

Assessment of Competence on Teacher Education

Mika Saranpää, Education Manager

*There is read butter. A loaf of it is managed.
Wake a question. Eat an instant, answer.*

Gertrude Stein, Sausages (Tender buttons, 1914)

Well trained butter, it must have read a lot.
It is able to make a bread, maybe even a sandwich.

Here Gertrude wakes multiple questions.

And you just ate a moment. There was your answer.

You may wonder, if I am sane / competent enough to speak about teacher competencies and even about assessment of those competencies.

So, you make an assessment. Please, do that.

Whom did you wonder?

Was it me or was it yourself?

What kind of criteria did you use?

"...in dialogue a person not only shows himself outwardly, but he becomes for the first time that which he is and, we repeat, not only for others but for himself as well. To be means to communicate dialogically. When dialogue ends, everything ends."

Mihail Bahtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics, s. 252.
Minnesota UNI, 1999

Situation in a seminar. Is it dialogical?

Is there a dialogue in you?

Afterwards in a corridor you may speak with each other.
Here you will speak with your inner other.

Lesson no. 1

You speak.

Language is something we use in assessment.

We must study language and take language seriously.

Lesson no. 2

Simple definition of competence:

Competence is
knowledge, skills and attitudes
connected in authentic work.

Where is authentic work of modern teacher?

How is teacher competence?

A happening - with colleagues and students and whole environment involved?

Lesson no. 3

To do the assessment of competence, you'll

- 1) have to verbalize competence (something is chosen, appreciation of something, targets for perceptions)
- 2) have to define levels of competence (something is seen better than something else, valuation or ranking, criteria)

Rene Magritte: This is not a pipe



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If everything said before is correct,
we have to be in authentic work to assess teacher competence.

Verbalizations of work and competencies are interpretations and valuations.
Through interpretations we find competences - in language.

This is competence – but this is not all. Work is, too.

Lesson no. 4

Exactness means that
we have to be as exact as possible
on polyfonia and polysemia.

There are only interpretations, so there should always be
multiple voices and meanings. (Dialogue as in Bahtin)

*...language that express our perspectives on things
and gives them outlines,
is an opening of discussion, not its end:
it stimulates research.*

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Filosofisia kirjoituksia*, p. 337
(Philosophical writings, English translation from Finnish by Saranpää)

To follow Merleau-Ponty:

assessment of competence
on teacher training is
research of competences.

We have competence based development programs.

We have even written criteria.

These are just tiny beginnings.

So, what do we perceive and especially,
how do we value what we perceive,
when we perceive teacher's competences
- when we do research on competencies?

Remember!

Here you must think dialogically.

Teacher is always with others, becoming oneself, as a teacher.

Others may be students, colleagues, work life partners, parents...

Level 1: my work!

We see one who is interested on his / hers own work.

One is organizing times and spaces for learning.

When he / she starts to speak, he / she is mainly interested in organizing (*"Am I able to do what a teacher is supposed to do?"*)

Level 2: interest in other...?

We see one who turns his / hers look from his-/herself to the other and especially to the learning of the other.

Do you ask the learner and wait for the learner's view?
Ugly question: would he / she learn without your help?

This is a wakening of pedagogical responsibility.

Level 3: faith on other...?

We see one who has faith on different ways of learning, not just his / her own ways of learning.

Also, we see respect and we hear researching questions: learner is a strange something that opens research.

Strange other is a core of research orientated teachers work.

Level 4: a mannequin for life long learning?

We see one who is able to learn in many ways and keeps changing for the learning of others.

Constant dialogue with others.

On this point competence is not possession.
It is something shared.

So how do we, teacher educators assess such competence?

Dialogically. All the time. From the beginning to the end.

On work, on contact days, on competence games, on peer groups, on multiple different situations.

We create structures and processes to boost assessment.

Assessment is first pedagogic. As ethics is first philosophy (Levinas).

Try to picture and verbalize teacher's action, speech and thinking simultaneously in teachers work!

Openness for paradoxes and contradictions:
there is not just one true interpretation.

We must try to find the best ones at the moment.

If our student is not willing to be in a dialogue...

*The care with which the rain is wrong
and the green is wrong
and the white is wrong,
the care with which there is a chair and plenty of breathing.
The care with which there is incredible justice and likeness,
all this makes a magnificent asparagus, and also a fountain.*

Gertrude Stein, Rooms (Tender buttons, 1914)

If there is still some time for a dialogue...

Thank you!