this sense, we speak of inadequate professional training, loneliness at work, and difficulties in communicating with pupils' parents leading to a rush of work. Reality shock also includes situations in which students *are unable to apply their theoretical knowledge* in practice (described, for example in Dicke et al. [4; 21]. Many studies focus on this area. For our study, an interesting perspective was that of Friedman [7], who claims that reality shock is not related to teaching methods, but rather *with socio-psychological aspects of teaching*, classroom management and relationships with pupils.

Correa et al. [3] came up with another perspective on reality shock, expanding the term as *post-modern reality shock*. The authors state that this is a phenomenon which corresponds to the current period, full of reversals, transformations and changes. This leads them to the conclusion that what students are taught in pre-graduate training at universities cannot be in line with what occurs in actual schools. They are prepared more for an idealised school which is safe, well-run and predictable with homogeneous pupil groups. The conflict between this ideal state and the actual state leads to an increased workload and is emotionally draining.

Reality shock is mostly investigated amongst beginning teachers at primary and secondary schools, as can be seen in the studies we have mentioned. Reality shock is not so often described amongst teachers at preschools, and extremely rarely amongst students of teaching for preschools. This is because preschools are environments which are educationally distinct when compared to primary schools.

## **2. Research survey methodology**

The **research objective** was to ascertain what pitfalls students of teaching for preschool experience during practicum and describe what situations lead to the phenomenon we describe as reality shock. A secondary objective was to compare the occurrence of reality shock following students beginning practicum with these students' perception of self-efficacy. The plan was to ascertain what relationship the occurrence of reality shock was with self-efficacy, or to determine if reality shock could be anticipated by measuring self-efficacy using a research tool prior to beginning practicum.

The **research sample** comprised 23 participants (including one man), students in the winter semester of their final year of bachelor's study at a selected Moravian university. The students had completed 4-week practicums in preschools where they performed educational activities in heterogeneous classes under the management of a training teacher.

**Data collection** was undertaken in two phases. The first was undertaken prior to students beginning their practicum (a questionnaire ascertaining student self-efficacy). The second phase occurred during the period of their practicum.

**Teaching practice.** Students' practicums were undertaken at two faculty preschools at the end of November/early December 2015/16. There were three classes in the first preschool: for children younger than three, those aged 3–4 years old, and those aged 5–6 years old. In the second faculty school, students were assigned classes with children aged 3–4 years old, and 5–6 years old.

All participants had also undertaken a number of types of teaching practice during the period of their studies beginning in their first year studying at university. These were observation, training practice and also practice which is called «project practice». This practice includes various types of project the university is involved in, such as a weekly summer camp for children at Junior University during which the students are in daily contact with preschool-age children.

Thus research participants developed within a specific academic environment, but also in the employment environment represented by the selected preschools. Although at the start of the research our objective was only to monitor how the students were experiencing the situation and how their personalities dealt with this, during the course of the research (in the context of the tradition of qualitative research design), a need emerged to expand the research field to ascertain how participants perceived the operation of the preschools, including as their potential employer.

**Research methods.** Our principal research method was *student diaries* from practicum. These were diaries into which students recorded their feelings and experiences of each day at preschool, describing the situations experienced freely.

Students were instructed to make regular entries in their diaries, if possible every day. The size of entries was not limited.

Another research method was the *SEPRES questionnaire (Self-efficacy Preschool)*. This was used to ascertain the self-efficacy of the students of teaching for preschool. Its construction and validation for the population of nursery school teaching students is described in another study [8]. The questionnaire comprised 33 items, which were divided into four dimensions: 1) Children's engagement in activities (Example of item *Holding children's attention in particular activity*), 2) Building trust amongst children (*Being fair to children*), 3) Eliminating problem behaviour amongst children (*Managing children causing disturbance*), 4) Professional co-operation (*Co-operation with paediatrician*). A six-point scale from 1 (*I have no ability*) to 6 (*I have a high ability*) was used to give a response. The reliability of individual dimensions for students of the bachelor programme in teaching for preschool ranged from 0,769 to 0,903. The questionnaire was given to students in October of the fifth semester of bachelor's study, i. e. four weeks prior to beginning practicum.

