

Teachers' Development Standards in the School of Education, Warsaw

A Case Study

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The present article describes the fundamentals of the Teachers' Development Standards (TDS) designed in the School of Education, Warsaw. It provides an analysis of the current context of teacher education in Poland (and available methods of professional development) as well as a brief outlook on the global challenges education is facing concerning economic, social and environmental issues. In a changing world, professional teachers are needed all the more. The article then presents the basic principles behind the Standards and the evaluation concept introduced in the School of Education. In the document presented in the article, the following four areas of professional development are mentioned: establishing a learning environment, knowledge about the discipline and teaching thereof, planning the didactic process, and managing the didactic process, each followed with example indexes. The experiences of the School of Education with the TDS can thus be used by other institutions. The article finally presents the conclusions drawn in the internal evaluation process.

—— **Keywords:**

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Introduction: The world's call for high-quality teachers

Education is one of the priority fields for both national and international policy. At the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century, we tend to face more and more challenges to which education might be an answer. Most of the challenges come from the ever-changing and fluid global situation. The newest research from the fields of social studies, economics and politics indicates that some previously defined global problems remain unsolved and still tend to endanger the global population. In 2019 the World Economic Forum published a report on the most important risks facing our world. The authors briefly described such tendencies as the ever-deepening climate crisis, causing large-scale forced migrations and social instability as a result. Consequently, the modern world needs to be prepared for a deep political crisis caused by both political populists and information handlers. World institutions need to adapt their policies not only to avoid further dangers but also to minimize the consequences of the already happening crises. As stated in the report: "As the outlines of the next geopolitical era start to emerge, there is still uncertainty about where the distribution of power will settle and from where influence will emanate, but a snap back to the old order appears unlikely. If stakeholders attempt to bide their time, waiting for the old system to return, they will be ill-prepared for what lies ahead and may miss the point at which key challenges – economic, societal, technological or environmental – can be addressed. Instead, longstanding institutions must adapt to the present and be upgraded or reimagined for the future" (World Economic Forum, 2020, p. 15).

The future seems more and more complicated. We should expect economic consequences (limited access to money and assets and inflation), as well as socio-political difficulties. The latter can manifest in a lack of trust towards governments and the ineffectiveness of political countermeasures. Democratic institutions are constantly losing their first and most important ally – the democratic media. A bigger and bigger part of the global community uses information distributed not by high-quality media but populists or internet "authors", which often leads them to believe "alternative facts", post-truths or even literally fake news. Thus, we have become more vulnerable to manipulation and lies.



On the other hand, the global population is suffering from deepening economic inequalities. This has its obvious impact not only on the world's economy but also in other, less obvious areas. The authors of two important works, Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson in their *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better* (2010) and Anthony B. Atkinson in his *Inequality: What Can Be Done?* (2015), argue that income inequalities have a strong influence on access to basic resources and rights, guaranteed in most developed societies, such as access to health care, civic participation and high-quality education. The latter is the most important realisation to be considered in designing teacher training programmes. To improve the public education system, institutions need to focus on the most crucial elements of professional preparation.

Students are the main focus of modern didactics. Their strengths and abilities as well as areas for improvement help teachers in developing the best teaching plans that address all the diagnosed needs. Now, it is important to bring up the research results on the role of teachers in the learning process and their impact on the learning outcomes of the students. John Hattie, in his large-scale meta-analysis *Visible Learning for Teachers*, creates a portrait of a teacher-expert whose actions help students achieve educational success (Hattie, 2012). This portrait is based on five basic principles: teachers are able to recognise the main ideas of the taught subject, they can create a learning-friendly environment for their students, they monitor learning and give feedback, they are convinced that all their students can fulfill the success criteria, and they have a real impact on profound and superficial learning outcomes. This description is accompanied by a list of eight mind frames that help students and teachers to develop:

1. My fundamental task is to evaluate the effect of my teaching on students' learning and achievement.
2. The success and failure of my students' learning is about what I do or do not do. I am a change agent.
3. I want to talk more about learning than teaching.
4. Assessment is about my impact.
5. I teach through dialogue not monologue.
6. I enjoy the challenge and never retreat to "doing my best".
7. It is my role to develop positive relationships in class and staffrooms.
8. I inform all about the language of learning (ibidem, p. 159).



