



Research Paper

Influence of the practicum experience on pre-service teachers' beliefs about effective teacher

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ABSTRACT: Teachers in modern educational reality construct their educational environment. Their role is crucial both for the promotion of the educational process and for the skills that the students will obtain. But what are the characteristics of an effective teacher? This paper, starting from the assumption that the teachers learn not only in their profession, but also during their studies, records the beliefs of the pre-service teachers about effective teacher, after their practicum experience in the Department of History and Ethnology at Democritus University of Thrace. The study was carried out with the contribution of a qualitative research method through focus groups. The results of the research show the reflecting beliefs of prospective teachers on effective teachers and how their practicum experience affects them.

KEYWORDS: Practicum, effective teacher, pre-service teachers, beliefs

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I. WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER?

Education without teachers looks like a ship without a captain. Even more acute is the problem if these teachers are not effective. The ship, in this case, will either sail without destination or, at some point, it will crash and sink. The effectiveness of the teacher has been a matter of concern for decades with agonized efforts at clarification [1]. It concerns the question of the effectiveness of the teacher and whether there is a specific standard to be used in modern school environments. For some researchers, the teacher who helps to transmit knowledge and develop skills is considered highly effective and qualified. Other researchers focus on differentiated and personalized teaching, provided to students with different learning profiles, with different knowledge and skills. The "good" teacher, based on this perspective, can effectively differentiate his methods and teach, setting the appropriate, each time, learning and social-emotional goals [2].

Fortunately, we no longer accept the view that the teacher is born qualified and effective. Through continuous engagement with the teaching profession he improves his knowledge and skills and strengthens his professional identity [3]. Already, at the end of the 20th century, attempts are being made to categorize those characteristics, which give the teacher the name "effective teacher" [4]. The dedication to the students, the knowledge of the subject and its appropriate presentation in order to be understood, the systematic way of organizing the knowledge and the subject matter it teaches, the clear targeting, the proper management of the classroom, the active integration into what we call "learning community", the encouragement of students to reach their own "zone of proximal development", the personalized perspective of teaching, are just some of the characteristics that stand the teacher on his "throne" and separate him from the "common" teacher [5].

There is a view that when the classroom works well, then the teacher does something well. What's he doing well? The teacher forms the appropriate learning climate and manages its classroom in a way that all students can communicate. Moreover, such a teacher knows his students very well, constantly shaping their cognitive patterns. Of course, the impetus nature of these teachers, who applaud and reward their students, is particularly stressed, giving them an incentive to engage, dialogue and constructive interaction [6].

So, whatever term is given as a synonym for "effective", such as "good", "ideal", "adequate", "expert", "responsible", "reflective", "qualified" [7], it is certain that this teacher exerts a great influence on his students and has a dynamic and systematic influence on their school performance, self-esteem [8] and self-efficacy. The factor of self-efficacy also seems to be positively correlated with students' choices in the school environment, with their participation in the classroom and with increased incentives for engagement and self-improvement.

Students with a sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy, with the help of teachers, are found to be more flexible in learning, participate more and actively, work more intensively, and do not have marked variations in their reactions when they encounter difficulties [9].

The interest in capturing the characteristics of those that signal the effectiveness of teachers lies in the link between the skills and competences of teachers and the proper preparation of their students. An element, such as teacher personality, is counted as a positive or negative factor [10], which has an effect on students, and appears to be even more important both from the teachers' cognitive background and from their pedagogical knowledge [11].

Teacher effectiveness is not just about teachers who are already in education. This issue is also examined by tertiary education that prepares teachers, as the effective teachers can be trained through their university studies. University departments have realized -perhaps some of them- that they are preparing teachers not only to be experts in their subject matter, but also to be equipped with the knowledge and skills required in the modern, complex educational context. Research has also shown a positive correlation between the effectiveness of the teachers and the courses they attend in their academic context, their performance in these courses and their participation in practicum programs [12].

As a result, Universities that prepare teachers should mobilize the prospective teachers [13], strengthening their cognitive background with both theoretical and practical courses. In addition, curricula should focus on student-centered and research-based approaches. In this sense, prospective teachers, through metacognitive "paths", will understand the concept of teaching in modern times, reflect on teaching practices and how they operate in the educational context and shape, at an early stage, the image of the effective teacher. Another important finding concerns pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and how they affect their professional development either positively or negatively [14]. This is because prospective teachers "carry" experiences from their student years, from primary education. These experiences enrich them through their studies, thus impacting on the way they think about teaching and its method, on the way they choose to teach and evolve scientifically [15].

