www.rigeo.org ISSN: 2146-0353
RIGE
Review of International Geographical Education Online
Review of International Geographical Education Online (RIGEO), 2015, **5**(3), 274-292

The Challenge to Change (?) Geography Teaching From a Number of Perspectives Offered By Polish Student-Teachers at the University of Gdańsk

Teresa SADOŃ-OSOWIECKA
University of Gdańsk, POLAND[1]
Martin BLASZK
University of Gdańsk, POLAND[2]

Abstract

The author interprets comments made by student-teachers given during interviews, as well as notes written in their teaching practice journals, made during or completed shortly after their practices in school. The background to these interpretations are official documents (e.g. the Polish Standards for Teacher Education, the Polish National Curriculum) and theories of learning and teaching (constructivist vs behaviorist). The main questions asked are what knowledge is important for young teachers and how they want to teach it. Other questions include: What possibilities does school give them to try out their ideas about teaching? What does school actually give them? What does school demand of them? What do their practices at school actually teach them (the tacit programmme)? And, how do the students actually view the reality that exists in school? Overall, the student's impressions show school to be a very formal organisation, where the teacher-trainer decides on the content of lessons, methods of learning and the course of lessons ("for the good of pupils"). In many cases too, the students only realise their teacher's ideas. In such a situation, this raises the question of whether or not they will be able to provide innovative education if they cannot themselves attempt to implement their own ideas.

Keywords: Geography teacher education, concepts of teaching and learning, student's personal knowledge about teaching

[1]**Corresponding author:** Dr.; Institute of Geography, University of Gdańsk, Bażyńskiego 4, 80-952 Gdańsk, Poland, geotso [at] ug.edu.pl
[2]MA, Institute of English and American Studies, University of Gdańsk, Bażyńskiego 8, 80-309 Gdańsk, Poland, Brcmart [at] ug.edu.pl
Original Research Article; Received 23 February 2015; Accepted 17 October 2015

Introduction

Teaching practices in school play a significant role in the education of future teachers. However, we rarely understand that today's students, as teachers in the future, may experience situations that will be completely different to those which they met during their practices (for instance, changes in law, educational policy, the expectations of society), as well as deal with pupils who are growing up in a different time, and in a changing culture. As part of this too, their pupils will use technology which was not available when the students were carrying out their teaching practices, so that they (the pupils) will have a different understanding of the world and function differently in it, including the way they think. As a result, this may change the whole of the context known to the students up to that time in areas such as culture, society, politics and the economy. Additionally, what we today accept as an obvious part of the twenty-first century may already be out of date by the time the students are established as teachers. And, even though we are aware of the dynamic changes taking place in the contemporary world, we pay too little attention to the critical competence and intellectual openness of future teachers, which would allow for a flexible approach to teaching in constantly changing contexts.

Along with changes in how the world functions and how people live in it, there are also additional changes in scientific theories – psychological, pedagogical, as well as geographical, which today's students will be teaching in the future. For, as Morgan has said in relation to the situation in Britain: "What makes a 'good' geography teacher and to be a good teacher 20-30 years ago does not necessarily apply today" (Morgan, 2010, as quoted in Biddulph, Lambert and Balderstone, 2015, p. 303). While Butt presents similar ideas concerning the contemporary teaching of geography: "geography educators should adopt a 'futures' perspective to their teaching and to their students' learning. One of the most trenchant criticisms of school geography is that it is too static and 'backward looking' (Butt, 2011, p. 4). To illustrate the difference between the approach to teaching in the very stable world of the past, and that of the present, which is changing at a whirlwind speed, Bauman (2012) used the following metaphors: the ballistic missile, which locks onto a defined, unmoving target and follows a definite route (education in the modernist world), and an intelligent missile that follows a moving target which constantly changes its direction (education in the contemporary, complicated and unstable world). As Bauman states: "What the 'brains' of smart missiles must never forget is that the knowledge they acquire is eminently disposable, good only until further notice and of only temporary usefulness, and that the warrant of success is not to overlook the moment when acquired knowledge is of no more use and needs to be thrown away, forgotten, and replaced (Bauman, 2012, pp. 18-19).

In such a situation then, it is difficult to establish a strict set of rules for the education of future teachers, whose task may not only be to follow the changes, but even to foresee or provoke them, as well as bring to bear critical reflection over their own educational activity. Indeed, this is a concern of geography teacher education in Britain at the moment (see: Biddulph, Lambert and Balderstone, 2015; Lambert and Jones,

2014; Young, Lambert, Roberts and Roberts, 2014) while in Poland it is rarely written about.

This being the case, can pedagogical practice in school support the student, preparing them to cope with an unforeseeable future and establish a basic critical thinking in the teaching of geography, allowing for those necessary changes? Indeed, can teaching practices cause the necessary changes in education; not for the sake of reform alone, but to ensure that the future pupils of today's students will understand the world of the future better and be able to function in it accordingly?

To start with then, in relation to educating teachers, it is perhaps worthwhile thinking about what we actually want teaching to be:

(1) Is it to be a profession like a lawyer or a doctor (Kincheloe, 1993), based upon solid scientific knowledge, serving the analysis of personal experience, even though the experience of school practice is always new, unrepeatable, being in its own way a form of art? Professional knowledge, therefore, although it derives from scientific knowledge, is based upon a different type of rationality – demanding improvisation and intuition (Mizerek, 1999), it is, indeed, a searching for knowledge similar to that of the "reflective practitioner" of Schon (1983). It can also be a continuous interpretation and imparting of meaning to the world, helping to bring up pupils as future, thinking, and active citizens - the "transformative intellectual" (Giroux, 1988), or the "postpositive practitioner" (Kincheloe, 1993). Indeed, this teacher could lead the pupils to educational Future 3 – beyond transmitted facts to 'powerful knowledge': "schools and teachers have to help students go beyond and sometimes resist the cultural forces that they experience everyday" (Young, 2014, p.18). The geography teachers' role is very important in a complex world: "we are in the business of helping students to make sense of the world as it is, to enable them to see it in new ways and to gain the confidence to believe they could even change it" (Morgan and Lambert, 2005).

