

# A development-oriented approach to promote reflection competence of teacher students

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## **1. Structure**

This paper includes the following parts:

- 1.1 Introduction and didactic problems in advising service
- 1.2 Didactic considerations of trainer activities undertaken in a class visit
- 2 Papers as instruments to the counseling process
  - 2.1 Cover letter to teacher students about the process (1<sup>st</sup> paper)
  - 2.2 Personal preparing the reflection of classroom education at home (2<sup>nd</sup> paper)
  - 2.3 Plan for the self-advising process with supporting questions - guidance to counseling techniques only for trainers (3<sup>rd</sup> paper)
  - 2.4 Example of an advising process (as an original portfolio by a teacher student)
  - 2.5 Examples for feedback in the development-oriented consultancy-process of teacher students, their teacher mentors and in addition inspected teacher trainers before their nomination
- 3 Summarizing a brief assessment

### **1.1 Introduction and didactic problems in advising service**

Classroom visits and debriefings represent the most individualized form of teacher training. This type of educational event is part of the legal basis of education of the federal states in Germany. At the same time it is likely to be the most expensive form of teacher training because of the human resource request. Its widespread use can therefore only be justified by the high level of training efficiency.

However, doubts about the expected effect in terms of professional competent teacher behaviour are appropriate. The various functions relating to classroom visits and debriefings are in the hands of only one trainer, even if combination classroom visits are arranged by two trainers of different modules simultaneously. The evaluation aspect urges

teacher students to behave strategically towards the instructor's efforts on training, guidance and advice. The incompatibility of these training functions that have to be accomplished by one person is at the expense of clarity, openness and trust which are essential for a successful consulting work.

Therefore the term professional consultancy is untenable due to the lack of voluntariness. However it is often replaced by the more general term of class debriefing. After all, this term is more honest, yet it does not solve the underlying fundamental problem: in this setting, the reflection of the trainee is mixed up with the instructor's expert advice and his task to evaluate the teaching behaviour of the trainee during class debriefing. Thereby ambivalences are created and student teachers beat the inner retreat. The effective development of an aspiring teacher is difficult under these conditions. This inconvenient framework that hinders successful training is often open minded in the literature, although the basic problem of separation of consulting and assessment cannot be changed in practice. Also, the presented approach in this paper cannot change that. It opposes, however, the tasks to be accomplished openly and shows ways in which the required separation can be carried out structurally at least in the framework of the module "Beratung, Reflexion, Berufsrolle" (BRB-module, translated title: Feedback, Reflection and Professional Role).

## **1.2 Didactic considerations of trainer activities undertaken in a class visit**

This paper shall show you how the option of disjunction works. The discussed development-oriented approach of counselling is explained in a case study. First, this paper introduces the used papers giving the teacher students in order to prepare themselves at home for the unevaluated counselling process. In addition the presented questionnaire instrument may be used by the teacher trainer guiding the teacher student in a deeper self-advising process after his lesson. Finally, the advice instrument's function is illustrated by an example. It shows a real self-advising process written as a portfolio by a teacher student. In the end, some feedbacks show the acceptance of the procedure.

Considering this type of training event, I ask myself "What do I want to promote in the core and what do I have to fulfill?" I reason that it is my job as an instructor to support the teacher student's development of their reflection competences and to advise them on their professional learning process functionally, i.e. by discussing pedagogy and didactics. For this purpose one may use a written draft, the realisation and the reflection of lessons in the context of a traditional classroom visit. In addition, I have the legal duty to evaluate the teacher student's performance in order to obtain a module grade and to prepare the teachers' final exam (comp. exam thesis by SAUL, 2008). In doing so the feedback function of the assessment loses its importance given the diverse, individual class debriefing. Thus, essentially only the selective and therefore the allocative function remains.

In view of the learning effectiveness, two different forms of counseling have proven to be beneficial: the so-called expert advice and the development oriented counseling.

A process that strengthens the resources of the teachers is to promote the development of their teacher personality, if that helps them to reflect on their teaching practice itself, to find their own development targets and enable them to take within students into account their professional actions. The development oriented counseling has this potential. During this process the teacher students get no advice from the trainer, but are prompted by appropriate questions for in-depth self-reflection. The intention is to take their professional activities and analyze which factors have led to the development of their skills. At the same time, this method can support the teachers to identify untapped potential and opportunities to improve and help them to develop solutions for a successful realization.

The student teacher's approval to this form of reflection and consultation is however a precondition, which should be granted only if the potential of the approach is reasonable, if transparency is maintained throughout the process and if evaluation components are excluded. This form of counselling is particularly taken into consideration in this article.

Experience in general pedagogical and didactic counselling has shown that the teacher can benefit from the instructor's expertise if he has had an opportunity to try out his abilities in unevaluated situations before. Then, he encounters questions and requests grounded advice with regard to practical implementation in class after a self-reflection.