**Data analysis.** The basis for data analysis in processing the diaries was recursive reading. During repeated reading of passages from the diaries, it was possible to gradually penetrate the thoughts and feelings of research participants. A phenomenon occurred while reading which we term immersion in the data [18]. Sensitive areas were identified during the reading and analysis of diaries which conveyed emotionally-charged information from the participant. These segments were labelled and coded. These segments varied in length, though they were never just one word. The codes were systemised and grouped according to meaning. Putting codes into groups produced categories which were able to integrate the codes of that particular group within themselves. Following the production of categories, codes were re-evaluated, checked and returned to the categories. We call this constant comparison. The creation of categories is an interactive process. Data and its interpretation and understanding plays a role in this. Elliot and Timulak term this process a dialogue with data [5, p. 154]. In processing the qualitative data, an induction principle was applied. The advantage of this principle is that it allows for the production of potentially new perspectives on the investigated phenomenon or phenomena. This gradually led to the production of meaning categories, and relationships between these were revealed.

Data from the SEPRES questionnaire was analysed using descriptive analytical methods (arithmetic mean, standard deviation, normality test, correlation). In this study, we give only arithmetic means.

### **3. Student adaptation shock at practicum**

**Adaptation** to any new environment is a source of many situations which can cause difficulties. Adaptation, or the ability for our teaching students to adapt to the preschool environment is an important factor which has in impact both on the students, and also on the children, teachers and even parents. The more complex the conditions of the environment, the greater the justification for regulating the

adaptation process which both the student and the training teacher enter into. Adaptation is the ability of an organism to adapt to the conditions in which it exists.

We have already noted above that the students were not in the selected preschools for the first time. They knew the preschools, because all their different types of practice had been undertaken in these institutions. Nevertheless, their first day of practicum was accompanied by various emotions which the students described. This was likely enabled by the fact that this practicum is long-term, that is to say continuous, whereas project practice is one-off. There, the student does not enter the same preschool environment the next day, they change their activities and can easily forget any misfortunes. This cannot be done during practicum.

*I was worried about going to preschool. I didn't know how the teacher would accept me, and if we would «click». I knew her, but you never know ... (SQ12)*

*I was most worried about the parents, or rather I was afraid of meeting them. I don't know why, but it's probably because they warned us about it at school. (SO4)*

It is clear from these responses that the students anticipate adaptation shock mainly in co-operation with the **faculty teacher**, in contact with the **children, and also with their parents**. These three possible areas of conflict are predictable. They are the fundamental pillars for good or problematic communication in the preschool.

Theory and research studies have looked at to what extent students experience social, cultural and educational problems [2, p. 718–722], how universities respond to the needs of students [6, p. 44–92] and what specific steps lead to their adaptation [13, p. 135–144]. These studies focus more, however, on adaptation to university conditions. In teacher-focused programmes, one also has to take account of the fact that adaptation also applies to the institution where the students will undertake their teaching practice. Even under the conditions of training institutions, students experience adaptation problems which may manifest themselves at an emotional, cognitive or social level. A disturbance to stability in these areas amplifies a more emotional experience of the situation, which may lead to reality shock.

### **3.1. Loss of confidence in the faculty/training teacher**

On the first day of their practicum, students were most worried about co-operating with training teachers. To some extent, this is an understandable worry, and it can change within a few moments into a positive response to co-operation with the faculty teacher, or in contrast into finding that the faculty teacher does not do his/her work in line with the student's expectations. This was seen by roughly a third of research participants.