(2) Is it to be an occupation like a librarian or a social worker (Kincheloe, 1993), based upon the implementation of procedures necessary to the mastering of a method of trial and error – a routine activity, a learnt method, without the need for deeper reflection; an occupation which only relies upon the fulfilling of demands and orders from a higher power, an uncritical application of instructions taken from a methodological handbook, written by someone wiser (or so it is believed by the teacher), with a feeling of limited influence (although here that influence is completely lacking) on what and how to teach (Mizerek, 1999; Kincheloe, 1993); "a constricted view of teacher intellect through emphasis on teaching as technique, an extreme form of individualism, teacher dependence on experts, acceptance of hierarchy, a consumer or "banking" view of teaching and learning …, a limited commitment to the betterment of the educational community and a conservative survivalist mentality among novice teachers" (Bullough and Gitlin, 1991, p. 38)?

From these perspectives, the possibilities for students to observe the emancipatory activity of mature teachers, as well as the possibilities and the will to institute change by

the student-teachers themselves, especially in terms of the realities of the classroom, were viewed. Questions helpful in establishing the issues important for finding out about the possibility of critical reflection in students taking part in school life were:

- What knowledge is important for young teachers and how do they want to teach it?
- What possibilities does the school give them for trying out their personal ideas about teaching?
- What does the school demand of them?
- What does the practice in school teach them ("the tacit programmme")?
- How do the students see the reality of the school?

In addition to this, inquiring into the functioning of the students cannot only be governed by the formal frameworks through which they will act: the laws governing education, the programme of study, or the Polish national curriculum. It is also understood that to these particular frameworks, the students will bring their own preconceptions and personal knowledge relating to learning and teaching (see Majcher&Sadoń-Osowiecka, 2007). These come from the whole of their lives: their own experience and that gained in their home environment; their almost fifteen years experience as pupils and then students; things they have seen in the media; and last, but not least (we can only hope) – educational theory. In this way, during their practices, a personally constructed pedagogical theory (being the sum of all of the above), having the character of naïve theory or folk pedagogy, meets with the personal educational theory of the mento, so that as Bruner has written:

> *... in theorising about the pratice of education in the classroom ..., you had better take into account the folk theories that those engaged in teaching and learning already have. For any innovation that you, as a 'proper' pedagogical theorist, may wish to introduce will have to compete with, replace, or otherwise modify the folk theories that already guide both teachers and pupils (Bruner, 1996, p. 46).*

At the same time, it is well worth remembering that previously acquired knowledge is difficult to change. Indeed, it has been proven that we normally accept that which is confirmed by our point of view up to the present time, rejecting that which does not match our previously acquired knowledge (Mietzel, 2002, pp. 57-61).

Methodology

The problem presented in the title which relates to the possibilities for change in the teaching of geography from the perspective of the Polish student-teacher, and with regard to the theoretical assumptions given in the introduction, is best explored using the interpretive paradigm of qualitative research; an approach which allows the subject of the research project to be treated in as broad a context as possible. Contrary to this, it may seem that the simplest way to gain answers to the problem presented would be to carry out an appropriately constructed survey, which would "objectively" show what the students think in relation to the subject. However, the answers to such a survey would only be declarative, and not supported by the day-to-day practice of teaching. Such a

choice, therefore, would reduce the problem, without showing its complexity and the context from which it arises.

In addition to this, the problem presented in the title is not straightforward, having one particular answer or meaning, because education, understood as a phenomenon or practice, is immersed in a fuzzy set of processes (Wortham and Jackson, 2008). Therefore, the way in which students perceive the teaching of geography may impose conditions on the flexibility of their development, criticism, and the implementation of changes. This depends, among other things, on the culture of education, resulting from social-historical conditions (Bruner, 1996), the institutional frameworks that exist, which are so taken for granted that they have become a form of transparent habitus, one which in an unforeseen way, dictates the way reality is seen (Bourdieu, 1999). With regard to this, a constructivist perspective allows for a view of how the students construct their identities as teachers, in what particular contexts, and what role their pedagogical practices play in that role.

The character of student knowledge concerning education may show itself in the activities of the students, their own narratives about the course of their pedagogical practices, as well as the artifacts which are created by them, documenting their work. In connection with this, the researcher in this particular case is not an "objective", external observer. Rather, as a person leading pedagogical-psychological lessons for those students studying geography and specialising in teaching, they are also taking part in the same educational process. In addition, they observe from the inside those processes in which the students' concepts of education emerge. It being a conscious limiting of perspectives through the application of theoretical knowledge, their own ideas concerning what "good" education is, the educating of teachers, the meaning of geography for them as a school subject, and the way it may be taught, as well as something which ties all of these areas together, a certain degree of indoctrination which the students go through.

Interpretation was made of the comments provided by students of geography at the University of Gdańsk during the course of their pedagogical practices, as well as entries in the practice journals they had created. The latter included descriptions of the lessons they observed carried out by their mentors, as well as descriptions of their own activity during their practices, and their reflection relating to it. Students prepared their diaries (practical journals) during their practices at the school. Additionally, the research was undertaken with the co-operation of students of geography with a specialisation in teaching who were carrying out their teaching practices in the years 2012-2014. In this sense this research was ethnographic: "the social actors who write such documents and the social actors who read (…) them bring to bear their knowledge – often tacit – of the conventions that go into their productions and receptions" (Atkinson and Coffey, 2011, p. 84). In relation to this, 120 diaries of Masters degree students were analysed after their third (45 hours) and fourth (45 hours) period of practice at the school (altogether 5400 hours of geography lessons observed and conducted by students).