By this, the instructor gets into the position of a desired expert. Under these conditions, concepts of teacher training like the presented are fruitful. As is known, however, an expected assessment is proved counter-productive to a specialist counselling, and even more so to a development-oriented counselling process. This behaviour intensifies, the fewer opportunities the teachers have left to prove themselves successful.

Therefore, this problem in the teacher training in Hesse (Germany) is especially present in class visits in the framework of evaluated pedagogical modules. In contrast to subject-related didactic modules, where two class visits are scheduled, there is only one class visit planned in the pedagogical modules. A correction of the teacher's behaviour on the basis of learning effects is impossible for that reason. Because this dilemma cannot be solved legally and organizationally at present, the presented approach argues in favour of the BRB-module. This begins simultaneously to the modules "Microteaching" and ("Video unterstuetzte Bearbeitung paedagogischer Standardsituationen" VUBpS-module, translated title: Mastering of pedagogic standard situations with video analysis of instruction), such that the results from these modules can be used and the teachers' development can be attended constantly over two years (PEUKERT & SACH, 2005).

The purpose of the following phase of development oriented counseling is that the teacher student gets support in strengthening his resources throughout his reflection process, in finding his own development targets and in taking a closer look at the implementation of those in his work in class.

During the reflection process with the trainer trying to figure out together with the teacher, which factors have led to the success of his skills. In this process, driven by questions, this intension is it that the young teacher deepens his process of self reflection to identify his untapped potential and opportunities for improvement.

Therefore, the teacher gets neither advice nor recommendations from the trainer at this stage. The structure of the questions is adjusted on the basis of SPIESS (2000) to the field of teacher training. The proposals for questions as well as their functions are shown in Table 1.

In addition, the trainer would speak to the accompanying mentor indicating his future role in the phase of counseling. They use the time of absence of the teacher student to think about his untapped strengths in context with his shown performance. In this way, the mentor's role and function during the class debriefing is clearly defined. Simultaneously, the trainer can use the efficient potential of a self fulfilling prophecy in a constructive turn through this component of conversation while communicating the results of the ex-ante discussion to the teacher. Moreover, the mentor receives a supporting role in the debriefing.

In the course of development counselling the teacher trainer elaborates needs for changes with the teacher. Using those, the trainer and the student teacher can define target agreements to some extent. In the role as a consultant, can therefore, contribute to the process, such that might return to the discussion of the agreements and their possible fulfilment in a follow-up consultation after obtaining approval on the one hand. On the other hand, the offer to this separate consultation in an unevaluated process within a module or working session to it. The teacher can ask for such a consultation on his own initiative in order to elaborate, substantiate and strength, how the formulated needs for change can be realized in class. The teacher student can prepare himself appropriately for this counselling and must not – unlike it has been customary hitherto in class debriefings – attempt immediately at a solution which is often irrelevant for the directly following class, but rather aims at a preparation for similar future class situations.

With an appropriate time interval between development and specialist advice, the teacher student can search for material and literature and make practical lesson plans. This makes the specialist advice more efficient and gives the teacher student a direct benefit for his following lessons. In the specialist consultancy there is given explicit expert advice. This counseling may be perceived as a special training event, which is neutral in terms of evaluation, because the teacher finds himself back in the learning and training process again. Depending on the assessment of the teacher student's educational level the trainer may also recommend a professional consultation with him.

We integrate Information Computer Technique (ICT) media like Videos of classroom education, collegial advice by peers, counseling by teacher trainers and self-advice which is produced after a research for self interesting pedagogical aspects assembled in a homepage-like program on DVD (Mediator by Match ware) by the teacher students.

## **2 Papers as instruments to the counseling process**

The following three papers are instruments for the teacher student and the teacher trainer as well on which the counseling process is based.

## **2.1 Cover letter to teacher students about the process**

In order to prepare the teacher students to the counseling process I give them the following papers which should help them to look forward to a transparent process.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Paper: Guidance to an advanced contemplation on individual teaching processes (with/without videotape)**

After reviewing both of your video sequences recorded in 'Microteaching' or after your lesson in the module "Beratung, Reflexion, Berufsrolle" (Feedback, Reflection and Professional Role) or based on the video recorded in your lesson (so far as you have agreed on it) you will have the opportunity to prepare the professional development oriented feedback conversation with the help of the following paper:

#### **Professional development oriented feedback**

The purpose of the feedback is that you will not be given any advice. On the contrary you will be supported in your contemplation process in order to strengthen existing resources, to find out about your own developmental targets and to focus on your individual teaching strategies. During this phase I would like to find out about the factors being responsible for your successful improvement of competencies. Therefore you should be prepared to undergo this - maybe unconventional way – of giving and receiving feedback. Together we will find out your unused potential and work on ways for improvement and problem-solving strategies.