*Today was especially hard. It's mid-week, and I'm tired. The children are wild, the teacher's in some kind of sleep mode and isn't taking much interest in me: apparently I'm doing everything well. But I don't feel like that. I'm feeling uneasy and unsure. (SQ5)*

*A girl arrives at preschool crying in the morning. I put her on my lap and we play with a doll. The teacher then berated me saying that if she did that she wouldn't manage it and I shouldn't get children accustomed to it. It didn't give me a great feeling. The girl then only worked with me, and although I enjoyed it the looks from the teacher were bad. (SO13)*

*Ultimately, I'm very disappointed, especially with the head teacher for our practice. (SQ12)*

Student reactions portray a certain disillusion over co-operation with the faculty/training teacher. There is a clear loss of confidence in how the teacher behaves and also what he/she says. **Confidence** is the willingness of one entity (in our case students) to rely on another entity (training teachers). French sociologists Phillippe Bernoux and Jean-Michel Serve [1] look at the definition of the term «confidence» at two levels, vertical and horizontal. In our research, it is a loss of confidence of the vertical type, because it is regarding the relationship with the faculty/training teacher, who in the conditions of the preschool is the superior to the student. According to the subjective perception of students, the position of faculty/training teacher is incredibly important. We see that it is even of greater importance than the position of methodologists, who are meant to provide a type of supervision over the practicum from the university.

Over the course of the practicum, the students found themselves in situations they assessed to be educationally «unclear». These were situations where they were unsure whether they were dealing with the children correctly, and so they wanted to clarify the personal position which they took at that moment. They sought help from the faculty/training teacher.

*I have to go to preschool with a lot of patience, because the girls don't behave at all, they don't follow the rules and they're already 5 years old. I feel that they're excused for a lot of things just because their parents are here. I asked the teacher about it, and she told me I shouldn't worry about the parents but rather the essence of a teacher's job is to ensure parents especially are satisfied. (SQ4)*

*It was worst after lunch when I was on my own. The children were incredibly unruly. At times I was helpless and alone. (SO16)*

*I learnt that I have to always calm the children with some exercises. It is very important because otherwise they are wild and restless. Now I understand what improvisation according to circumstances means. You can't learn that at school, but it's good that I heard it. (SO5)*

Many studies draw attention to problems with children's behaviour. Weinstein [25], for example, notes that students and beginning teachers find it difficult to deal with responses to poor child behaviour, and in this area feel the need for support, which they seek from the training teacher. When they don't receive this support, symptoms begin to manifest which promote reality shock.

A loss of students' confidence in their training teacher, however, also arises from a failure to understand the **rules of the organisation** which the research participants find themselves in.

*I like children. But sometimes it's harder with my colleagues. Today, the teacher complained that people visit the yard at times when the school is closed. I told her it might be better to lock the gate.*

*My discussion with the teacher had consequences. The head came to see me and I was told off. Why do I think they should purchase a gate with a lock just because of me? I didn't understand. I was just responding and trying to help. Sometimes I have the feeling that teachers make problems to make themselves important. (SO6)*



*I wake up in the morning tired again, but looking forward to the children. We did well yesterday. As soon as I arrive at school I'm angry. We made a book with the kids yesterday and it had been on display. It's not there today. I asked the teacher about it and got nothing. Simply, it wasn't there. I don't understand. The kids were crying. They were sad, and so was I. (SO3)*

*A new environment and general inexperience were a big problem for me. These afternoon shifts especially seem really lengthy and illogical. It was worst after lunch when I was on my own. The children were incredibly unruly. At times I was helpless and alone. (SQ14)*

*Today was one of low spirits. A new teacher came. I spent all day trying to clarify her idea of running the class, but we didn't get through much. She left everything up to me. I feel like they're rather exploiting us here. (SQ6)*

Non-identification with the rules, or failing to understand them, began to manifest itself in the second phase of adaptation to preschool conditions. For the purposes of this research, we have termed completion of the first week of practicum in the preschool as the second phase.

Students wanted help dealing with a particular situation (as seen in the responses above), and their activities were not positively received by the teachers. This resulted in disillusionment. It is notable that students did not describe any problems with the didactic grasp of educational content, or preparation for their teaching. This implies that didactic preparation does not cause any problems for students. Nevertheless, somatic symptoms began to occur, such as post-morning fatigue and headache.