The diaries were studied as a text in the traditional way – for their content and their use of language. For interpretation and analysis, grounded theory in its contemporary

sense was used (Charmaz and Bryant, 2011). As a researcher, we also simultaneously analyzed our data collection (notes from diaries) and correlated them into categories. The first categories were based on existing theoretical frames: reflective practitioner, postpositive practitioner, transformative intellectual, and technician. However, on comparing the data with the codes, we decided that these categories should be tentative only. During the process of analysing and comparing data with the codes, and these with other codes, new and more fitting categories were created. When these properties were eventually saturated with data we integrated our analyses (see: Charmaz and Bryant, 2011, p. 292). To better understand the processes, we decided we must show their context and as a result of this, divided categories for acting teachers were created.

During the course of analysis, categories emerged concerning the students' attitudes, and supporting a critical view of the realities of teaching geography leading to change.

The formal framework of teacher education in Poland

The training of teachers in Poland is regulated by standards for education relating to preparation to the profession of teaching (*Ministry of Science and Higher Education*, 2012). This contains a description of the effects of teacher training, as well as a description of the process and organisation of that education. This among other things contains: the minimum number of hours to be carried out, and the number of points (ECTS) to be received for each part of the practices (for example, general psychological-pedagogical preparation – 90 hours; psychological-pedagogical preparation for a particular level of education– 60 hours; first practice – 30 hours; basic didactics – 30 hours; subject didactics, in this case geography – 90 hours; second practice – 120 hours), as well as a detailed description of the contents of each part. In the regulations for the standards it is written that the education of teachers of geography on their second level of studies (MA level) should take place in, as well as prepare student-teachers to work in, schools at lower and higher secondary levels. According to the standards, the aim of this second practice (120 hours), which itself is open to interpretation, is:

> *the gathering of experience connected to work of a didactical-educational nature and a comparison with the knowledge gained during didactics training for a particular subject (teaching methodology) and the realities of teaching through partaking in the practices. (Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2012)*

Abstracting away from what actually takes place during the education of teachers, if we were to treat the content and form of the standards as a curriculum, it would be possible to classify it as collection code according to Bernstein (1975). Something which, characteristically, shows culture; in this particular case, a transmission of the culture of education, where a definite and rigid collection of information and skills, the things necessary to teachers according to the authors of the standards, become a form of educational framework. In doing so, according to Bernstein, they thus regulate the choice, organisation and co-ordination of knowledge, thereby fitting into the framework of a given area of work. Such an accommodation also serves to reinforce a given order and reproduce habitus in the understanding Bordieu attributes to it. However, the recommendations in the standards, according to which “the education of teachers ought

to be an integral whole designed so that theoretical knowledge stands as a basis for the gaining of the practical skills necessary to the carrying out of the the profession of teacher", may point to integrated code, giving greater freedom in the choice of the content and its ordering; although the rigid content and definite number of hours written for each part of the practices may, at least in formal terms, restrict the freedom of choosing or connecting, as well as deeper analysis of the problems encountered. This does not mean that my aim here is to negate the value of the content given in the standards, nor the role of theory, rather it is an attempt to uncover the educational ideologies that lie at the core of the standards, and which may have an influence on the critical competencies of future teachers and school education.

The formulations, "so that theoretical knowledge becomes the basis for gaining practical skills", and "the comparison of … knowledge with … pedagogical reality", points to how the theory presented during academic lessons should be used in practice. It is important to stress here, however, that pedagogical theory cannot be subject to implementation, as "it is rather, the basis for understanding pedagogical reality, its interpretation, and definition" (Kwiatkowska, 2008, p. 104). The real problem is then, that the standards direct teacher education towards an instrumental-technological current in education, which has its source in behaviourism, and which emphasises a particular method of teaching: the learning of routine procedures of behaviour, which are supposed to produce measurable effects. Indeed, there is nothing written in the standards allowing for alternative concepts of education or educational philosophies. At the same time, Schön's concept of "reflective practice", calls into question technical rationality applied to relations between people having any kind of place during educational processes:

> *standardised knowledge is knowledge useful in the solving of problems of that same type. A tried and tested way of doing things becoming universal for all similar problems. This does not work, however, in pedagogical activity, where the teacher does not solve problems which are identical or even similar (Kwiatkowska, 2008, p. 68).*

In relation to this, it is therefore "difficult in professional education to show theories that in there implementation have actually been an unfailing success" (Kwiatkowska, 2008, p. 68). Going even further, Combs (1978) negates any form of standardisation in the education of teachers, which would in any way try to unify their different characters. He also calls into question the implementation "from above" of a programme for the education of teachers, as such a programme will stand in the way of the students' independent assignment of meanings and interdisciplinary thinking, connecting together psychological, pedagogical, philosophical and sociological knowledge (Kwiatkowska, 2008, p.93), and, as teachers of geography, geographical knowledge.

With such doubts in mind, the programme for educating teachers of geography in the Institute of Geography at the University of Gdańsk was agreed upon, being a compromise between the legally established framework of the standards, economic conditions and, to a lesser degree, personal beliefs. The course of teacher education based upon the standards, which are obligatory, is presented in table 1. It shows how

theoretical subjects are connected to pedagogical practices. In semester 1, the general pedagogical practices are linked to subjects which are part of an overall psychological-pedagogical preparation. In semester 2, parallel to a theoretical preparation in didactics, practices are carried out which include the observation of geography lessons taught in schools and by teachers who are specially chosen. During this time, the observed events are described and discussed with the students with a concentration on their interpretation. The choice of teachers and schools in each case is governed by the fact that they show the specific nature of each of the environments under observation and different styles of teaching. With regard to this, students during one round of practices observed lessons in a school of so-called "difficult youths", situated near to a juvenile detention centre and a child's home; a prestigious private school; and an "ordinary" school, placed within an equally ordinary housing estate. This gave the students the possibility to observe and then talk together with the teachers about their styles of teaching, very often revealing the specific character of the learners in a given class of pupils, while at the same time uncovering the covert educational ideologies governing the ways the teachers acted, the different actions and reactions of the learners, as well as the on going discussions concerning possible educational effects.