Please allow enough time and a convenient room where we can talk without being disturbed. In any case time pressure should be avoided.

At first you will have 5-10 minutes to reflect uninterruptedly on the lesson.

Not until the end of the development oriented phase of the lesson's review I will give you feedback on your written lesson plan and teaching process in view of your observation task given to me before the lesson.

You'll have the opportunity to mention factors for success being evaluated on your own given standards.

Afterwards you will study more deeply on the factors for success, reflect on central questions, and find out about their effects on the teaching process in practice.

Thereupon you will frame benchmarks where to improve your teaching strategies.

On this basis you'll have the opportunity to note down your first steps.

I will finally appreciate your strengths – possibly with you mentor – and speculate on further areas where your strengths could be furthermore used efficiently.

Reciprocal feedback on the contemplation process terminates the process. Your mentor will be invited as well.

#### **Written reflection of a lesson combining theory and practice**

At home you will finally reflect on the teaching process based on the results of the feedback on development, your own cognitions as well as relevant literature.

For this purpose you will receive your videotape after the advising process, my notes that you can use for your written lesson reflection in your development portfolio. You will be allowed to make photocopies or use parts of them. Please hand my notes back to me (the latest by two weeks).

### **Proposition of separate professional advising**

In a non-graded process we can work to, consolidate and solidify your wishes for modification referring to your questions and material. There will be the opportunity for professional guidance as well as professional advice from me either in a module session or a working session. This phase can be seen as a specific training session, which is non graded because of your entering the learning process again.

The resource oriented advising can be followed by professional expert advising – but **only** if you want to use this option. It will be based on a concrete realization of your specific wishes for modification. It refers furthermore to the subject matter and the material being used (and which should be available). Here you can ask for specific professional advice, contrary to the structured conversation techniques in resource oriented advising the professional expert advising is based on your questions and the structure you will need. Here I will give advice and recommendation. It can take place in a module session or a working session. According to my valuation of your current state of learning in your teacher training program I will keep the opportunity to recommend professional expert advising.

### **2 Personal preparing the reflection of classroom education at home**

On reflection of their instruction the teacher students are invited to prepare themselves by the following paper even before the lesson.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Paper: Preparation of your teaching contemplation**

In order to prepare your lesson already in your planning phase – in other words in a relatively relaxed atmosphere – you can check your lesson plan with the help of the following questionnaire and respectively anticipate your teaching contemplation. You can furthermore frame an individual observation task for the lesson you have planned.

#### **Contemplation of a learning-conducive feedback process**

Starting the process you can ask yourself: "If I can say at the end of my feedback teaching process: 'This given feedback was good!' – What should have happened during the process? And What can I do to support it?" Write your thoughts down into your portfolio.

### **1. My Learning-Portfolio for my teaching process (data)**

#### **Record of my perceptions**

When was I successful?

How did I feel as conductor of the learning process: during the preparation phase, two minutes before the start of the lesson, during the introduction phase of the lesson, during the teaching process?

How did I feel about my complete learning group, my topic and the structure of the lesson?

Which atmosphere, feelings, thoughts, fantasies, awareness of my body did you recognize?

I note down my recollections and perceptions, but do not evaluate them yet.

### **Record of my (lesson) topic**

What was important to me according to the topic?

What was additionally important according to subject matter?

What was my/our topic called precisely? What effect did the topic have on me and my students?

How did I introduce the topic?

How did it develop during the teaching process?

Which elements did my students take up, which did they not take up?

What left untreated?

### **Record of the learning process of the learning group**

How did my students work together with me?

How did we encourage each other according to our targets (teaching and learning)?

How did I experience their working process?

I try to see things from the students' perspective, how could they have experienced the learning process? How did they cope with their classmates, with the topic, the subject matter, the questions, the structure of the teaching process?

Which differences could I observe during the working process and the outcome?

### **Record of the working structure**

Which structures (methods, techniques, interventions ...) did I use?

What was their effect on my students?

Was the provided material conducive?

How did the sequence of the working structures contribute to the success?

How did I introduce particular structures?

How did my students react on them?

Which learning potential did material and media contain?

How was the working atmosphere?

### **Record of environmental influences on the learning process**

Which external factors did affect my/our teaching process?

Which ideas and considerations did occur during the working process, how I/we would like to represent ourselves?

## **2 Perception of my Teaching**

How did I conduct myself according to acting and admission?  
What did I do precisely in order to succeed in my teaching process?  
Where could my students have recognized that the teaching process was successful?  
How can I now recognize that my teaching process was successful according to my lesson plan? Were there unexpected factors that influenced the success?  
What were these factors that contributed to the success?