In the process of adapting to the conditions of work in preschool, the particular workplace the student finds themselves in and with which people they begin to co-operate are of great importance. Although for our students this is not a typical job, because the student is not going to be an employee of the preschool, he/she must still understand the rules of the organisation.

### **3.2. Adaptation shock for children and their parents as a source of crisis situations**

Adaptation is a problem which children and their parents also have to deal with. Even within the context of Czech academic discourse, this is an issue which has been subject to fairly broad research (Opravilová, Syslová).

A child's transfer to preschool is one of the major areas in the preschool's relationship with the child's parents and it is fundamental in terms of satisfying children's needs. A child's adaptation to the preschool environment is a long-term affair and it is linked to certain risks at the start of attendance. A child's entry to preschool is often influenced by disproportionate motivations in both a positive and negative sense – the idealisation of the preschool environment, or in contrast threats from parents. A child's parents may be a source of a negative picture of the preschool environment through the child receiving information such as: «Just you wait for preschool, they'll teach you there!» [22]. An important element influencing a child's adaptation is determining the period and frequency of the child's presence in preschool in line with his or her needs and mental state. An important aspect arising from the family environment is the willingness to accept advice and help from

the preschool teacher and make use of activities which the preschool offers to families for facilitating the child's adaptation.

As shown, even the adaptation of the child, and response of the child, parents and teachers become an important aspect of the situation for the students themselves. Their responses refer to the emotional symptoms of a reality shock (such as «I was heartbroken»).

*I wasn't afraid of going to preschool. I know the children from my last practice. So surprise. Sometimes I was heartbroken how much the kids cried when their parents said goodbye, how they kicked their legs, reaching for their mum and unable to calm down. (SQ1)*

*I was surprised in the morning how much the kids miss their parents. It's hard to watch when you don't know what you can do. (SO10)*

*New children still miss their mums, they keep on crying and have to be consoled; they are exhausted all morning. Sometimes when one child starts crying and calls out for their mum, another three kids hear it then they feel sad and also start crying. There is a negative atmosphere in the entire class then. The teacher doesn't do much about it and it feels strange to me. (SQ2)*

*I had a weird morning today. Mareček wouldn't leave his dad. He kept crying and standing at the door. The teacher told me he sometimes stands there all morning. I asked what I should do. The response – nothing. Just leave it. (SQ3)*

*I woke up with a headache so I hope the kids aren't going to cry so much. (SO7)*

Students were also surprised by the children's morning reaction because according to the teachers' assertions, the children should have already been adapted: the practicum took place, as we have noted, in the months of November and December. But every child is different. Thus adaptation takes place at various rates and over various timespans. Parents' behaviour during their child's adaptation is also important. But parents also have to deal with the new situation, and they should be supported by a teacher whom they can trust.

#### **4. Parents are our clients**

Students stated in their responses that they met parents less often. There was an obvious attempt here by teachers not to involve students in communication with parents. On the one, hand this was a good strategy for the school, but on the other hand students also need to experience communication with adults, especially when they're looking after their children all day.

Majerčíková [15] writes of the importance of co-operation between school and families, and also of the different nature of parent-teacher communication under preschool conditions.

Students doing practicum said of what they were able to see that they thought parents were too demanding and wanted their children to be educated in the preschool as well. This is confirmed to some extent by Opravilová, who states that in recent years increasing numbers of parents take a more rational and realistic approach to the education of their pre-school age children. This is because the child is considered a part of the family status presentation. As we have already noted, for both selected

faculty preschools, there is a predominance of parents with university and higher education, and so it is understandable that they have high demands of teachers' work.

The preschools' educational curriculum is also set up in line with this.

Students understood this challenge as meaning that they had to prepare interesting educational activities.