Table 1.

Pedagogical practices at the Faculty of Geography, University of Gdańsk - according to the Polish Standards of Teacher Education

Pedagogical practices at the Faculty of Geography, University of Gdańsk	**Parallel academic subjects**
I semester: educational practice in schools and other educational institutions (care of pupils, activities to activate pupils together with teachers) – 30 hours	Psychology - 60 hrs; Pedagogy - 60 hrs
II semester: observation of geography lessons (including discussion) – 30 hours	Bases of Didactics - 30 hrs; Didactics of Geography I - 60 hrs; Education Law – 15 hrs; Voice Emission – 15 hrs
III semester: geography lessons taught by student-teachers (2 x 45 hours)	Didactics of Geography II (30 hrs)

Pedagogical Practices as a Source of Student Knowledge about Teaching

The following sections of the article are based upon the comments of students after or during their pedagogical practices, when they were teaching lessons themselves, and in schools that they had chosen. The schools were mostly in the Tri-city conglomerate (Gdańsk/Sopot/Gdynia), and very often situated close by to where the students lived.

The Basic Models of the Mentor as a Pattern for Development

The views of the students concerning the pedagogical practices which they carried out are extremely varied. This was for a number of reasons: the individual character of each student and the personalities of the teachers; agreement (or not) on what geography actually is and what makes "good" teaching, as well as cognitive styles; the specific nature of each school, and, connected to this, the functioning of the pupils within the school. Meanwhile, the lessons observed by the students during their practices and the way the teachers acted may serve as an example for them to emulate, bringing either positive or negative results. Although from the viewpoint of critical thinking sometimes a negative example may also give positive results, as well as the opposite. For instance, following the example of a teacher who is perceived to be an authority due to his relations with pupils and his deep and flexible knowledge of geography, making it easy for him to elucidate complicated phenomena, may stand in the way of the student working out his own effective strategy. Therefore, copying the behaviour of a teacher who is an authority for both the pupils and the student teacher, may not always bring the desired results, and this may be for any number of reasons: the difference in character between the student and the teacher, the lack of experience of the student, a certain stiffness caused through stress, a lack of openness towards the pupils, a lack of geographical knowledge, or because of another way of thinking. Simply put, the student is someone other than the teacher.

Bearing in mind the above, based on the reactions of the students, a number of categories for the mentor were generated. These related to their styles of teaching, personal philosophy concerning education, methods of teaching and so on; that is, everything that for them has value as teachers. In this particular instance, the most important was the ways in which they treated the student teachers; whether or not they allowed or curbed initiatives taken by the students. The categories are as follows:

(1) Teacher-master (guide)
(2) Teacher all-knowing (authoritarian)
(3) Teacher-poser

It is worth noting here too, that establishing the categories is always a synthetic process and that in the practices the categories may intertwine or become mixed, depending on the context, so that sometimes the borders between them are fluid. The characteristics for the different categories are given below.

1. Teacher-Master

After her practices, a female student said: "I tried to be like Mr K., but it didn't work." In relation to this, it might be surmised that good results can only be had by working out one's own strategy. The mentor in this case was not dictatorial and did not demand that the student copied the way he worked. He was open and friendly. He also tried to motivate by being positive, praising the progress the students made; when, for instance, they were able to interest the pupils and add to their knowledge on a particular topic.

Sometimes the teachers showed their happiness at having the students present, and the fact that they were teaching lessons. Because, as they stated, the students could

bring some freshness to their (the teacher's) routine, which had perhaps become stale, and, in this case, present the experienced teachers with other strategies and methods of teaching. In addition, they were also critical with regard to the lessons they themselves taught, as well as those of the students. Moreover, when talking about the lessons that were being planned by the students, and which would then be taught, the relations they had were almost like a partnership. The ensuing dialogue was similar to that of equal partners, although one of them, the teacher, had greater experience and was treated by the students as a pedagogical authority. In this way, it is reminiscent of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, where the pupil-student, in this case a future teacher, learns from a very experienced colleague. The teachers allowed the student-teachers to try out different methods of teaching and then worked with them to find the possible cause of any problems they had **after** their use, without judging them beforehand. The result, therefore, was deeper reflection by the students concerning their own work.

2. Teacher All-Knowing (Authoritarian)

Usually, on the very first day, the students were told how to treat the pupils even though they (the students) had not yet met them. One of the students even received a list with the pupils' names with warning-labels to the effect of "well behaved / badly behaved". However, as it turned out, the "badly behaved" pupils, when the student treated them as "normal", started to be "well behaved". Meanwhile, other students were instructed by their mentors not to ask the pupils in one particular class about anything, because "they don't know anything, anyway". Or even: "dictate what they have to know, and then ask them about it". Generally speaking, the students ignored what their mentors told them and found that the pupils "knew" what they were talking about, especially as the lesson under question was about the weather. Sometimes, in talking about their practices, the students also talked about their relations with the pupils, who found it easier to relate to them because of their youth, openness and enthusiasm. This, in turn, made the students happy and helped them believe in their own predisposition towards teaching. Although, at the same time, they felt it awakened their mentor's jealousy, leading to a number of snide comments.