What did I not achieve as expected?  
What exactly happened at this moment to me, the learning group, the subject matter, the structure?  
What could my students have mentioned what they had needed at this moment?  
Why did they not mention it?  
What do I know now? What would they have needed to achieve the target?  
Which were the factors that restrained my teaching?  
What were the factors that facilitated it?  
How could I recognize these factors in advance?  
Which alternatives are appropriate to such a situation?  
How could I already proceed in my planning phase?

## **3 My perception concerns**

On which particular aspects should my training teacher focus on?  
On which particular aspects should my mentor focus on?

## **4 My conclusions drawn from contemplation and feedback**

Which teaching methods do I want to change/improve?  
How can I recognize that I succeeded?  
When will I have reached the target?  
Which will be my first steps?

## **5 Feedback to my training teacher on the contemplation process**

Compare classroom leadership instruments PEUKERT in: REICH (ed.) (2009).

### **2.3 Plan for the self-advising process with supporting questions (3<sup>rd</sup> paper)**

(Guidance to counseling techniques only for trainers by Walter SPIESS, 2000)

If the teacher trainer uses the following questions he can bring the teacher student in a deeper self-advising process. After using the paper sometimes you will get free in the phrasing of the questions. Sometimes it is helpful to create a small dialogue to the teacher student in which you can explain the function of the question. So he will understand the intension of the question and the process will get more fluid. But in general it is better to the self-advising process to restrain the own speech input.

**Table 1: Development oriented counseling**

1	Expectations for the current conversation	At the end of the counseling what should have happened to you to say "It was worthwhile."?
	In case of a following conversation	What changes in your teaching strategies have been made since our last counseling?
		How could you recognize these apparent changes?
	First counseling	
2	Induction via animation questions	When you think about improvement of your teaching strategies: What does already work well? If you reflect further on ... where you have already succeeded...
3	Reality-Testing via indicators	How can you recognize your successful teaching strategies? What do you do that your students can accept it? What would your students say? If I were your colleague what could I report?
4	Analysis of factors of success: detailed questions on status quo: Sustainability, efficiency and attitude (moral) depend on detail. Requesting detail offers further depth, attendance at the lesson is not even necessary – important for counseling in BRB-module	What exactly did you do in your lesson to make the improvement? What exactly did you do in the phase of your lesson in which you improved your teaching strategies? What did you feel when you realized your improvement? What did you think when you realized your improvement?
5	Analysis of conducive moments of understanding and the creative idea	How did the idea come to your mind? Where did this idea come from and how did you know about its success? How did you know about what to do exactly? What did you do to recognize the vital spark?

6	Concept of future competencies using: self-fulfilling prophecy. Asking chronologically questions in interaction	What would be the most significant feature to realize your improvement? Imagine being very good at doing something, how would you recognize it? What would it look like in concrete terms? When would you realize your improvement? What will happen in the meantime?
7	Circular questions via change in perspective	If you asked your students: How could they recognize your improvement in your teaching? What would they say how you act? If you asked your mentor ...
8	Analysis of development of strengths : looking at similar situations in his/her biography	What did you do to improve your teaching? How did you improve? Was there any key moment? Which life experience could have contributed to your success?
9	Developing a target agreement with oneself: Search for current moments of future strengths. Using scale of status quo in your self-evaluation	Which competence would you like to improve in the course of your training?
10		Where would your competence be rated now on a scale (1 – 10) (1= low, 10 = high)
11		What would you like to achieve with reference to the scale?
12	Ascertainment of anticipated strengths via indicators	How would realize that you have reached the target? How would you implement the designated competence in practice? What could your students realize? What could I realize during my next visit?
13	Establishing a way of learning: Aiming at time and situation to reach the designated competence Question about When? and Where?	When would you like to have reached your target? Please set a date, a period in your training resp. a crucial point in time in the school year
14	Focusing quality aspects	What should happen between today and the required point in time to reach the designated target?
15	Undertaking of tasks	What should you contribute to a successful achievement of the target?
16	Including accompanying support	What should you discuss in detail with me?

17	Taking over responsibility	How would you motivate yourself to implement your designated target?
18	Ascertainment	What would you decide to do first?
19	Intermezzo: The trainee teacher leaves the room for about 5-10 min	With your mentor I'd like to find out about further competencies we both have observed.
	Opportunity to accept a specific role / specific tasks by the mentor in counseling	Focusing additional strengths being observed by the trainer and mentor
20	Being called in again: information on additional strengths observed by the mentor and trainer	Information on recognized strengths – Would you like a tip? Stay the way you are ... Continue to work on your teacher professionalism
21	Focusing on feedback with reference to the counseling	When you think of the beginning of the conversation what would you say is better now? In what way did you benefit from the counseling process?
22	Short silent reflection and feedback of trainee teacher and mentor as well as suggestions for the counseling process	The counseling process was ... I benefit from / have learnt .... I'd suggest ....
23	Appraisal of strengths of all participants being involved in the counseling process, their contribution to the working atmosphere and relativization of standards by the trainer	
24	Best wishes	