Hattie's concept is based on one important assumption: that effective teaching is a combination of profound content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and management, and these three components are inseparable. A similar approach can be seen in Robert J. Marzano's *The Art and Science of Teaching* (2007). In this study, the author defines the following three elements of effective teaching: using effective teaching strategies, effective classroom management and creating effective teaching curricula. In the first chapter of his book, Marzano states: "In the last decade of the 20th century, the picture of what constitutes an effective school became much clearer. Among elements such as a well-articulated curriculum and a safe and orderly environment, the one factor that surfaced as the single most influential component of an effective school is the individual teachers within that school" (Marzano, 2007, p. 1).

It is not just academics who have recognised the role of teachers as a factor of global change. It is also mentioned in the ILO/UNESCO *Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers* from 1966: "Education, from the earliest school years, should be directed to the all-round development of the human personality and to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and economic progress of the community, as well as to the inculcation of deep respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; within the framework of these values the utmost importance should be attached to the contribution to be made by education to peace and to understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and among racial or religious groups" (ILO/UNESCO, 2016, p. 22).

After 54 years, the goals described in the document have not changed that much. Even highly developed communities face difficulties in these areas. This means that schooling systems should be far more responsible for the future development of societies than we realize and that part of this responsibility will be placed on teachers. On the other hand, teachers need to deal with the educational goals defined by the state in the common core standards and requirements for an external examination system. Deep knowledge and experience are factors educators can use to maintain a balance between these two tendencies and, in result, to create an environment in which students can grow and thrive. Creating an effective learning environment that addresses the challenges defined by modern world



problems would not be possible without supporting teachers in their professional development.

There are a few areas in which we can define effective and professional teachers. The first one is a set of moral and personal attitudes towards students and teaching. Teachers need to understand their role in the public and ethical development of young people and also their responsibilities towards future societies. Proper high-quality education might be an answer to the above-mentioned global challenges, but it requires effective academic teacher training in pedagogy, psychology, pedagogical content knowledge, content knowledge and classroom management. Teachers educated in that way focus not only on the content of their lesson but also on the soft skills and attitudes they teach their students, such as empathy and eagerness to share one's passions. They also need to teach cognitive skills, like cognitive flexibility, tolerance towards ambiguity or openness to experiments. It is also absolutely necessary for an educator to be able to reflect on their teaching philosophy or values they present every day in their classroom.

There is also one more perspective that needs to be taken into consideration when writing about a proper teacher preparation process – the great and not always openly stated purpose, understood as the set of socially important values. David T. Hansen in his article *Values and purpose in teacher education* writes that: "Among the most prominent values influencing the scope and structure of teacher education programmes today are preparation for work and life, academic learning, human development and social justice, with the latter cast in some cases as respect for cultural diversity or multicultural education, and in others as civic or democratic education" (Hansen, 2008, p. 12).

For the author, there is a distinction between the purpose and the function in teachers' education, the latter being more of a technical term: "Function denotes maintenance, purpose the possibility of transformation" (ibidem, p. 23), and it is the personal challenge for every educator to take part in a never-ending debate on the main and most important values of education.

A modern teacher is then a professional who understands their role and presents positive attitudes and virtues as well as a consciousness of that role.



Teachers' Development Standards in the School of Education, Warsaw – A Case Study

Teachers' standards – theory and practice

In the public debate, the sentence "Teaching is a profession" will not be considered questionable. It is even safe to say that it would not be considered as such within educational circles. Although this sentence seems obvious, it has raised a lot of controversy within the professional debate. In the volume *Pedagogical Knowledge and the Changing Nature of the Teaching Profession* (Guerriero, 2017), the authors present a few approaches to the problem. All of them argue that teaching cannot be treated as a profession, but as a semi-profession: "Howsam et al. (1985) classify teaching as a semi-profession because it lacks one of the main identifying characteristics of a full profession: professional expertise. They argue that teaching lacks a common body of knowledge, practices and skills that constitute the basis for professional expertise and decision-making. This is a consequence of the practice of teaching not being founded upon validated principles and theories. [...] Like Howsam et al., Hoyle considers decision-making to be an important characteristic of professions because professions require the practice of skills in situations that are not routine and where professional judgement, based on a systematised body of knowledge, will need to be exercised when encountering new problems" (Guerriero & Deligiannidi, 2017, p. 21).