Strong beliefs in both their subject matter and teaching methods are often raised as obstacles for pre-service teachers [16]. As a result, they operate, when they practice the profession, anchored, with scientific and pedagogical "blinkers". Here is also the bet of departments that prepare teachers, to draw up flexible and up-to-date curricula, which will give the candidate teacher the opportunity to build and rebuild knowledge rather than being trapped in "mazes", which as an outlet have only the theory and traditional perspective for teaching and learning.

Prospective teachers, therefore, are trapped -many times without having chosen- in this "maze" of their studies, when they enter the profession, "dragging" all that they have learned, unsuccessfully, and, at the same time, forming their professional 'portrait' on the basis of their experiences and not on the basis of the modern perspective on teacher education. In this case, there are two possible 'paths' for teachers; (a) to go along with what they have learned academically and to follow it whether they are close to their beliefs or not, (b) to follow their own (pre)scientific teaching example, based on previous experiences from their student years or from the standards they have "assimilated" into their own teaching practices.

II. PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT EFFECTIVE TEACHER: THE RELEVANT RESEARCH

As this paper starts from the beliefs of prospective teachers about effective teaching after their practicum, it is therefore important to have a brief bibliographical review in the relevant research field. In particular, as the prospective teacher goes through various stages of preparation through his studies, he shapes or -unfortunately, sometimes crystallizes- his views on teaching and learning [17]. Research has shown that both theoretical courses and courses about pedagogical practicum enhance the effective teaching of teachers and are important factors that affect their sense of self-confidence [18].

Through the recordings of the candidate teachers, key issues arise for the effectiveness of the teachers, related to their adherence to student-centered approaches to teaching, as well as to behavioral issues, concerning the appropriate management of the school classroom. In particular, prospective teachers consider that in the context of the student-centered approach, a teacher is effective when he loves his students, is supportive, encourages them, is kind, caring, patient, has leadership skills, is creative, flexible in the teaching and pedagogical methods he adopts and exploits in his teaching, clear in the teaching goals he sets, and in the content he teaches, motivates the interest of his students, communicative, responsible and dedicated to his profession. Through the views of prospective teachers, their focus is also on specific characteristics, which will make them effective [19]. For example, some prospective teachers through their practicum focus on methods and techniques that they will use to empower all students in their classrooms. Others focus more on strategies that will enhance the climate in the classroom, dialogue and communication with their students.

The bibliography categorizes the characteristics of teachers, which make them effective. These are: (1) to use student-centered perspectives in teaching (79.5%), (2) to have passion and zeal for their profession (40.2%), (3) to do the right thing and to be "ethical" towards their students (38.8%), (4) to have corresponding classroom management skills (33.3%), (5) to make effective use of methods and techniques in their teaching (32.4%), and (6) to be well aware of their subject matter (31.5%) [20]. These findings are considered important to shift the beliefs of prospective teachers. Candidate teachers influenced by the curricula of the departments they attend and their academic experience, change, or better reform, their beliefs about teaching, giving it an even more scientific character, while some insist on their beliefs and perceptions of teaching, often giving it a more pre-scientific character, closer to the art of "education" [21].

However, because prospective teachers express these views on effective teachers, this does not automatically and effectively make them effective, when they are asked to teach in a classroom. Their views and beliefs often conflict with their teaching practice. One obstacle seems to be the difficulties faced by the newly hired teachers both for the subject they will teach and for the management of their classroom, thus neglecting their epistemological assumptions about effective teaching and to teach more traditionally. Whether, therefore, because they do not have the relevant teaching experience or the appropriate pedagogical knowledge, or because they fear teaching, or because the educational framework does not allow it, or because they cannot understand how they will "translate" scientific knowledge into pedagogical knowledge or because there are other reasons, newly recruited teachers sometimes move away from their over-optimistic beliefs about effective teaching [22] and follow "safe" teaching and pedagogical practices.