## **2.4 Realized Example of an advising process (as an original portfolio by a teacher student)**

### **Counseling based on individual resources**

**Address:** student teachers who attend the module (as part of their training programme) "Beratung, Reflexion, Berufsrolle" (BRB-module, translated title: Feedback, Reflection and Professional Role)

**Intension:** To evaluate and improve self efficacy

### **Personal strength**

**When reflecting your teaching as a student teacher: what can you achieve easily? What are you good at?**

- I'm capable of establishing a good relationship to my students of all ages. They tend to come and talk to me more often than to other teachers. This is a good basis. In the beginning I was having difficulties in deciding on the proper teaching methods. This has become easier. I can put myself in my students' position.
- I'm good and quick in planning lessons. My lessons aren't necessarily strictly planned. I don't see things too narrow. I have got my own opinions and can express them clearly.
- I feel empathy for my students. I like playacting with my students – in all my classes.
- I'm good at organizing things even if I feel exhausted sometimes. I can work through the night if necessary.
- I can achieve good results when working with visual material – pictures, drawings, photography.
- I get along well with my colleagues and feel confident among them. But I do not agree with everyone and everything, I can express my point of view. I'm not always pleased with my teaching. I don't believe everything others tell me about their teaching.

### **Reality-testing**

#### **What makes you realize that you are actually good at the above mentioned points?**

As far as working with methods and visual material is concerned I can say that I plan my lessons focussing on the intended learning objective. I try to do things the way I planned them. That does not always work but I'm flexible and I always achieve something. I anticipate my students' responses. Most of the time their responses tell me when to rearrange my planning. Compared to my student teachers'- colleagues I'm good at that! I talk a lot to experienced teachers. I have also been given the task to organize a reading competition. I am not afraid of asking questions. I like my tutor to be with me in my lessons in order to get a feedback. The opening of my lessons is usually good because I can create a situational context. I can also respond to individual spontaneous reactions of my students. I sometimes read professional literature but not enough because of the demands of my training. I'm not good at: reflecting and evaluating my teaching performance immediately after a teaching visitation (Unterrichtsbesuch). I can do so only after some contemplating.

As far as my relationship to my students is concerned I can say that not all of them are euphoric about me but sometimes I hear them say: „You are better than x or y“. The class I teach German in for example even asked the head of school to have me as their teacher. I am not too strict. I don't ask my students to remove their baseball-caps for example. They go to school voluntarily. By giving my students some room to express themselves they are willing to give me some. To me this is important. My colleagues sometimes say: “Well done – we can already give you some extra tasks, a cover lesson, this is going well. I have also taken part in mediation and accompanied a school trip. In fact, I have helped planning various school activities. Sometimes I hear them say: „Can you tell me how you did that in your teaching visitation? “.

The things I organize work. I'm never without my calendar, I note down everything. Strong discipline during the week helps me to have free weekends. I need that to relax and to recover. The teaching visitations are exhausting and there's a lot to organize around them – that needs time. But I can do it – still, that doesn't mean that there is nothing worth improving in Student Teaching.

My students enjoy role-plays. We plan and present them together. In class 11 (17 years old students) for example there are really good results. They found out on their own that “freezing” is a useful method. I can see on their faces when things need discussing. The younger students really have fun and tell me: “We have never done something like that before.”

Empathizing: A female student was following me all the time, she waited for me at the train station, wrote emails to me and she eventually poured her heart out to me. I only listened. She then told me: „You really helped me a lot.“ I was 14 once too! I also received letters: „We would like you to be our class teacher. Our present class teacher doesn’t really understand us. A younger teacher like you can understand us better.“ What counts is the final result. But I also demand something from my students. My tests are not too difficult and not too easy. I also moralize when students call each other „asshole“ or something like that. I don’t accept this! Knowledge is important but the way we behave and treat others as well.

### **The determinants of successful teaching**

**You told me that you are successful in understanding and establishing a good social context: Can you describe HOW you do this?**

My English-Module helped me a lot concerning the methods. It is clearly structured. I always apply the methods I learn there. It helps me to concentrate on the central theme. I rely on structures, read books on teaching methods and sometimes try them out. I encourage my students to be creative. They sometimes grumble because it is demanding. This is also true for the use of visual material in the classroom – I need that to achieve my aim.

As far as empathy is concerned I act intuitively– most of the time this is the right thing to do. There was a girl last week for example whose brother had just died. I felt I had to leave her alone. I would not expose students for their faults. This is why I prefer having conversations; I can then ask him or her to put himself (herself) in another person’s place. That’s good! This is how I make them more empathic. And this is also how I do it – I put myself in another’ person’s place.