In addition to this, the all-knowing teacher is convinced of his own effectiveness, therefore, his teaching methods are strictly limited to those he believes are effective ("Don't try anything new because it will only spoil 'them' (the pupils)"). It would seem that the strategies of these teachers not only arise from their belief in their own effectiveness in relation to teaching the pupils, but also from an external factor. The teacher is obliged to realise the teaching programme (which is not always the same as teaching the pupils), which is checked scrupulously by the headmaster. It is good, therefore, to have a strategy which does not necessarily support the teaching of the pupils, but rather one that allows the teacher to "realise" a particular topic by "going through" the material as quickly as possible. One female student stated: "The teacher gives great lectures using multimedia, but the pupils don't do anything apart from listen and watch. No one takes notes. … Sometimes the teacher delivers two lectures in one teaching hour (45 minutes). … Once, there was a lecture on population. One pupil asked: "Can I say something about gypsies?" To which the teacher replied: "You can, but make it quick." Time in this type of school is the most important criteria for judging

the quality of work done. The pupil has to know quickly what (and why) he is expected to know something at any given moment, and not waste time problematising the issue by talking about other topics, even those which are extremely pertinent, because "now is not the time for it!"

The student was given specific instructions about the course of the lesson. His role was simply to realise it. This does not mean, however, that the students were criticising the behaviour of the teacher when they talked in this way. For them, such teachers were often authorities. At the same time, however, they took away the students' responsibilityfor making mistakes as well as any doubts they might have, teaching them the one correct way towards "effective teaching".

3. Teacher-Poser

This teacher does not want to lose face and so does everything not to let the student observe lessons with classes in which there "is trouble", because it would be better if no-one saw them. On the one hand, this way of thinking may relate to beliefs which have grown out of the behaviouristic myth concerning didactics; that mistakes, once they occur, will become reinforced. On the other hand, it may be a culture in Polish schooling geared towards "correctness" (a leftover from the *homo sovieticus* mentality perhaps*?*), where what counts are the effects one achieves and not how one got there, nor the conditions or the teaching environment that exist; the emphasis being on avoiding poor results and placing the blame on the teacher if something goes wrong. It may also, therefore, be an attempt at self-defence by the teacher. In addition to this, teachers sometimes interfere with the notes made by students who have observed their lessons. In such cases, they are unhappy if the student witnesses inappropriate behaviour by the pupils ("eating in the lesson", "not taking notice", "the students are bored"), believing that the student is describing behaviour that will reflect badly on them as the teacher, undermining their authority. In reality, however, such comments could be treated as the description of a critical event (Tripp, 1993), and in that way serve towards analysis of the situation, reflection, and even, perhaps, change. In one extreme case, a teacher asked the student to come and teach the lessons he (the teacher) had chosen, without carrying out any form of observation. Unfortunately, in such a case the student is then not able to grapple with any of the real problems of teaching, which is the greatest benefit of the practices, as he is not able to work out (and upon) his own strategies. Moreover, he does not learn how to analyse a situation and draw from it conclusions which will be helpful for his further practice. He learns instead a culture of posing.

"Models" of Students as Practising Teachers

Before the different categories for students carrying out their practices are given, it is worth noting how, on entering the school, they articulate their understanding of geography teaching within it. During their lessons at the University of Gdańsk, they meet different conceptions of the teaching of geography. A theme of one of their lessons, for example, is the formulation of their own programme for the teaching of geography. Prior to this, there is a discussion covering the topic. For me, as the person leading the lesson, it was interesting that even though the students were critical towards

the geographical education that was known to them, when it came to trying to create a programme with the obligatory language of "effects" and using the necessary operational verbs (identify, describe, classify, etc.), they were not able to give elements that would change that education; indeed, they ended up copying the scheme offered by the existing programme, keeping to the attitude which they had previously criticised. This is as if the language itself conditioned the rigid formulation of geography in school, which is based upon learning towards the task and not individual cognition and experimentation. In relation to this, it was proposed that they formulate their own "Manifesto for teaching geography", where they were allowed to use informal language to show their ideas.

As a result, in the manifestos, the following slogans can be found: "Away with the spade-like-pathology that uses the blunt instrument of the textbook to beat knowledge into heads", "An end to thoughtless teaching of geographical names and definitions, which are immediately forgotten, anyway!", "We think!", "Globes and atlases fall like rain on the pupils' benches!", "An end to tests which are limited to a problem to be solved and don't allow for your own interpretation of topics!", "We demand: … tangible knowledge and lessons that take place in the heart of nature!", "... that geography should be a strict science, but also refer to humanistic models!", "... the possibility for pupils to have more interpretive freedom in the knowledge gained!" All of these statements appear to be connected in some way (although not overtly and, most likely, unconsciously), to Dewey's progressivism, but also to a belief about teaching geography in the didactics of geography, which the students came into contact with during their studies. E. Romer (see: Chałubińska, 1954), and after him G. Wuttke (1957), and later J. Winklewski (1969), proposed teaching geography without textbooks, while W. Nałkowski (1887) proposed a "geography of understanding". Generally, in spite of this, for decades school geography has in practice ignored these conceptions, and colloquially speaking, functioned like a container full of names. It would seem therefore, that the slogans articulated by the students relating to the teaching of geography would be a challenge to instigate change, and would be reflected in their pedagogical practices.

In addition to this, the views of the students with regard to how geography is taught may also be influenced by the functioning of the teachers presented in the previous section, as well as a range of other causes. From analysis of what the students' said, as well as what they wrote in their teaching practice journals, the following categories were formulated with regard to their behaviour as student teachers, often different in type to what they declared in their "Manifestos":

(1) Realisers (engineers) – they realise the teacher's recommendations on how to act, the school programme, and what is written in the methodological handbooks to the letter. Their knowledge, both geographical and didactic, is fixed. They use so-called active methods, but they treat the descriptors as a systematic but unchanging set of instructions giving the desired effect in every situation. They believe that there is a universal solution to all of education's problems. They are also uncritical towards

their own performance and the results they achieve. They often rely upon their own experience as a pupil, copying the character type of "their" teacher.