III. THE STUDY

Students of the Department of History and Ethnology at the Democritus University of Thrace have the opportunity, in addition to the other courses of the Curriculum, to attend courses, which are part of their "Pedagogy and Teaching Competence Program". In the context of the course "School Pedagogy", during the spring semester 2018-2019, through discussions with students, but also from the experience of their practicum, I realized that they were particularly interested in the issue of effective teaching and the characteristics that make a teacher effective. For this reason, I selected six university students (four females and two males) to explore their beliefs about teaching and the effective teacher. The participants in the research throughout the course and their practicum showed particular interest and zeal for the teaching profession and were also evaluated with 'excellent' in the final exams.

The study was conducted at the end of the spring semester 2019, following the written examinations, and the six students agreed to participate in research with a qualitative strategy and in particular through the focus group technique [23]. This mini group of students was chosen because: a) they have as a common characteristic that they are graduates of the same university department, with the same experience of practicum, b) they have the same academic performance, and c) they have similar stimuli through the follow-up of the course "School Pedagogy". The duration of the debate was 80 minutes and its central theme was the role of the practicum in the context of their professional development. However, in this paper I will refer only to their beliefs about effective teaching after their practicum experience.

A key topic of discussion was: *'The characteristics of an effective teacher in modern educational reality, after the practicum experience'*. For the recording and processing of the data, the principles of recording and transcription of the material were used and for ethical reasons aliases were given to the prospective teachers. The beliefs of the prospective teachers of this research are presented and analyzed below, with an effort to formulate interpretative patterns, which will be linked to the relevant researched literature.

IV. RESEARCH ANALYSES

4.1 PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT EFFECTIVE TEACHER

Pre-service teachers, having the practicum experience, focus on the teachers and how they should teach and react with students in order to be effective. A topic, which seems to be of international concern to the research community [24]. Many times, through the unwrapping of their thinking, there is a lack of relevant teaching experience in order to strengthen their arguments. In particular, by giving them the theme: "The characteristics of the effective teacher after the practicum experience", prospective teachers record many relevant characteristics, so that the teachers can function, based on their views, effectively in their classroom.

'Listening to the word "effective", in my mind I have the teacher who is approachable, and close to the children. For me there must be intimacy, for the good teacher to know his students, every student. To be able to know them, so that he can better deal with problems in the classroom, that is to say to understand some problems of the students and come closer to them. For me, from what I saw in my practicum and from my teaching experience, I understood that a teacher must be flexible in the classroom in many ways. For example,

to be able to cope if there is no projector or technological means in the classroom. Of course, he must know his subject matter and not read down from a book (Emily)'.

Characteristics related to the personality, in particular, of the effective teacher are noted. Candidate teachers insist on pedagogical principles of the teacher and, as noted in the theoretical context, on student-centered approaches to teaching. Their opinions appear to differ from the relevant research [25], as it is found that prospective teachers in corresponding researches persist in the cognitive dimension of effective teaching (content knowledge) and less in their social characteristics. The good teacher seems to be the communicative teacher, who is approachable, flexible, versatile, even if he does not have the necessary means to teach his subject, as shown through the relevant discussion. In the published literature, it is found that these characteristics refer more to female prospective teachers and less to male prospective teachers [26]. Although in this study we are not interested in such a gender segregation, because it does not obey the principles of quantitative research, however it could, with any restrictions that apply, and in this study in the focus group we have more female prospective teachers than their male colleagues.

I believe that it is essential for the teacher to have knowledge on not only his subject, but also to have knowledge of Pedagogy, on how to deal with his students. To have knowledge of Psychology. What makes it connect to other sciences, to other cognitive disciplines? For me, that's essential. I think, a teacher has to do with students, has to do with children, each having his own social profile, so he has to take these into account (Chloe)'.

The notion of interdisciplinary perspective and the multiple role of the teacher is added. In other words, for the participants of this study, a teacher should have knowledge of both Pedagogy and Psychology Science. Of course, this knowledge must assist his work, as they note, and not be followed faithfully and cut off from the educational context. Moreover, the university students of this research attend courses in both Pedagogy and Psychology, which may have an explicit or inextricable effect on their beliefs and (pre)scientific assumptions about effective teaching.

I have something to add, that both Psychology and Pedagogy and their theories can't mold all students. In other words, they (teachers) should not only read theories but also investigate more and have an interdisciplinarity. Because the theory cannot be done in practice purely in one person. Psychology says something, but that doesn't apply to everyone, and I can't do it like that. And let us not forget that we cannot talk about "recipes". For me there are no "recipes" in teaching (Eleanor)'.