I cannot organize anything without my calendar. I need it to plan my week, my lessons, my module-schedule, doctor’s appointments and I always need some space for spontaneous appointments. When my calendar is full, I say: „That’s it – no more appointments possible!“ I do not go out in the evening during the week. I draw strength from the weekends. My relationships to friends suffer a bit. But I meditate every morning. I get up at 5 o’clock to have half an hour for myself. I light a candle, sit on the sofa and think about my day. In the evening I sit down on my bed and look back at my day. Ten people live with me – so I have to be well organized. My time table helps me to stay calm.

I get along well with my students. But I am what I am, I am friendly, honest and direct (blushes) also in telling them how I feel, I can tell them things like: „Things aren’t working too well today“. I have to accept criticism, too. Normally I keep promises but sometimes I’m

totally out of it and forget it. My colleagues and students know that. I remain true to myself (she opens the window).

When reading a novel in my German lesson for example I like transforming significant parts into a dialogue and then acting it - for example in „Der Vorleser“ (translated title: The Reader). The students can playact a certain scene and find out things like: Why is this? I then ask the other students: What struck you while watching? This works fine.

I was lucky with my classes. Only in class 6 (12 years old children) things are sometimes rough. But I'm happy about the experience, I learn something there. But, it was straining.

### **Circular Questions**

**If you asked your students (or colleagues): How do they recognize that you are successful in the things mentioned above?**

**What would they say if asked how you do this?**

My students see that I'm self-confident, that's the way my colleagues see me, too. I am moody. My students know that things went well for me when I'm in a good mood. I'm happy about things I can do well. I ask my colleagues many questions. It was important for me to feel secure about things. I don't want to make a fool of myself. My students realize that I am competent – but they also realize if I'm not. I'm quite good in sensing things that go on between people, I perceive a lot of things. My students know that, too, they also know that I am quite strict about moral questions. I don't allow jokes about minorities for example. There is a little Chinese boy in my class, the other boys were tough on him once – I intervened and stopped it vigorously.

### **Analysis of the history of personal strengths**

**- How did you become so good?**

**- How did you realize that you've become good and successful?**

**- Is there a key-experience?**

There were many situations. My mother is like me. When I was a little school-girl there was a boy in my class with red hair and bad breath. I bullied him and proudly told my mother about it. She slapped me and said: „Put yourself in the boy's place!“ And my teacher from class 1 to 6 had a strong influence on me. There were many foreign students in my class. I realized then what to do, how to behave. I have been surrounded and influenced by tolerant people. My political views are my father's. The fact that I don't see things too narrow is due to the fact that I live with 10 people from different cultures. We are all individuals. Some teachers had a strong influence on me. I can see the difference between "right" and "wrong", somehow I feel it. I have learned not to reject other people's opinions from my mother and teachers. This is why I have always wanted to be a teacher. You stay young. Helping others is essential to me. I want to combine knowledge and humanity.

**Looking for future strong points and their sources  
-wherein do you want to improve?**

There is a clear answer:

Communication skills – conducting a conversation in class;  
documentation of results.

**Imagine a chart ranging from 1 to 10: 1 means: You are not capable of conducting a conversation, 10 means: You are very good at conducting a conversation: Where do you see yourself?**

a) I see myself between 5 and 6. Very often I interfere too quickly in class discussions and don't give my students the time they need to think and discuss things on their own. My tutor always gives me a sign then (hands on her throat).

**When do you want to be where?**

I can't make it until the end of my Student Teaching time; still I'd like to achieve 8/9. In order to achieve this I need my Student Teaching Time and 3 to 5 more years.

I'd like to become calmer, less nervous in teaching visitations when my headmaster is present. To be honest – I would like to impress my headmaster. I was at 3 concerning this at the moment and I'd like to be at 6/7. This should be the case at the day of my exam.

I'd like to get better in the way of presenting and documenting the results of a lesson. I see myself between 4 and 5 at the moment and would like to be at 9-10.

**How would you realize that you've moved forward on that chart?**

I start today. I tell myself: "Look at it, let's get going!" Everything else will happen slowly, bit by bit.

**What are your next steps?**

Often there is not enough time for me to anticipate things when conducting a discussion in class; this is why I interfere too often. If open questions lead to a substantial discussion I have taken another step. I have tried that once and will try it again.

Some time ago I felt I had to take notes on everything being said about the documentation of results at the end of a lesson. I feel more self-confident about that today.

I would realize if I felt more confident in the presence of my headmaster too. I have also told him that I feel insecure around him. I have to behave more self-assured around him. That would be a step forward.

I will work on 1 and 2 simultaneously, I need more time for the last one

### **Individual feedback of the teacher trainer and appreciation of the student teacher's strong points**

It has become quite obvious to me that you have considerable knowledge about good teaching and that you are competent in:

Dealing empathically with students, colleagues, other people in general, organizing your daily and professional life clearly and still being able to act spontaneously applying a large repertoire of teaching methods.