(2) Rebels – they rebel against the older generation (especially teachers); they want to change everything. Without any form of reflection, they often reject the reality that surrounds them without any basis in theory. In addition to this, they do not agree to any form of interference from the teacher in the way that they carry out their practices. They only realise their own plans, but without reflecting on the effect they have generally, as well as on their pupils. Sometimes they realise a folk version of didactics and geography, using commonly known stereotypes; their knowledge is superficial, being the product of a particular type of "educational pop culture".

(3) Critics – reflective; they understand and are able to connect psychological and pedagogical theories with practice. They can also look at them critically and sometimes see the dissonance between theory and practice. This in turn helps them to look for their own solutions, which are applicable to the particulars of a chosen topic and individual pupils. Their knowledge (of both geography and didactics) is flexible and profound; critical towards both their own activity and that of the teachers, they are always searching for better solutions to the problems they encounter.

For realisers (engineers) their own work is important. They try very hard to look good in front of the teacher. They prepare materials and plan in detail what, when and how they are going to say something, as well as do things according to the instructions. In relation to this, they concentrate on what **they themselves** do, not really taking any notice of what and how the pupils are learning. Moreover, the pupils, according to the realisers, must learn, because everything has been prepared for them to do so. For the realisers, the following assumptions are characteristic:

"*All the assumptions were realised", "The lesson was very well done. I covered all the materials", "The class was polite and carried out all my orders". These students also stated that the pupils did not ask any unnecessary questions, and did not cause any problems with the tasks, their knowledge being shaped according to what the student-teacher had planned.*

"I was using active methods but they (the pupils) didn't want to learn"

"I prepared a presentation for them" (about demography, about a country, about volcanoes etc.) He draws attention to the fact that the main subject here is actually HIMSELF, preparing and then realising the lessons, which should be "absorbing" for the pupils, because the appropriate methods were used.

The realiser trainees also want to be prepared in detail to carry out the actual political demands of education in terms of the technical side. For instance, they want to be taught how to complete the necessary documentation, treating this as one of the most important competencies of a Polish teacher. On the one hand, this may suggest that there is a lack of opposition to the bureaucratic machine, intellectual passivity, and a lack of faith in their own ability to cope with a new, and up until this point, uncomplicated cognitive process. On the other hand, however, giving them (the trainees) everything, confirms

their belief in the pupils as equally passive, and who in turn must be treated in a similar fashion.

The "rebels" are against everything – the demands made upon the pupils, which in their opinion are excessive, as well as the teacher's inability to cope with the pupils (also only in their opinion), and the lack of discipline. They do not reflect deeply about teaching because, as far as they are concerned, it is simple. It is enough to use the appropriate methods, which, for some reason, the teacher (again, according to the rebels) does not possess. Knowledge of geography should also be uncomplicated, so that the pupils will assimilate it easily. Characteristically, there is a lack of reflection, as well as any reference to theory, or admittance of the possibility that they might make mistakes (in contrast to the teacher), as well as no awareness of the temporariness of their solutions. This is illustrated by the following comments:

"The teacher couldn't cope with discipline. I gave them some 'ones' (the lowest mark possible) and they were quiet." Here students show a lack of reflection on the long-term learning outcomes of such behaviour and the aims of school overall. Is it only about maintaining discipline and controlling the pupils, who will follow the instructions given for fear of being punished (training), or of building the pupils' interest and willingness to learn (educating)?

"Why do I have to teach them about it?" (e. g. the scale of maps). This comment may come from a lack of knowledge concerning geography and its role in school, as well as it being a subject which teaches us how to enquire into the environment, for which an understanding of the problem (scale) is a necessity. Furthermore, if the student does not see the sense in teaching such a problem, then it would be important for him to give his reasons.

"Why do they have to understand? They only have to use it." Sticking to teaching only facts, systematically, may work, but the pupils will only be able to use them successfully when the context is limited to that given in a lesson. Lack of a real understanding of the problem may in fact lead to an inability to apply the learned procedure or facts when the pupils are placed in non-standard situations. Investigating knowledge for oneself, although it takes more time, leads to greater flexibility and a deeper personal knowledge. Understanding gained in this way also allows for a critical stance towards those truths which are presented as the one and only way to see or do things; something which will allow the pupils to function in a democratic society. Meanwhile, the argument the rebels raise in defence of their own position is "Well, it's obvious that they (the pupils) don't understand it anyway!", "It's too difficult for them!" without really trying to see if the involvement of the pupils actually confirms such a belief. Such a lack of trust in the pupils may, at least in part, be the result of a lack of certainty in their own knowledge, of its shallowness, with the fear that they will be "unmasked" by the pupils.

The "rebels" are against the prevailing order of the school, without being able to offer any sensible propositions for change. Their behaviour is like the rebellion of the teenager, with its characteristic destruction of norms without any mature reflection concerning the sense of such change and its effects. In this way, the rebel also draws

attention to his egocentric nature, and his inability to try and understand the pupils. Ironically too, the trainee-rebels lay down their own norms, showing authoritarian behaviour – they are always right and know best how to act effectively. Additionally, and even though it might seem to be otherwise, the changes they propose are not in the best interests of education, rather they consolidate the position of the teacher, granting him an alleged declared power over both knowledge and pupils.