*Something happened today. We were playing with beans, and suddenly I saw a worm. All I could think of was to show it to the children and explain what it was doing there. The kids were amazed, and I think they were really interested. But then I got told off that I should hope they don't say it at home, because then there'd be hell. Nothing happened, nobody complained, but I really felt queasy. Parents are really demanding here, but I have the feeling that it's only because the teachers aren't able to explain to them properly what they are doing. I mean who knows what you think of it. Shouldn't it be about the kids? (SQ10)*

As is clear from the example, the student managed her approach well, but the faculty teacher, apparently out of her fear of parents' reactions, was unable to objectively assess her endeavour. Students often stated they had the «*feeling that they were more worried about what parents would say than what the children do.*» In this regard, Opravilová (2013) states that parents expect the positive and smooth development of their child, something they are willing to support (without direct involvement).

All children have a natural ability to learn and become familiar with new things, but they often become mere means of power pressures and fashion trends. Only a teacher who is sure of his or her professional competence can contend with this stress. It would appear that this is the source of the problems which teachers and parents have, and in our case this has also influenced the student, who felt that she «*knows more than the teacher*».

## **5. Keeping children healthy as a crisis situation for the student**

For the needs of this study, we shall consider a crisis situation to refer to a state which is limited in time and in which the student's equilibrium is disturbed, which may subsequently threaten his or her health, self-confidence or own identity with his or her future profession. The data makes it clear that during the period of practicum, students experienced many situations which were unusual and different for them. There are even responses given above which we could describe as referring to a crisis situation. In this section, we present a finding that students described situations in which there was clear parental failure in terms of looking after their children's health as surprising.

*The mum arrived with Sofinka, and said she had had diarrhoea at night, but it's okay now. We had an exchange of views, because I didn't agree with her approach. The teacher left me on my own. I tried to explain to the mum that it wasn't possible for her to have diarrhoea in the morning if she hadn't eaten anything. Sofinka's mum is at home, she isn't working. I suggested she should take Sofinka back home and if she still didn't have diarrhoea after lunch she could bring her back to be amongst the other kids. I was proud of myself. But the teacher told me you shouldn't speak to parents like that and you should help them. (SQ10)*

*I'm taking the phone. A mum called saying she's leaving Barunka at home because she has diarrhoea, but her husband will bring their second daughter. In half an hour, the second girl also has diarrhoea and one boy has been vomiting. It looks more like a hospital than a preschool here today. I have to chase up parents all day asking them to come and pick up their kids. (SO12)*

*I really didn't want to get up this morning, but duty calls. First thing, I find out that one girl in the class has nits. The phone kept ringing. I didn't understand, the teacher paid no attention to it at all. She gave me the task of calling the girl's parents to come and pick her up. Then we inspected all the other kids, well really it was mostly me because apparently I'm good at it, and we wrote an announcement that nits have been found at the preschool. (SO2)*

As can be seen from the responses, real life at preschool results in situations which even the best university cannot prepare its students for. Even if students study paediatric preparation during their undergraduate lessons, it appears they would also need to be equipped with practical advice. Injuries are frequent in preschool, and students need to respond appropriately.

*A boy I didn't have my eye on fell in the garden. I had to explain what happened to his parents. I managed okay, but it made me sick to the stomach. I had expected help, but I didn't get any. (SQ6)*

This student's feelings of personal remorse, also somatically supported (stomach pain) were evidence that the student was suffering and feared for the boy and the reaction of his parents, and in this situation naturally sought support.

There are also events at preschool which are multicultural in nature.

*It was fascinating today. I registered new children today who are from Mongolia. The teacher gave them to me, because she thinks I must know English. But the kids didn't speak English, and nor did their dad. Only the mum can communicate in Czech, but not very well. So it was really difficult all day: it's given me a headache. (SO10)*

Although the student found herself in a favourable situation because she spoke English, on the other hand she had more work to do, knocking her off kilter and again causing somatic issues. She again expected some help in the situation, or a different strategy from her training teacher.

## **6. Final week at practicum**

The final week of practicum brought interesting and emotionally-charged student testimony. It is clear that the end of practicum was the strongest moment, and this is also reflected in the data. In the testimony of research participants, there were many positive responses in regard to what they learnt at practicum. In our study, however, we wanted to show when and how reality shock was experienced for students, and so the reader will not find responses of this type here.