I think you will be successful in getting better in the above mentioned aspects even if you might need more time with dealing with your nervousness. I wish you all the best, patience and staying power.

#### **The teacher trainer's offer:**

Whenever you feel like asking me for pedagogical or methodical advice concerning your considerations on how to realize your plans, please do so. This would then be a counselling based on your concrete pedagogical question.

#### **The student-teacher's feedback:**

I felt comfortable during the consulting. I could think about my strong points which was positive and motivating. I did not have any problems with talking about myself. If I had more time I would do this more intensively. But I will go on thinking about it. A conversation like that is good as the training is sometimes hard. I felt respected.

#### **The trainer's feedback:**

I also think our conversation was good – first of all because you were able to accept the given structure, then because you really got involved, that was obvious to me. Our conversation was, this is my impression, useful for you. I could perceive your reflective skills. To me you seem to be an open person and dedicated to your work – which is why you were able to talk about aspects important to you. I wish you all the best for your training and your teaching.

### **2.5 Examples for feedback in the development-oriented consultancy-process of teacher students, their teacher mentors and in addition inspected teacher trainers before their nomination**

#### **Feedback from advised teacher students:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Person** It was good that I once had the time to get a clear head. There are usually only a few moments in which I manage that. The conversation was a vehicle to produce a stream for me. Usually there are few moments in which I experience this. Even a cup of tea in the afternoon does not trigger this.

I ask myself: Can I create a space for leisure for me? Because practically I can't, I will be responsible for 12 hours of lessons in school, thus there is no space for leisure. It would only be possible if I accept compromises in the quality of my lessons or in my own education. I have already experienced this in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade at school, when I took some time off at the expense of my own preparation. I became aware of the consequences and I had to take responsibility for my actions. Therefore, I don't see the possibility to enjoy my free time as long as I am still studying. Within the 45 minutes system, I cannot reach a profound level.

The conversation has been very pleasant. I identified the need to get things clear. It is rather difficult for me to find a person to talk on this level we have reached. One must know each other. The partner should have an appropriate knowledge as well as distance. He must not attempt solutions. This wouldn't help, but rather discourage me. This situation was given in the conversation. I have had no difficulties to get it straight before. Moreover, I was aware of my learning progress, but talking about it has helped me a lot nevertheless. Especially, because the conversation was outside the usual class we visit situation. Unfortunately, this is not part of the training. In my opinion this is a mistake. In order to make progress, efficient conversations should base on dialogues on an eye-to-eye level. Mentor and teacher trainee are not equal in fact, however, depending on the subject, I would prefer that. I feel it very useful that something like the development-oriented consultancy exists.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Person** The conversation was strongly structured. I already knew the structure and could therefore prepare myself well. However, I was surprised that you have been able to tickle so much out of me by asking "What else?". This helped me to organize my thoughts. I missed the fact that "my weakest point" was not part of the conversation. It was a nice process. I liked your restraint.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Person** I often focus too much on what has not worked out. Talking about the success helps me to be aware of my strengths. At the beginning, it was difficult to change the roles, even when we repeated it. However, it is useful to change roles in order to be conscious about my impression on others. This consultancy method was beneficial to me. I am interested in reading your minutes in order to prepare further reflections. It affected me deeply.

**4<sup>th</sup> Person** The consultancy method was very unusual. The focus lay on positive aspects. I reflected for a long time. In the course I had many ideas. After having left, I thought of many wishes for change. I liked the atmosphere.

**5<sup>th</sup> Person** I consider the class visit and the debriefing really important. I became aware of my strengths in a productive way. The presented models have shown me that my positive actions in class can be explained theoretically as well. Those were easy and at the same time logic and concrete with regard to the realization in class. The whole atmosphere was very open. I have been motivated to curiously face the new situations. Especially at the beginning of my teacher traineeship, I liked this consultancy method, because it reduces the fear with respect to evaluated future class visits. I know now what I am already good at and I have the opportunity to further work on my strengths.

### **Feedback from participating mentors:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Person** The counselling was fair. You encouraged the reflection intensely. The questions are fittingly to come into the connection. I felt well as you led the conversation.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Person** This is a well approach to watch on the lesson in a positive way. You can speak it out elsewhere only in a difficult way. However I don't feel good to demonstrate the strengths only by the example of only one lesson.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Person** It is helpful for the teacher students if you provide the backup information and notes you wrote on your sheets. To call for changeover the teacher student's outlook is very useful. It helped the teacher student in the reflecting process.

**4<sup>th</sup> Person** Elsewhere I underwent debriefings always in the way as the teacher students would stay among "wolves" and not in front of an advisor. This kind of debriefing gives courage. It outwears longer because the own wishes for change will help. The kind of education was not disaggregated. The identity of the teacher student was recognized as a whole.