Paradoxically, the "realisers", with their strictly controlled external directives, and the "rebels", locked in by their own norms, are similar to one another in the way that they function in class. They only concentrate on realising their own aims, while the pupils are only more or less useful material making it possible for them to do so. And, in both cases, the most important person is the student-trainee. Indeed, this shows itself in the very noticeable use of "I" ("I did it", "I prepared it", "I must give them"), with the consequence that knowledge if it is to be "digestible" for pupils can only be presented in the way given by the students, which in turn supports cognitive passivity.

The critics are only similar to the rebels on the surface. In contrast, however, their criticism is the result of observation, thought and reflection concerning their actions and the ensuing consequences, as well as those of the mentor, who acts as a role-model, but not one to be emulated blindly. Their criticism results from the instigation of action which, in their opinion, may be unhelpful to the learners in the act of learning. The sign of such behaviour is the following comment: "The pupils are learning about landscape, but I have the feeling that they don't really understand what the teacher is talking about. Because of that, for the next lesson, I've prepared some photographs of those different landscapes, so they might see what the teacher was actually talking about." It is worth noting here that, similar to the "realisers", the student says she "prepared a presentation", but in this case, her preparation was the result of her analysis of the situation. The beginning of the comment may read like those of "realisers" made after many hours of teaching, however, the ending allows us to reach a different conclusion; that the student was not simply following a rigid plan as she wrote:

> *"Even though the teacher commented how difficult it was for even an experienced teacher to lead 8 lessons in one day, I didn't feel especially tired. Rather, I was satisfied that it went well and that I was able to do something different to what I had planned earlier, reacting spontaneously to the situation."*

Something similar can be seen in the following comments: "The pupils can't make notes by themselves" or "The pupils don't use atlases when they are learning geography." The consequences of this were attempts at learning how to make notes independently, and not something dictated by the teacher, as well as running a lesson in which the pupils discovered the value of maps in atlases as something worthwhile for themselves, and a way of independently constructing geographical knowledge. Sometimes thoughts concerning lessons which had just taken place also appeared: "Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know something.", "I presented facts and myths in a very schematic way", "I have to work on another way of actively involving the pupils". At the same time, they often feel joy and satisfaction at a lesson that is led differently. After a lesson doing fieldwork, a student feverishly wrote:

> "At last, the pupils had the chance to touch everything, to experience. To use maps outside and quickly see if they were right by looking around them. At last they had a chance to get dirty and wet, and experience contact with nature, whose laws are best understood in that way. Such a trip away from school awakens interest in the world and a hunger for knowledge."

Unfortunately, it is probably true to say that there are only really a few passionate "critics" amongst the students who will become future teachers of geography.

Conclusion and Discussion

The interpretation above of the comments of student teachers during their pedagogical practices gives only limited hope for change in the teaching of geography. This could be a consequence of reflection on the role of geographical knowledge in the contemporary world generally, social change, and also changes in the functioning of cognition of people at the present time. The attitude of the "critics", even though it awakens the greatest hope, does not allow for total change, however, and the possibility of going beyond the patterns of teaching known in schools. The rigidity of the basic programme and the timetable giving the amount of hours available to the subject of geography in school, as well as the way in which it is realised, means that there is a lack of time even to reproduce (and certainly not create) the prescribed content. From the comments made by the students, school also appears as an extremely formal organisation in which the student's mentor decides on the content of the lesson, the method of teaching (rarely, learning), and the course of the lesson ("for the good of the pupils"). The most important thing, however, is realisation of the programme, and not how the pupils understand the world and what tools are used to get to know those things that exist in the world. In a great many cases, the students only realise the ideas of the teacher, while the reigning belief is that valid knowledge is only to be found in the school textbook and the teaching programme, structured in one particular way - the correct way. This reinforces the existing state of geographical education and slows down any chance of change.

The functioning of the mentor ("authoritarian" and "the poser") may lead, at best, to an understanding of the profession of teaching as simply an occupation, serving the wishes of a higher power. Only the category of "teacher-master" may lead to an understanding of the teacher's role as that of a professional, using scientific knowledge as well as creating it ("reflexive practitioner"). It is difficult too, in the reality of school, to find a place for the "transformative intellectual". The students, not knowing any other culture of education, may not be able to imagine other forms of functioning for the school or the teacher. In addition to this, the different approaches to teaching geography which can be seen from the slogans the students used in their "Manifestos for the teaching of geography", will only ever be a form of myth or legend, however positive, if they cannot themselves experience them in school. Sadly, too, their meaning is lost in the protracted accustomization to one particular way of experiencing reality – met during the students own time at school and later confirmed during their practices. Most of the students, therefore, are left with their folk understanding of education, which does not; however, function as Bruner (1996) describes it and which is cited in the

introduction. Rather, the theory functioning in schools is that which is used by the authoritarian teachers and the posers, which is not based on a flexible knowledge applied to a particular situation (situations in schools are never standardised anyway), but rather principles that are always based upon a true, given, and decontextualised law. And, if the pupils do not follow them, then all the worse for the pupils. Only the teacher-master uses folk theories in the way understood by Bruner.

In relation to the above, among the students, the dominant attitude is to gain control over what exists ("realisers-engineers"). The "rebels" also try to fit in with the existing reality, adopting one simple route, the authoritarian, even though on the surface their demands may appear to be "rebellious".

In such a situation, it is the "critics" alone who are the greatest hope for change in geographical education, which would be change not simply for the sake of it, but because it arises from reflection concerning the things which are not working in the teaching of the subject. It is worth mentioning here, however, that the student-"critics", if they are to become transformative intellectuals, reflexive practitioners, or postpositive practitioners, have in front of them a long journey in search of knowledge, both from the practice of teaching itself, as well as science (which in the case of education also comes from reflection upon its practice). With regard to this, it is constantly worth remembering that changes in education are not only a question of changes in the methods of teaching, but also the whole way in which we think about education, and as part of this, about our conceptualisations of what both man and knowledge are (Klus-Stańska, 2010). This research can be treated as reflections upon geography teachers' education. It must be constantly inquired into, however, to be relevant to the contemporary world.