From analysing diaries, it is clear that short-term reality shock was identified in both somatic, emotional and also cognitive fields.

*I spent my final two days at the end of my tether. I had an incredible headache, and I was generally exhausted. (SQ15)*

In the somatic field, there were headaches, fatigue and general exhaustion. These manifestations also led to a loss of students' energy and performance quality.

*I couldn't handle it psychologically any more, and I was crying even during games. I was so physically and mentally exhausted that I needed to compose myself.*

*After that, for a while I considered giving up on the preschool teacher profession because it isn't worth it. I'm really angry, disappointed and exhausted from my practicum at this school. (SQ11)*

In terms of psychology, manifestations such as crying, shouting, anger, nervousness were described. From this student's testimony, it is clear that her state led her to doubt herself and her own professional identity.

*I feel disappointed and sad. I've got a headache, but I'll get through it somehow. I'm sorry for how the teachers treat the children. Like things. Am I going to be like that? God no! (SO4)*

Besides somatic and emotional symptoms of reality shock, cognitive phenomena were also manifested. In her testimony, the student wonders what she will be like: how she will treat children in a few years.

For research participants, the diaries became an aid and to some extent also a therapeutic tool. Students stated that they often went back over their entries and sought support in their response to situations they found themselves in.

*The diary has helped me. I couldn't rely on the teacher, so at least I got it off my chest. (SO21)*

Students' diaries were not structured. Thus they were not reflective portfolios of practicum. One benefit of a diary is that it tells the researcher of the participant's personal feelings and emotions, and its use in research is modest. The researcher is able to penetrate the research participants' internal world. In contrast, participants appreciate the personal feedback they get from writing a diary when looking back over it. Diaries can also serve a therapeutic purpose. They can «heal» problems which look different when looking back on them in future, and can also show their writers where they made an error in their work, or what they were successful in.

Research participants appreciated being able to draw from their own experiences.

## **7. Self-efficacy of research participants**

The SEPRES questionnaire to measure self-efficacy was administered in order to ascertain the relationship between an estimate of students' expertise and the perception of how they acted within the preschool environment. This should help us understand their behaviour when dealing with children, their parents and training teachers. According to Pajares, self-efficacy represents the positive affective focus of someone to make a decision and act, and it is an «energising» factor in such behaviour. Because reality shock manifests itself in unfortunate emotional states and a loss of energy, we anticipated two possibilities. If students have high self-efficacy, then they will have weak energy shock. In contrast, if they have low self-efficacy then they will have strong energy shock.

Our results showed quite high averages in all dimensions of the SEPRES questionnaire. In the *Children's engagement* in activities dimension, the average was

4.77, in the *Building trust amongst children* dimension the average was 4.00, in the *Eliminating problem behaviour amongst children* dimension the average was 4.49, and in the *Professional co-operation* dimension it was 4.96. All these averages are above the mid-way point of the six-point scale (i. e. above 3.5). This finding demonstrates a relatively *high student confidence* in their professional skills, and a source of the optimism in work. Students anticipated that they had sufficient expertise and were ready for working in a preschool, and so they did not expect major professional problems when beginning practicum.

The questionnaire findings showed a high personal perception of skills in the four areas. The *Eliminating problem behaviour amongst children* and *Professional co-operation* areas were shown to be problematic in an analysis of the diaries. We can therefore conclude that prior to beginning practice, the students felt that they knew how to manage these problems, but practice demonstrated that this was not the case. This discrepancy in their own self-assessment can also cause reality shock, something our research showed.

Similar research findings were ascertained by Kim a Cho [14]. These authors used a questionnaire which included, for example, the following items: «The reality of class management will be different from the theory we have learnt»; «The school's educational philosophy will be complicated and hard to implement within the classroom» and «Poor cohesion amongst the teaching staff will be an obstacle to my professional development». This questionnaire was used amongst students of teaching at one university in the Southwestern USA. The results showed a relatively low level of reality shock expectation (average of 3.84 on a seven-point scale), and on the other hand a relatively high level of self-efficacy of students (5.87). Thus these students have high confidence in their professional abilities and low worries about the reality they will be entering. Both these variables displayed negative correlation.