The authors then discuss the problem of the independence and self-governance (as basic characteristics of professionalisation) of teachers being limited by a broad set of factors, both local and national.

Having stated this, we need to consider teaching once again as a profession, not in an academic discourse, but in a very practical approach, based on the experiences of thousands of Polish teachers. The already-quoted ILO/UNESCO recommendation gives us a clear statement on regarding teaching as such: "Teaching should be regarded as a profession: it is a form of public service which requires of teachers expert knowledge and specialised skills, acquired and maintained through rigorous and continuing study; it calls also for a sense of personal and corporate responsibility for the education and welfare of the pupils in their charge" (ILO/UNESCO, 2016, p. 22).



There are a few important elements of this definition that should be further considered, especially taking into account the Polish context. First of all, the authors mention the important role of teachers as public servants in maintaining the continuity and coherence of the state's educational policy. Teachers are, in a way, the first and most important actors in implementing all the regulations required by law, such as realising the core curriculum or acts of parliament regulating the organisation of the schooling system. It has consequences for teachers themselves, and they should be fully aware of the set of responsibilities they have before the state. Furthermore, entering the teaching profession is preceded by a prolonged period of university training in a specific academic domain (in Poland, it is required for a teacher to have a Master's degree) as well as teacher training. Educators are also expected to be constantly developing their skills in different domains, and they enter additional professional courses in methods or classroom management.

The general outline of teacher education in Poland is given by the decree issued by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The decree states all the compulsory elements of teaching in the preparatory programmes, such as elements of pedagogy, psychology or content knowledge (Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2019). Although the document is meant to cover the entirety of future teachers' preparatory programmes, it is too general to be used as a proper guide for designing academic programmes. Therefore, every institution providing a teacher preparatory programme needs to design its own subjects' syllabi to meet the Ministry's requirements. It can be both a blessing and a curse – academics still have a lot of freedom to decide on a programme, but it may also lead to disproportionality among various programmes and, in consequence, teachers' readiness to work and practice.

Consequently, another kind of standard is needed not only to maintain a comparable **content** of teacher preparatory programmes but also to achieve the highest quality of teachers' **performance** in their practice. In general, ready-to-use standards within the educational praxis should focus on three main areas, as described in the working paper *Learning Standards, Teaching Standards and Standards for School Principals: A Comparative Study* issued by the CEPPE, Chile: "Standards can be understood as definitions of what someone should



know and be able to do to be considered competent in a particular (professional or educational) domain. Standards can be used to describe and communicate what is most worthy or desirable to achieve, what counts as quality learning or as good practice. Standards can also be used as measures or benchmarks, and, thus, as a tool for decision-making, indicating the distance between actual performance and the minimum level of performance required to be considered competent" (CEPPE, 2014, p. 14).

In other words, standards contain the informative **description** of the valued good practice, with references to the values and philosophy hidden behind practices (so-called **content standards**), and the proposed ways of the **assessment** of one's performance as well as their **criteria of measurement** (so-called **performance standards**), as was clearly presented in the report *Standards for Teaching: Theoretical Underpinning and Applications* by Elisabeth Kleinhenz and Lawrence Ingvarson (2007).

In many educational systems, standards for teachers have been successfully introduced, and each system produces its own list of professional standards for teachers. They serve different kinds of purposes: from accrediting teacher preparation programmes' graduates, through licensing, to an evaluation of the advanced teachers' practice. All these situations require fully-informed considerations of the candidate's performance in which standards are the best tool not only to assess teachers but also to give clear characteristics of a teacher-friendly environment. Kleinhenz and Ingvarson write: "Professional standards provide a basis for developing more valid systems for teacher accountability and performance. Standards also highlight conditions, such as opportunities for collegial interaction, that need to be in place for teachers to teach effectively" (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2007, p. 9).