References

Atkinson P., Coffey A. (2011). Analysing Documentary Realities. In D.Silverman (Ed.) *Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). London: SAGE Publication.

Bauman, Z. (2012). *On Education. Conversations with Riccardo Mazzeo*. Cambridge: Polity Press Ltd.

Bernstein, B. B. (1975). *On the Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge. Class, Codes, and control* (vol. 3). London: Routledge and K. Paul.

Biddulph M., Lambert D. and Balderstone D. (2015). *Learning to Teach Geography in the Secondary School: A companion to school experience*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Bordieu, P. and Passeron, J.-C. (1990). *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: Sage.

Bruner, J. (1996). *The Culture of Education*. Harvard University Press.

Bullough, R. and Gilis, A. (1991). Educative communites and the development of the reflective practitioner. In B. Tabachnik and K. Zeichner (Eds). *Issues and practices in inquiry-oriented teacher education*. New York: The Falmer Press.

Butt G. (2011). Introduction. In Butt G. (ed.) *Geography, Education and the Future*. London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Chałubińska, A. (1954). *Różne drogi nauczania geografii*. Warszawa: PZWS.

Combs, A. W., Blume R. A., Newman A. J. and Wass, H. J. (1978). *The Professional Education of Teachers. A Humanistic Approach to Teacher Preparation*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon Inc.

Charmaz K. and Bryant A. (2011). Grounded Theory and Credibility. In D. Silverman (Ed.) *Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). London: SAGE Publication.

Giroux, H. (1988). *Teacher as Intellectuals: Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Learning*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Kincheloe, J. (1993). *Towards a Critical Politics of Teacher Thinking: Mapping the Postmodern*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Klus-Stańska, D. (2010). *Dydaktyka wobec chaosu pojęć i zdarzeń*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie ŻAK,.

Kwiatkowska, H. (2008). *Pedeutologia*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie I Profesjonalne.

Lambert D. and Jones M. (eds.) (2014). *Debates in Geography Education*. London – New York: Routledge.

Majcher, I. and Sadoń-Osowiecka, T. (2007). "Głową muru nie przebijesz" – refleksje nad studenckimi trudnościami z rekonstruowaniem wiedzy osobistej o nauczaniu. In M. Gwoździcka-Piotrowska, J. Wołejszo and A. Zduniak (Eds.), *Edukacja w społeczeństwie ryzyka. Bezpieczeństwo jako wartość*. *T. 3*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Bezpieczeństwa w Poznaniu.

Mietzel, G. (2002), *Psychologia kształcenia. Praktyczny podręcznik dla pedagogów i nauczycieli*. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Pedagogiczne.

Ministry of Science and Higher Education directive (2012, January 17). *Rozporządzenie Ministra Nauki I Szkolnictwa Wyższego z dnia 17 stycznia 2012 r. w sprawie standardów kształcenia przygotowującego do wykonywania zawodu nauczyciela* Retrived from: http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20120000131)

Mizerek, H. (1999). *Dyskursy współczesnej edukacji nauczycielskiej. Między tradycjonalizmem a ponowoczesnością*. Olsztyn: UniwersytetWarmińsko-Mazurski.

Morgan J. and Lambert D. (2005). *Geography: Teaching School Subjects 11-19*. London: Routledge.

Nałkowski, W. (1887). *Zarys geografji powszechnej (rozumowej).* Warszawa: Paprocki.

Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner*. New York: Basic Books.

Tripp, D. (1993). *Critical Incidents in Teaching: Developing professional judgement*. London: Routledge.

Winklewski, J. (1969). *Rysunek w nauczaniu geografii*. Warszawa: PZWS.

Wortham, S.and Jackson, K. (2008). Educational Contructionisms. In J. M., Holstein and J. F., Gubrium (Eds.), *Handbook of Constructionist Research*. New York: Guilford Press.

Wuttke, G. (1957). *Ćwiczenia i wycieczki terenowe w nauczaniu geografii*. Warszawa: PZWS.

Young, M. (2014). Knowledge, curriculum and the future school. In M. Young, D. Lambert, C. Roberts and M. Roberts (Eds.), *Knowledge and the Future School: Curriculum and the Social Justice*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Young M., Lambert D., Roberts C. and Roberts M. (Eds.) (2014). *Knowledge and the Future School: Curriculum and the Social Justice*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Zinovjev, A. (1984). *Homo sovieticus*. London: Wyd. EPUB. Polonia.

Biographical Statement

Dr.Teresa SADOŃ-OSOWIECKA is a lecturer in the Department of Oceanography and Geography at the University of Gdańsk; Master of Geography and Doctor of Pedagogy. Previously she was a teacher of science and geography at primary and grammar-school for many years. Her major fields of research concentrate on the didactics of geography; ways of constructing geographical knowledge at school and the understanding of place by students. She is the author of a monography *Konstruowanie wiedzy geograficzej w klasach gimnazjalnych. Możliwości i zaniedbania* (*Constructing Geographical Knowledge in Grammar-school Classes. Possibilities and Neglects*) (2009) and an editor of *Miejsce, przestrzeń, krajobraz – edukacyjne znaki* (*The Place, the Space, the Landscape – educational signs*) (2015).

Martin BLASZK is a lecturer in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Gdańsk; Master of Fine Art, as well as having completed a diploma course in English teaching and an in-service course in teacher training. As a researcher, he is interested in alternative ways of teaching creatively. He has published a number of articles related to creativity and compulsory education in Poland: *Happening as an Educational Experience: Early Education* (2008)*; A Social Constructivist Island in a Sea of Transmission* (2013). Currently, completing his doctoral thesis: *Involvement in happening: in search of a place for happening within education*.