The ascertained self-efficacy of students and beginning teachers in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is a frequent research topic [9; 10; 11; 15; 16; 28]. The data ascertained in these studies referred to the method of how students and teachers considered themselves. Data on self-efficacy clearly cannot fully uncover any problems students anticipate after beginning practicum. In this regard, it would be a good idea to construct a research tool which specifies more closely anticipated problems during the period of practicum, and which focuses not just on the methodological (didactic) aspect, but also on their emotional experience and social integration within the preschool environment.

It was interesting, however, that the dimension looking at students' ability to eliminate problem behaviour amongst children was in stark contrast to the findings which were analysed from the data in the diaries. This shows the reality that some anticipated personal abilities were proven in practice to be overestimated. This contrast is a strong source which triggers and strengthens reality shock.

## **8. Conclusion**

In implementing their intentions, all students find themselves in situations where they have to take a stance. Through these interactions, they create their own mental construct which puts into context the experience they acquired from what they went

through. The insight isn't about reality, but about its importance for the student. On the basis of the teaching practice they experienced, the student evaluates their theoretical knowledge and puts it into context. The direct transmission of complete knowledge is impossible. Students create their own meaning for words, ideas and experience on the basis of their actions. This is one reason why practice is of fundamental importance to every student.

During undergraduate study, the period of practicum may involve a phenomenon we call reality shock. It manifests itself in various situations which have connotations of crisis for the student. Although the crisis phenomena differ in their specific manifestations, we can nevertheless decode some characteristics:

- a moment of surprise at its emergence,
- a lack of detailed information at the times which are most fundamental,
- communication channel not working (training teacher – student),
- increase in extent of diverse activities, which become hard to monitor,
- threat to students' professional objectives,
- activities under stress and time pressure,
- emergence of panic, somatic manifestations.

When a student's experience at practicum includes reality shock, this can result in a change to professional identity. We have shown this in our research. It should be said that 12 research participants left for preschools, 6 are continuing in follow-up studies, 3 students did not complete their final state exam and two changed their professional focus.

Our research was limited by the focus of the research. The research participants were only (and currently are) graduates of one particular Moravian university in one subject. The course of the research therefore relates to just one subject, although some data and data interpretation may have broader connotation and overlap. There is the potential for further perspective research here.

Our research also noted problems in organising practicum from the university. It is abundantly clear that in order to secure high quality practicum, close co-operation with universities is required from the first years, not just at the level of individual types of practice. Faculty/training schools should become an integral component of students' lives during the course of their studies, beginning in the first year. An open school model is possible here, in which the university plays the role of co-operating partner. As the participants' testimony makes clear, it is not enough that they are warned of possible problems during their theory lessons (such as in relation to communication with parents). It is also essential that they encounter the real environment in which they may be working during the course of their studies so that they have the opportunity to get a grasp and an emotional feel for what preschools are as an institution, and what is typical for them.

### References

1. Bernoux Philippe, Servet & Jean-Michel. In: *La construction sociale de la confiance*. Paris, Montchrestien : Association d'économie financière, 1997.
2. Cliniciu A. Adaptation and Stress for the First Year University Students. In: *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 2013. № 78. P. 718–722.