In some systems, like in Poland, teachers are required to attain certain stages of career development in which the evaluation of their performance could or should be conducted. According to the corresponding Polish Act (usually called the *Teacher's Charter*), this assessment is based on the ten criteria listed below:

1. Reliability of the implementation of tasks related to the entrusted position and the basic functions of the school: didactic,



- educational and tutelary, including tasks related to ensuring the safety of students during classes organised by the school.
2. Supporting every student in their development.
 3. Striving for full personal development.
 4. Professional development in accordance with the needs of the school.
 5. Educating and raising young people in love of their homeland, in respect of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, and in an atmosphere of freedom of conscience and respect for every human being.
 6. Caring for students' moral and civic attitudes in accordance with the idea of democracy, peace and friendship between people of different nations, races and worldviews.
 7. Conducting didactic, educational and tutelary classes conducted directly with or on behalf of pupils.
 8. Implementation of other activities and activities resulting from the school's statutory tasks, including care and educational activities, taking into account the needs and interests of students.
 9. Conducting classes and activities related to preparing for classes, self-education and professional development.
 10. Being guided by the well-being of students, concern for their health, moral and civic attitude, and respecting the student's personal dignity (reconstructed according to the Teacher's Charter Act, section 2, art. 6, Educational Law Act, art. 5).

Teachers' performances can be assessed according to these criteria and be evaluated on a four-grade scale: outstanding, very good, good, or negative.

The situation described above leads to some very serious and profound consequences. First of all, the above-mentioned criteria are too general to be used as everyday references for teachers. The list does not state clearly what kind of practice could be graded as outstanding or as negative. It is all based on the subjective approach of every teacher and could be, in this way, a source of misunderstanding and misconceptions. This remark is also applicable to the assessing commission – it is easy to imagine situations where a final grade is not based on the thorough evaluation of the candidate's practice but

on the very subjective attitude towards them. In our opinion, the current situation does not meet expectations with regard to the above-mentioned understanding of standards.

In this way, standards need to be designed and implemented in the Polish context to be a guide for teacher candidates and experienced educators who wish to develop their practice.

*The School of Education as a complex approach
towards teacher training*

The School of Education of the Polish-American Freedom Foundation and the University of Warsaw (SE) was opened for students in the academic year 2016/2017. The programme is meant for graduates of universities who want to obtain a teacher preparation programme diploma as well as for in-service teachers who want to further develop their skills and learn new educational solutions. On completion, students receive a post-graduate diploma which gives them the right to become practicing teachers in all types of schools and institutions. During the first two years, the programme was addressed to Polish philologists and mathematicians only, but recently it was also opened to future biology and history/civic education teachers. The programme was created thanks to the co-operation of the Polish-American Freedom Foundation, the University of Warsaw, the Foundation for Quality Education, the Centre for Citizenship Education and the support of experts from the renowned Teachers College at Columbia University.

The novelty of this programme (the first of its kind in Poland) lies in combining full-time studies with intense practices. Students are able to deepen their academic knowledge and implement it in school practice in clinical schools participating in the support programme realised in the SE. These are over 30 elementary, middle and high schools in Warsaw and surrounding areas in which students' get to know the full extent of a teacher's job – participating in faculty meetings, parent-teacher conferences as well as teaching and co-teaching classes. The schedule has been synchronised with the school year. In every clinical school, students are able to observe and consult mentors – teachers working in a school. In the afternoons, students participate in academic classes at the SE. The SE provides a professional preparatory programme in the fields of pedagogy, didactics, psychology, the development of leadership and creative skills.



The SE philosophy is strongly based on synergy between the praxis and theory of teaching. This bond is visible in many fields: SE professors have practical teaching experience, represent various academic institutions, and have the support of leading American and European specialists in the area of teacher training. In this way, they can present different approaches to teaching methods and content. The faculty staff are people actively involved in education who can apply different perspectives into their training of teachers: as practicing educators and academics.