Clearly, the issue of a different approach to teaching is being discussed, because not all of our students are the same and should not be considered the same in our daily teaching practice. It is noted by a prospective teacher that we must constantly adapt our teaching practices not only on the basis of the theories we take into account in our studies, but also on the basis of our students. As he adds, teaching is not predetermined and strictly engraved steps. Teaching is not a "recipe", which I reverently follow and I know will lead me to my educational and teaching success. In related research, it is stated, in particular, that the teacher can be described as a cook who daily, based on his materials and everything new he can think of, experiments and cooks, constantly changing his recipes [27]. The prospective teacher also has certain beliefs about teaching, forming the basis for further engagement with the profession. The issue is that these assumptions can be shaped according to student potential and teaching and pedagogical objectives. A recipe, for example, that has been made without taking into account what those who try it like, may be delicious, but not for everyone. Similarly, teaching for all students, without differentiation, can harm students with special learning difficulties. This is supplemented by another participant below, who states that the theory itself has no value, but must be "dressed" accordingly, taking into account specific learning contexts. *'What I may not have set correctly is that no one can teach. He needs to have key axes in his mind, to know some things he needs to take into account at that moment. Not that I have a theory and I follow it word for word (...)' (Chloe)'.*

A pre-service teacher refers to a holistic view of the effective teacher. For him, although he agrees with what has been said by his colleagues, the teacher is taken into account as a whole, carrying knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, learned techniques, but all this will be more lovingly linked to an integrated personality, as he notes. What does that mean for him? To be able to approach not only knowledge, but also its students globally and multifaceted. In other words, to be conscious in the profession, to love it and to gather enough elements in his behavior, which will make him liked by his students, but also by his colleagues. These elements are also very important for the prospective teacher, as he can reflect and discuss them in the context of his initial education, which should emphasize the personality of the future teacher [28].

'Exactly what has been said is important and I cannot assess it as more or less important. I don't think anything has more or less weight. I think the teacher should be a complete personality who loves what he does. Okay, if you don't want to, you don't. I mean, and if you try, you're not sure if you're going to get it (Mateo). But, what do you mean, a complete personality?' (Chloe). I mean, it doesn't matter if you're expert at your science. You might know everything, it doesn't mean you're good. Be able to behave properly to both your students and colleagues (Mateo). Oh, yes, that's right (Chloe)'.

James also complements the issue of attracting interest from the effective teacher. It notes, in particular, that knowledge of the subject is an important factor for success in the educational process, but for the professional teacher himself he does not only stay there. What he must be trying to do is mobilize his students, motivate them in order to love what he teaches them. *'All this is nice and very important for the teacher to be professional and to have knowledge. But all this is needed together and especially the one who is a good teacher to be a teacher in the sense that he likes to deal with the transmission of knowledge. Not only the transmission of the object, but also the transmission of interest. To be able to provoke interest in children to deal with something that he considers interesting. If you don't find it useful, you can't pass it on to others, love it and make the most of it (James)'*.

A candidate teacher then, through the relevant reflective discussion refers to the virtue of patience. The effective teacher must have this gift, because students are not 'unwritten maps', but are active subjects with personality, influences from their wider social and educational environment. The prospective teacher considers that an effective teacher should possess such elements in his character so that he can operate more effectively and more humanely [29].

'I would like to add, that a teacher beyond any abilities must also have pedagogical knowledge. He should have patience in his character, too. In the sense that a child as at home as in school can have different behaviors. I mean, we meet kids who behave strangely or are abrupt. A teacher should rein it in and not tell him to get out of the classroom. There must be these elements, because we are talking about human teachers (Sofia). That's right. You have to deal with this pedagogically (Emily)'. The university student, and according to a further research, focuses on the "ethics" of the teacher [30]. The effective teacher must therefore be free from stereotypes and prejudices, which act as a deterrent to teaching and to the promotion of the educational process, as well as to the favorable and friendly climate in the classroom.

'To have self-awareness, self-confidence. That is, to have an ongoing dialogue with himself so that he doesn't think he's an authority. To see his flaws, his positives. I know this isn't easy at all, but whether you're doing the teaching profession or whatever profession you're doing, I think these questions should always be asked to yourself so you can be okay and evolve and improve and be able to offer (Eleanor)'.