I attached this procedure repeatedly on the inspection of instructors in training after asking their feedback. By this they learned the procedure to know. In the meanwhile they use it as well. They have got similar feedbacks from their teacher students as I did.

### **Feedback from advising instructors:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Person After the reflection about directing a class debriefing:** I've learned a lot about myself. The atmosphere was friendly and stress-free and we worked patiently. The tips on expected skills were very supportive.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Person After the reflection about directing a class debriefing:** I liked the fact that we began by talking about the teacher's strengths. We spoke mainly about positive aspects, this promotes confidence. I find it difficult to scale the aspects that I want to be changed, because it seems highly technical if there are more than three of it. I missed your perspective on the aspects, because you only asked me, when you did not relate them to your feedback.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Person After the reflection about directing a module working session:** The questions were challenging for me, however, I was able to broaden my repertory of actions. Coping with negative criteria is easier for me now. It was good that I worked again with the group with regard to the crucial point we had. The conversation has encouraged me to bring in my calm and contemplative character in this group. The feedback was effective.

**4<sup>th</sup> Person After the reflection about directing a class debriefing:** Concerning the last three points that I considered improvable, I named aspects, which I have never entirely thought through. Now, after discussing it in the consultation, I substantiated those. This will help me in my work. It helps me to operationalize those competences that I consider improvable by defining quantities and a time framework. I found it difficult to express the positive aspects in the situation. You continued asking "What else?". In fact, I wanted to begin talking about negative factors and just like the teacher trainees I intended discussing critical points. It was good to start with positive criticism and touch upon improvable aspects later. However, it was difficult to receive only impulses instead of real feedback. It inspired me to reflect, because positive feedback tends to interrupt the self-reflection-process. It felt like a

monologue that was stimulated whenever it stalled. It was a confidential atmosphere. This is why I talked honestly and proceeded my own way. In addition, I learnt to listen to my inner voice. It was not only drawing a balance, but rather a further opening with respect to my future work.

### **3 Summarizing a brief assessment**

This method is in use since 2006 in the unevaluated part of the training. The presented feedback above depicts substantially the usually expressed one. In general I received almost exclusively positive feedback. In some cases, the consulted persons felt hard to reflect about successful moments. This is the problematic point in this process. Usually, they were able to overcome this point. The process is difficult to implement when the teacher trainee tries to work only objectively, avoiding reach the level of relationship. They allow a strong dependence from the trainer as an instructor and want to hear negative criticism from him. It seems to be that they do not trust the secure situation. However, I experienced this only twice in all the years. Hence, this method has a high potential for reflection and is useful to work on a teacher's behaviour. By now some other colleagues use it as well.

Counseling in the unvalued modules after SPIESS (2000) is beneficial indeed but induces no problem of acceptance by the teacher students. In contrast it is difficult to practice it in the valued modules. Since some years I modified the process also for valued modules like "Diagnostizieren, Foedern, Beurteilen" (DFB-module, translated title: Diagnosing, Encouraging, Evaluating). In this case the chance is due to the fact that the valuation of the written concept of the lesson and the lesson itself is done with criteria the teacher student knows before. Instead of telling him the result before the counseling process the mark is written but hidden. So the teacher student is not constrained to behave strategically to get a better mark by uttering that what he means the teacher trainer wants to hear. By disjunction of valuation and counseling phases in the debriefing accordingly to the pedagogical encouraging-circle I found a procedure of successful counseling to which the teacher students agree, take to the process, and feel it beneficial although they know that they will be valued by the same teacher trainer. The procedure includes five parts:

1 A written concept of the lesson for evaluation of the planning competence (The mark remains hidden.).

2 Performance of teaching the lesson (I find the mark by the present. After hearing the uninterrupted comment by the teacher student I verify and fix it and keep it hidden. In this phase I do not ask any question and give no advices.).

3 The following part includes the development oriented counselling as described above (This remains unevaluated because it is my duty to give advices to the teacher students. Thus there is no reason for the teacher student to react strategically. He feels free to get involved with the teacher trainer and with personal aspects.).

4 At the end of the counselling process I offer a separate expert advice which will be done if the teacher trainer grasps the nettle of calling me and bringing his questions and material to me. Otherwise he will not get any farther advice (This remains unvalued too because I have to educate the teacher students.).

5 The teacher student is requested to write a written conclusion based on the counseling and reflection process within 14 days on two pages. This conclusion is only reasonable if the teacher student deals his conclusion with immediately use for the next lesson or next unit

or the next time with the class (Upon this paper the teacher student gets the 3<sup>rd</sup> mark of his teaching performance.).

This kind of disjunction of the phases of the counseling, advising and evaluation procedure shaped up as very effectively. If you have only one possibility of teaching visitation so this single visitation has to achieve the highest efficiency factor of teacher training. I am going into detail on this setting of counseling in a further publication.

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