The practical aspect of this programme is also realised in applying effective teaching methods to teaching students. SE professors model techniques and strategies while teaching students. In that way, they enforce meta-reflection in future teachers, who are then able to apply new solutions in a well-informed and conscious way. Academic classes are held in small groups, with a strong emphasis on discussion and systematic reflection on learning progress.

In the SE the idea of individual support to every student is realised in many ways. For example, the core concept of supporting future teachers in their development is tutoring: students are under the substantive care of SE tutors. The tutorial is an important element of teacher education. Tutors are experienced in didactic work, they understand the challenges faced by future teachers, and they know how to help them organise their own experiences and learn through them. Tutors, together with learners, evaluate their work and help them set development goals. The tutorial at the SE also has a different, less obvious goal. This is to instill in future teachers a willingness to work with such methods with their students at school. The tutorial at the SE has an important place in the weekly schedule of students. Tutorial meetings usually take place every two weeks, but their frequency may change due to the needs of students. The tutorial takes about 45–60 minutes. Importantly, the tutorial is a process planned for the entire academic year; it cannot just be a response to the current problems of students. This does not mean, however, that this plan is rigid and unchanging, yet we ensure that work on the most current issues in student practice does not limit the possibility of referring to the whole process.

During the whole development process, tutors support students in improving their own professional craft. This is served by taking care of the quality and continuity of the process, building self-awareness



and supporting self-reflection as well as meta-reflection about learning. Tutors and tutees share the experience gained while working at school, conduct discussions (substantive conversations) regarding issues related to teaching, planning or conducting the educational process, and enter the role of expert teachers. During the academic year, tutors evaluate student activities based on observing lessons, analysing the lesson plans, discussing recordings from the lesson, and discussing teaching practice.

Another aspect of the specific SE approach to teaching is creating critically reflective teaching practices. Stephen D. Brookfield, in his book *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*, describes this practice in the following way: "critically reflective teaching happens when we build into our practice the habit of constantly trying to identify, and check, the assumptions that inform our actions as teachers. The chief reason for doing this is to help us take more informed actions so that when we do something that's intended to help students learn it actually has that effect" (Brookfield, 2017, pp. 4–5). This is the main idea behind organising the learning – practice – reflection – practice cycle. Students acquire theoretical knowledge of the methods and strategies and ideally have the opportunity to practice them in clinical schools. Then, during the classes, they have a chance to reflect on their actions. Integrative Seminars are classes specifically designed to discuss and evaluate weekly practices and are held every Friday.

All of the learning experiences of the students are eventually collected in a teacher's portfolio, this being the basic form of assessing learning. It is a means of reporting the most important aspects of education, challenges and ways to overcome them through participating in the SE programme. Students incorporate in their portfolios their lesson scenarios and pupils' works with comments and feedback, as well as personal notes about learning. The portfolio reflects the individual development path of every student.

To fully realize all the goals of the programme, Teachers' Development Standards were designed. In the Polish tradition, we have not had this kind of document before, so the Standards had to be designed from scratch, based on international inspirations.

The sources of Standards, good practices and inspirations

Describing good teaching is not easy – there has always been a heated debate over values that should define the teachers' ethos. As one



of the jobs considered a calling, teaching has always been seen as fulfilling a mission rather than simply working. But still, every future educator needs to know the basic principles that make their job a profession. It is one of the key factors essential for learning anything, especially learning to teach. Over four years have now passed since the teaching staff of the SE started to design a document shaping the vision of the teaching professional – the graduate of our programme (the leading authors being Maria Samborska, Magdalena Swat-Pawlicka and Kinga Białek). Thanks to the intensive work of the team and constant modifications, this complex and satisfying tool that helps students to develop as future teachers can now be used under the name of Teachers' Development Standards (TDS). The basic principles underlying the TDS come from the years of experience of the staff as educators and teachers' tutors. It starts with the belief that the most important element of teaching lies within creating a good, supportive learning environment for each and every student in the classroom. This is followed by trust in the teachers' knowledge and expertise within the subject area and pedagogical content knowledge, careful and purposeful planning as well as the ability to manage the learning process. All of those are included in our TDS and reflected in the syllabi of academic subjects taught in the School of Education.