What is noted above is very important, with regard to the reflection of teachers on both teaching and the elements of their character. The university student highlight the internal dialogue of the teacher, who wants to evolve and shape his professional identity accordingly. This dialogue will help, as noted, to increase the sense of self-confidence and, by extension, self-efficacy. Of course, by evolving the student's thinking, prospective teachers should be involved, at the same time, in constructive dialogue with their fellow students, teachers and mentors in the context of the practicum [31]. Both the personal reflection of teachers and the group discussion are important indicators for the professional development of teachers and for the cultivation of reflective optics in teaching.

Moving forward with this discussion, there is also the question of the willingness of the effective teacher both to teach and to prepare his course. The teacher must take away those elements that lead him to carry out the teaching and cling to the teaching perspective that is constructive and requires constant engagement and effort.

'I would like to add that the teacher who teaches and will enter a classroom with children, to enter with an appetite and not only at that moment, that I enter the classroom and I am in a good mood. All the work he's going to do at home on what he's going to teach. It's not just that I have the book, I'm going to tell them, and then I'm going to leave. You need to do a good preparation, a good exploration of the topics, what activities will attract interest, to pass on the knowledge he wants. I think it is very important because the only easy thing is for him to get in the classroom to have a text in front of him and say it, to parrot it. That's the only easy thing (Chloe). That takes a lot of work. That's what we agree on. It takes day-to-day work (Mateo)'.

It is also noted that this profession wants daily work, with a different degree of difficulty for each teacher and with different influences. James, in particular, states that the teacher must find his own teaching example and not adhere to the standards he has from his student years, from other teachers or exclusively from what he has read and has been in contact during his studies. In other words, it must gradually set its own teaching example in order to find out what it achieves and what it needs to improve.

'Yes, but he doesn't want the same job from everyone. That is, each teacher is different and everyone will rely on themselves. It seems that no teacher, based on a pattern in the sense that he took and read something, a book with pedagogical theories, no teacher, based simply on the words of someone else, managed to attract the interest, the interest of the children, to make them love the lesson. That is, to want to participate, because it was based on the recipe of either a book or some other model and did not make it his own (James)'.

Experience plays an important role in strengthening the teacher's role. A teacher is "shielded" scientifically and through his university studies from the courses he attends, but mainly from his involvement in the practicum programs. The pre-service teachers note that practicum is, as they realized, an important experience and predictor of success in teaching; finding consistent with the findings of relevant research [32].

This experience will help to reduce the feeling of anxiety and insecurity that is often held by newly hired teachers, who have never before seen a "real" school classroom.

'I think that a teacher wants skills and a little experience because, as we have mentioned in the course, most people, when they start their careers as teachers, use more behavioral methods because of anxiety, insecurity, whatever. So it takes a little experience, practicum, which I think is very important. It is necessary for a teacher to be flexible. To be able to go from one subject to another. When he sees that something else is coming to the surface through the dialogue, he can develop it, to formulate a question, so that he can move all this forward (Chloe).'

One element that comes to light concerns the experience of teaching. Experience is important, but many times when a teacher has many years of work experience, this can lead to unexpected results. It is stressed, in particular, that there are teachers who have many years of experience in teaching, but do not evolve and do not shape their epistemological examples respectively for the benefit of the educational process. On the other side, "inexperienced" teachers may be more zealous about teaching and more focused on it. Of course, it is stressed that there is a difference between years of experience and the content of "experience". Experience is needed that is not only time-determined, but that relates to the teacher's opportunities for self-improvement. Experience, for example, gained from practicum, as Chloe notes, that will help the teacher improve and reform his teaching and pedagogical practices.

'But experience can also have the opposite effect. That is, someone who has many years in one position to bring a practical experience only. We see this, young people with no experience have an appetite to offer, and some who have 20 years, for example, experience of being stale (Eleanor). I'm talking about experience, no, I'm 20 years a teacher or 10. I'm talking about experience after I do these studies and I follow this career. I must necessarily have done a preparation, a training that we did (Chloe). Just a minute. I think there's a difference between experience and experiences. No experience with having a lot of years in a school. But being tested on different things and being able to know a lot of things. Don't get bored and do things that aren't just defined that you should teach this and that (James).'