3. Correa J. M., Martínez-Arbelaiz A., Aberasturi-Apraiz, E. Post-modern reality shock: Beginning teachers as sojourners in communities of practice. In: *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 2015. № 48. P. 66–74.
4. Dicke T., Elling J., Schmeck A., Leutner D. Reducing reality shock: The effects of classroom management skills training on beginning teachers. In: *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 2015. № 48. P. 1–12.
5. Elliot R., Timulak L. Descriptive and interpretive approaches to qualitative research. In: *A handbook of research methods for clinical and health psychology*. 2005. Oxford : Oxford University Press. P. 147–159.
6. Feldt R. C. et al. Measurement Adjustment to College: Construct Validity of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire. In: *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*. 2011. P. 44–92.
7. Friedman I. A. Classroom management and teacher stress and burnout. In: *Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues*. Mahwah, New York : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006. P. 925–944.
8. Gavora P., Wiegerová A. Self-efficacy of Students in a Preschool Education Programme: The Construction of a Research Instrument. In: *The New Educational Review*. 2017. № 47 (1). P. 125–138.
9. Gavora P. Profesionálna zdatnosť vnímaná učiteľom. Adaptácia výskumného nástroja. In: *Pedagogická revue*. 2009. 611/2. P. 19–37.
10. Gavora P. Measuring the Self-Efficacy of In-service Teachers in Slovakia. In: *Orbis Scholae*. 2011. № 5 (2). P. 79–94.
11. Gavora P., Majerčíková J. Vnímaná zdatnosť (*self-efficacy*) učiteľa: oblasť vyučovania a oblasť spolupráce s rodičmi. In: *Pedagogická orientace*. 2012. № 22 (2). P. 205–211.
12. Hejlová H., Opravilová E., Uhlířová J., Bravená N. In: *Nahlížení do světa dětí*. UK : Praha, 2013.
13. Chang E.C. et al. Relation between problemsolving styles and psychological adjustment in young adults: Is stress a mediating variable? In: *Personality and Individual Differences*. 2007. № 42. P. 135–144.
14. Kim H., Cho Y. Pre-service teachers' motivation, sense of teaching efficacy, and expectation of reality shock. In: *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*. 2014. № 42 (1). P. 67–81.
15. Majerčíková J. et al. Profesionálna zdatnosť (*self-efficacy*) študentov učiteľstva a učiteľov spolupracovať s rodičmi. Bratislava : Univerzita Komenského, 2012.
16. Majerčíková J., Syslová Z. Profesionálna zdatnosť učiteľov pro spolupráci s rodiči. Situace v českých a slovenských mateřských školách (124–135). In: *Předškolní vzdělávání v teorii a praxi*. Brno : MU, 2014.
17. McShane S. L., Von Glinow M. A. Organizational behavior. Boston : Irwin McGraw-Hill. 2008.
18. Miles M. B., Huberman A. M., Saldana J. Qualitative data analysis. 3rd edition. Los Angeles : SAGE, 2014.
19. Muller-Fohrbrodt G., Cloetta B., Dann H. D. Der Praxisschock bei junger Lehrern. Stuttgart : Klett, 1978.
20. Roy J., Robichaud F. The shock of reality of new nurses. In: *Recherche en Soins Infirmiers*, 2016. № 127. P. 82–90.
21. Stokking K., Leenders F., De Jong J., Van Tartwijk K. From Student to Teacher: reducing practice shock and early dropout in the teaching profession. In: *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 2003. № 26 (3). P. 329–350.
22. Šulová L. Děti nastupují do mateřské školy. In: *Informatorium 3-8*. 2004. № 7. P. 5.
23. Švaříček R. Zlomové události při utváření profesní identity učitele. In: *Pedagogika. Sk.* 2011. № 2 (4). P. 247–274.



24. Švaříček R., Šed'ová K. Kvalitativní výzkum v pedagogických vědách. Praha : Portál, 2007.
25. Weinstein C. Preservice teachers' expectations about the first year of teaching. In: *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 1988. № 4 (1). P. 31–40.
26. Veenman S. Perceived problems of beginning teachers. In: *Review of Educational Research*, 1984. № 54. P. 143–178.
27. Vlčková K. et al. Z posluchárny za katedru. Mocenské vztahy ve výuce studentů učitelství. MU : Brno, 2015.
28. Wiegerová A. et al. Self-efficacy (vnímaná zdatnosť) v edukačných súvislostiach. Bratislava : SPN, 2012.
29. Wiegerová A., Lukášová H. Teaching degree students' experience of teaching Practice. In: *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*. 2021. № 1 (9). P. 1–12.