But they are also based on experiences gathered internationally, like from the Teachers College at Columbia University, the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley or Indiana University Bloomington's School of Education. The first and very important inspirations were standards used in New York schools, reported in Charlotte Danielson's *The Framework for Teaching* (2013). In this tool, teaching is divided into four domains that are then described using different actions taken by teachers in the classroom or outside, within the school community, each written in the form of learning progressions in four stages – from Unsatisfactory through Basic and Proficient to Distinguished. Danielson's evaluation programme is detailed and easy to use, and it contains a lot of additional evaluation tools, e.g. observation plans or feedback forms. However, the programme itself is not really a teacher-friendly tool, being too bureaucratic and generic. Even if it could not be fully adopted, it was a very good starting point for designing the TDS used in the SE to this day. Another source of methodological insight was the TRU standards



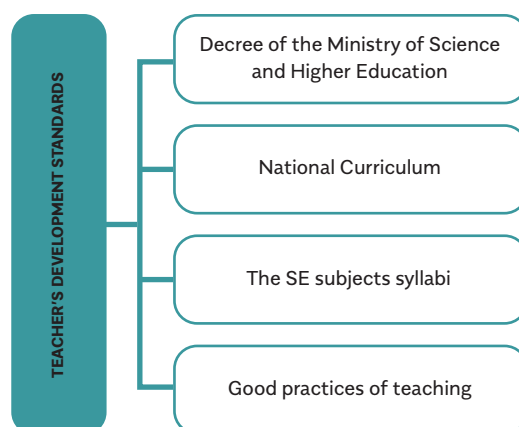
(Schoenfeld, 2016) designed at the University of California, Berkeley. These allowed the inclusion of mathematical good practices in the TDS. The last of the most important models incorporated into our design of the Standards in the last stage of the project were the evaluation standards applied in the School of Education at the University of Indiana Bloomington, from which the latest form of the TDS comes.

We strongly believe, however, that the key to the effective introduction of standards to everyday work lies not in simply translating other experiences but in modifying them to fit the Polish educational reality. The final product is therefore original and useful in our conditions.

The design of the Standards – the first and final drafts

From the very beginning of the process, the team designing the Standards wanted to include the whole spectrum of teachers' practices in them. They were also supposed to reflect the values and philosophy behind teaching in the School of Education. That is why the main sources for the Standards had to include external requirements (taken from the Decree of the Ministry describing compulsory elements of teachers' education and the National Curriculum for students) as well as internal findings concerning the content of the SE syllabi and lists of good practices coming from national and international research (see Clarke & Moore, 2013; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). The diagram below illustrates the sources of the Standards.

Diagram 1. Sources of the SE Teachers' Development Standards



Therefore, the Standards included several areas, and every one of them was described in terms of key questions and a graduate's profile. They concerned both the preparation, planning and conducting of lessons as well as the more personal elements of career and development planning. In the table below, we quote the names of these areas and their descriptions (Table 1).

Table 1. Areas of the Teachers' Development Standards and their descriptions

AREA I – DIDACTICS – PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND TEACHING THE DISCIPLINE OF PHILOSOPHY
The teacher understands the primary concepts, research tools and structures within the scope of the taught discipline, and plans didactic situations conducive to building a thorough understanding of the discipline in students.
AREA II – DESIGNING TASKS ENTAILING COGNITIVE CHALLENGES
The teacher understands and applies various strategies in order to further understanding of the given discipline, improve awareness of significant connections between various content and develop methods for using knowledge and abilities. The teacher knows how to combine different concepts and perspectives within the scope of the discussed issues in order to encourage critical thinking, creativity and co-operation in solving actual problems amongst school kids.
AREA III – ESTABLISHING ACCESSIBILITY OF KNOWLEDGE CONDITIONS FOR ALL SCHOOL KIDS
The teacher understands the knowledge acquisition and school kid development processes and is aware of diverse learning styles stemming from cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional as well as physical conditions. The teacher designs and introduces adequate didactic situations. The teacher uses knowledge about individual differences and also about cultural and social diversity in order to provide school kids with inclusive education, one where the satisfaction of high requirements is guaranteed to all school kids.
AREA IV – BUILDING THE IDENTITY OF SCHOOL KIDS AS LEARNERS
The teacher establishes an environment which supports the individual development of school kids and co-operation amongst learners, based on positive interactions amongst school kids and their active participation in the learning and motivation processes.
AREA V – MONITORING AND MODIFICATIONS. FEEDBACK IN THE LEARNING PROCESS.
The teacher understands and applies various assessment methods in order for school kids to become involved in their own development, monitoring progress and providing support in making decisions.
AREA VI – PROFESSIONALISATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
The teacher is engaged in school life and is part of the local community, co-creates the learning community, exhibits professionalism and shows the need for lifelong learning.