Reflection exists, directly or indirectly, in the prospective teachers of this research. If, therefore, the teacher does not understand where he is lagging behind and where he is superior, he will probably not be able to strengthen his professional identity. It is very important to mention the view of the teacher's profession from a "distance". In other words, I must realize, by taking out any of my prejudices or my perceptions, that if something does not improve my teaching practice and classroom interaction, I may be responsible as a teacher. I therefore give my students what they return to me. An important finding that takes us to the modern perspective of research in this field, on the basis of which I not only look at what the teacher is doing in the classroom, but also how he thinks, and how he reflects on his teaching [33].

'Okay, but to show off my good points, I must first have tracked them down or removed everything bad I have. Of course, this will help the classroom. I also consider the performance of the students, from what they give me. Since they won't give me anything, it means I don't give them anything. So I'm doing something wrong. Or through conversation. I think that a teacher if he does any discussion with the children will find many things for both the lesson he does and for himself (Sofia).'

Here are various thoughts about how the teacher to be effective can better methodize his teaching. For example, as pre-service teachers have learned from both teaching observation and their teaching, this can be achieved by making appropriate use of teaching practices, such as individual or group activities, away from teacher-centered standards. In addition, reference is made to the fact that the means is not helpful if the teacher is not effective. Therefore, the teacher is the main factor in learning, it is the "captain" in his own "ship", who will lead it somewhere. The instructions he often gives are more important than how good his boat is.

'In order to become even better a teacher will be able to try different practices in his teaching, i.e. to try a simple activity, another method of teaching, beyond the teaching-centered approach. Did he achieve what he had thought? (Chloe). It can be a team game for example, as we did in our practicum (Emily). It could be anything, not just something new. Besides, for me, it's the teacher who has to teach. The person using the means affects the whole process (James).'

Through the discussion with the participants, a mismatch was found in the image they had originally formed for the teacher, through their student years, and in the image they formed in the end, after their practicum experience. Many times, as noted in the relevant literature, prospective teachers "carry" any assumptions about teaching, influenced by the standards and experiences of their student years [34]. In this case, these standards are either an accommodative factor in shaping their own professional profile and fit their teaching example or are obstacles and do not contribute to the formation of an effective teacher profile. Through the recordings of prospective teachers, in particular, there is a reflection on their experiences during their school years.

4.2 WHAT DID THEY BELIEVE? IS THERE ANY CHANGE?

Initially, the participants in the study had, as they note, the perception that the teacher merely transmits knowledge and interacts only in the cognitive field with his students. The relevant research agrees with this finding and gives us many interpretations. One of these is also related to the practicum that prospective teachers attend, which, if they obey traditional teaching models, may negatively affect their perception of how a teacher should teach [35]. This one-sided role of the teacher seems to be eliminated as their beliefs vary. Now, they realize that the teacher has multiple roles within a school environment or, at the very least, must operate in this logic if he wants to be effective both didactically and pedagogically.

I used to think as a child, as a student that the teacher is there to simply impart some knowledge, and after both my education and my practicum, what I realized is that his roles are much more than just teaching something. It is to be able to perceive each student individually, to face problems of each student (...). So, a teacher has to deal with too many problems and too many factors, who come into the classroom to obstruct his work. Also, what I saw as a student that the teacher might want to do some things. "Yes I do, but I don't have the time" or that I'm being pushed to come out of a particular subject, which as I have an image, that was a very wide range of subjects with very little time to teach, so they didn't have time to do anything else (Chloe). I agree. I did realize that the teacher has more roles and it's more complex what he ultimately does than what I thought he was doing, because when you walk into the classroom to teach, you realize that you're not just a person who's going to start saying something. You have to look at everything that's going on inside at the same time, from what the student does, what you say, from what happens in the classroom (Mateo)'.

A pre-service teacher notes a more simplistic picture of the teacher. He had, initially, the perception that the teacher teaches effectively only if he wishes. Through the experience of the practicum, however, he realized that teaching is not an easy task, but the teacher takes into account many factors related to the subject matter, the method of teaching, and the means he will use in the lesson. As students, as the pre-service teacher says, we do not understand this demanding role of the teacher [36] and what decisions he must make for the proper functioning of his school class.