Key questions were used to evaluate and self-evaluate students' practice. As a tool of self-evaluation, the Standards were supposed to be used on an everyday basis by students themselves to check



their lessons and discuss them with peers observing their lessons. As a tool of assessment, they were used by mentors and tutors to provide feedback.

The first draft of the Standards was a really complicated and huge document. Students had trouble using them, and in fact, the Standards were read thoroughly only during semi-annual three-party assessment meetings (student, mentor, tutor). Also, as they were written in the form of learning progressions (every aspect of the Standards was transcribed into four steps of practice), and exemplary activities were sometimes inadequate for actual student practices in the classroom. After a year's trial use, the Standards were modified into a form applied to this day.

The final draft of the Standards now has four main areas:

1. Establishing a learning environment;
2. Knowledge about the discipline and teaching thereof;
3. Planning the didactic process;
4. Managing the didactic process.

This list of areas reflects the hierarchy of priorities in the learning process. First of all, we want our students to create an environment that helps their pupils to learn and grow. This means that they need to take care of establishing proper communication standards in their classroom, help children to co-operate and learn from each other and help each other when needed. Then, teachers should apply the content knowledge so that it realizes the most important elements and essential ideas and concepts (this area regards both content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge). As the next step, all the important teaching goals need to be included in the most effective teaching plans, especially in the specific tasks for students. In the SE, we stress the importance of planning tasks with the use of taxonomies, like those of Bloom (Bloom et al., 1956) and Webb (1997). The informed and effective practice of assessing educational achievements is also part of the Standards. In the last part of the Standards are the strategies and techniques of managing the learning process – this is based on the experiences of the SE staff as well as research.

The form of the Standards was also modified. In the table below, we present an example of one of the categories in the area "Managing the didactic process" (Table 2).



Table 2. Example of a category from the Standards

	CATEGORY DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE INDEXES	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE
C.	Use of strategies, methods and techniques	<p>The planned methods, strategies and techniques are entirely adequate for the teaching objectives and materials as well as school kids' needs.</p> <p>The teacher understands method effectiveness conditions and ensures they are satisfied.</p> <p>The teacher uses various techniques supporting the performance of the same objectives, depending on children's needs.</p> <p>Materials prepared by the teacher facilitate the most effective children's work.</p>	No data 1 2 3 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Students, mentors and tutors use these Standards in the same way as the previous version. The Standards contain examples of practices that could be observed during the lesson. But the list is not a closed one and can be supplemented with any evidence collected during observation. An assessment is then conducted after collecting data from three different perspectives: students' self-evaluations, and mentors' and tutors' observations and evaluations of lesson plans. In every category, the performance level is assigned to one of the following levels: 1 – unsatisfactory, 2 – beginner, 3 – satisfactory, 4 – professional. If a given category of activities cannot be assessed on the basis of the collected data, the "No data" box is checked.

In consequence, students use the Standards as a guide in their lesson planning and to point out the most important elements of the lesson practice. At first, the students are usually not convinced of the importance of the Standards and point out the "bureaucracy" behind it, but in time, after some weeks of using it, they mostly agree that they are useful in practice.

Evaluation and discussion

After almost four years of functioning as a teacher training programme, the School of Education has collected a lot of useful materials



as the basis for further evaluation of the TDS. Every semester, students fill in the evaluation survey, and after every academic year, a group of students is chosen for an interview where they have the opportunity to extend their answers. For the sake of this article, we have analysed the effects of the evaluations conducted in the academic year 2018/2019. The interview group consisted of seven persons, comprising both Polish studies and mathematics students. Below, we quote fragments of the students' answers on the most important questions regarding the TDS.

It was essentially important to us to know whether implementing the Standards in the students' practice at the beginning of the academic year was successful. To assess that, we asked students for their first impressions of the document.

I remember that when I read it, I found it impossible, I could not implement it all. It is like designing the units of study... it turns out that it is possible. Later, when I read these standards and tried to summarise the practice, it turned out that yes, it was possible, it was not so difficult after all... as a result, it turned out to be all logically related [...] but after the first reading, it makes a real impression.

I thought it was weird, disturbing. I remember that I liked the fact that those four goals, this Platonic ideal, were unattainable and it showed me that one is always "on the way" and there is practically no possibility that they achieve these four. The only problem I had with it was that each lesson is a little different and each lesson can be assessed differently according to these areas, and I was wondering how to generalise it. Many times I did something right but many times I did something wrong, and I was wondering what would happen with it. Here, I think that the recordings and the tutor observations are helpful.

Generally, the first impressions of the document were slightly negative. Students mentioned the feeling of being overwhelmed by the size of the document and the large number of factors it included. The most important conclusion to be implemented in the following years was to introduce the Standards in a student-friendly way, during



the Integrative Seminar, so that the users are not uneasy with them from the very first moment.

The second important question was whether the Standards were truly implemented in the process of development in the School of Education. The interviewer asked the students to describe the practice of using the Standards during the tutorial process.

Yes, the tutor used to come to the lessons that I conducted in high school, and then we discussed these lessons, there were several such meetings.

Yes, especially after observing the lesson or when creating the lesson plan.

Yes, even yesterday we discussed them, although it is impossible to discuss it step by step, e.g. first, second, third area [...]. Also, not everything can be done and checked over a dozen or so hours, so they are helpful to see which area is to be improved later, what exactly is wrong, but I would not stick to the Standards alone. Most often, it was done in a way that we chose one area for observation, the first one was general, and then we chose another. But also sometimes during the lesson it turns out that in the area we have chosen we would not have that much to talk about, so we changed it. It was a flexible approach, which I think is good.

Yes, by all means. Mostly by way of summary and we chose the areas that are most important for me to work on. And also following the feedback I received. [...] These standards were useful in this respect [determining the development goals], because they somehow closed certain categories. Because when I have to say that I have a problem, I have to say that I have a problem with everything, but when I have to indicate a specific category, it is not quite as big as it seemed to me in my emotional statements. It is different when you are to say if you are good or bad at something, and different when you point out the evidence. In this respect, it was helpful to me, because it allowed me to get rid of such a general impression and divide all my ideas of learning into smaller parts. And focus on these parts and not on the overall impression.



These answers show a few ways in which the TDS function within the SE programme. The first of them is the semi-annual assessment. But it is much more important to use that as a basis for planning individual development goals and realising them during the programme. Students also mentioned using the Standards to plan their lessons. It is really reassuring that this document was considered helpful as a tool.

It is also essential for us for the Standards to be implemented in the practice of our students after their graduation as a tool to plan their development in their career as licensed teachers. First of all, it requires an ability to self-evaluate. This is one of the biggest challenges for our students.

Was it self-assessment that was the most difficult part of your tutorial, as it appears so often in your surveys?

Incredibly difficult, because this is already a summary. Although it is easy to point out someone else's strengths, at least for me, to realise that I am good at something and to talk about it and show it is extremely difficult. To talk about my strengths and to make people aware that I think I am good at this or that.

It is also connected with introducing the culture of co-operation where admitting both strengths and development areas is not a subject of judgement. It is not an easy task, because it is a novelty for many of our students. It also leads to the next problem – introducing the Standards to the professional practice of our graduates. They are unsure if their working environment will be as friendly and supportive as the SE environment. This is still the most challenging question to be answered in the future practice of the School of Education – how to encourage teachers to use the Standards in their independent practice.

In the coming years, we are going to ensure that the Standards are used in the actual school environment.

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