I had another picture, I thought it was based more on willpower. I mean, I couldn't take into account all the factors we saw when we went to teach. I thought the teacher either wanted to do a good lesson or didn't want to do a good lesson. Either he was bored or he was in the mood to get involved. But in the end there are many reasons, i.e. even what you need to teach, how to teach it, what you have been taught about how to teach. It's what we're saying that a professor who came out of university many years ago and isn't interested in seeing what's new is left in older methods. So, there are too many things that play a role, which when you're a student you don't think about, and all you see is a teacher opposite you and what he tells you (Mateo)'.

The important thing is that the prospective teachers in this research, despite the short duration of the practicum in which they participated, were able to reflect, even at an early stage, on the role of the teacher and to make the so-called role swap; to enter the position in the role of teacher and to see with their own eyes the factors that affect teaching.

'After all, what you're doing isn't just about telling a lesson like I thought. You do countless things at the same time, without necessarily realizing that. I don't think many people realize how complex the role of the professor is after all, but only when they get in his role. Only then can you understand it (Eleanor)'.

They also discuss both the old and the modern school and their perception that the teacher basically teaches behavioral and teacher-centric, which seems to be shaped differently through their own experience, but also through the 'School Pedagogy' course attendance. *'Going to Intercultural School I had the impression that I would see in front of me the teacher correspondingly I saw in front of me all these years, when I was in elementary school. That is, a teacher who will be primarily influenced by the traditional school (...). I thought this would be what I experienced throughout school, elementary and secondary school (Sofia)'.*

Above all, prospective teachers through their practicum realized that the teacher not only transmits knowledge to his students, but does much more; teaches, educates, shapes the environment of his classroom, is flexible, takes into account depending on the context, how he will do both teaching and behavioral. The image of a teacher entering a classroom, reading the lesson from a school textbook and interacting minimally and mechanistically with his students, begins to move away from the views of the pre-service teachers of this research. It gradually changes, reshapes and reframes the profile of the effective teacher based on their stimuli. The teacher, as noted, has many roles and the professional teacher must take these roles into account in order to be considered effective in modern educational reality.

V. DISCUSSION

I consider the beliefs of prospective teachers to be very important for teaching and for effective teachers. Their beliefs can feed us with elements that we will use appropriately in our own teacher training programs. This is because it is very important to understand in the field of higher education that we cannot seek to change only the epistemological assumptions of prospective teachers, unless we first take into account their

personal assumptions. We must also understand that the beliefs of our university students are 'filters', through which new situations and behaviors can be interpreted in the teaching profession [37]. After all, the beliefs of prospective teachers have a multidimensional perspective and give us clues about their epistemological assumptions, their experiences, the way they reflect and think about their future profession [38].

Prospective teachers often believe that their teaching practices and interaction with students will not differ significantly from their own experience as students. Some argue, at first, that experience within the profession will shape them and turn them into effective teachers. And on the basis of this argument, they do not want to be taught pedagogical courses in the academic departments they attend. These assumptions seem to have a negative impact on their image of an effective teacher and on their future professional identity [39], with the result that some prospective teachers do not take into account issues of social interaction in the classroom, but are, some stubbornly, interested in the "correct" teaching of their subject.

Happily, the participants in this study have a "fresh" perspective on teaching in modern times. They take into account the context and the learning condition and consider that the effective teacher must, above all, be close to his students, behave and adapt his teaching accordingly. Patience, love for the lesson and constant effort to attract the interest of students are some of the elements that advocate an effective teacher. Today's teacher, based on their own experience, is fortunately far from the traditional teacher who lectures and does not take into account the interests and "voices" of his students. Therefore, a mismatch is noted between the initial experiences they had from their teachers during their student years and the experiences gained by teachers who saw in their practicum. They claim, without knowing whether they will do so in the future, that they should teach constructively, humanely, pedagogically, to reflect in order to improve and pursue interdisciplinary perspectives in their own teaching.

Despite the small-scale research, these reports may focus on the relevant international debate. By deepening the beliefs of prospective teachers, we can understand the ways in which initial teacher education can have a positive impact on the development of an effective professional profile, through relevant courses and from "serious" and up-to-date pedagogical practicum programs. So let us give our university students the opportunity to become professionals in the field, with a solid scientific structure and let us activate them through critical and reflective practicum models [40].

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