

# Portfolio in the Quality Assurance System of Training of Future Teachers in Hungary

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**Abstract** State certification of education students in Hungary is held in the form of a comprehensive state examination. One of the effective tools used in the certification of future teachers in Hungary is the portfolio. The portfolio consists of two parts: documents and an essay. In the abstract a future teacher analyses the level of their own professional growth. Portfolio must convincingly prove the ability of the education student to perform functional duties of teachers, teach, assess the impact of the study, analyse the development of students and the effectiveness of the educational process, to use professional literature, plan and organize their own teaching career. The Hungarian experience of including portfolio into the structure of traineeship and state certification of the education students suggests that the portfolio is an efficient tool in verifying the level of a teacher's competencies.

**Keywords:** *portfolio, national certification, Hungary*

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## 1. Introduction

State certification is one of the important stages of the educational process. State certification is called to establish compliance with the standards of training in the field of higher education and within the specialty. The higher education reform in Ukraine, known as the Bologna process, is marked by the creation of a single European area of higher education and requires finding more effective forms of the evaluation of the university graduates' professional competence development and updates the study of similar experiences of the countries that have effectively solved or are solving the problem of transforming their systems of higher education. Hungary is among such countries. In Hungary one of the effective tools that are to be used during the state certification of education students is portfolio.

The word *portfolio* has come from the United States and means *files, folder*, or rather a *binder*, which keeps important documents. The Latin word "*port*" corresponds to the verb "wear", the word "*la porte*" in French means "*door*". The English word "*portable*", as well as the French "*porter*" stands for mobility, flexibility and indicates portability and transportability. The word "*folio*" means a specific book format, 21×33 cm square sheet, or double the size of the portrait page. In the Renaissance period the Italian artists and architects gathered and kept their work projects in the portfolio, based on which they could apply to the academy or receive orders for works. In the portfolio there were collected documents reflecting the quality of their work, and certain stages of their development, moreover, sketches, projects represented the

style and technique of their work. Since the 80th of the last century portfolio is actively used in teaching. Career portfolio is an organized presentation of an individual's education, work samples, and skills. First in the USA and Canada and since the 90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century portfolio has been experiencing a revival in Europe.

Portfolio is made for the primary purpose of evaluation, and presents the results of the student's performance in a particular area. With the documents that are in the portfolio the teacher can assess the student's achievement more precisely and wider, taking into account the qualitative aspects; or an employer can more accurately assess the competence of a potential employee. If the evaluation criteria are clear and predetermined, a portfolio made to assess can develop a student's self-esteem and their capacity for independent decision-making since after being informed about the criteria for evaluating the student can assess what should be placed in the portfolio in the hope of success. In case of applying the portfolio for assessment, students need to learn in advance the criteria for the content selection, assessment, and establishing the principles of the quality of the works. Portfolio can be considered complete only if it contains a written reflection, careful measurements, and discussion.

Transparency of criteria can be achieved through the development of standards. Consequently, the portfolio is a product that can be evaluated based on the standard, which primarily represents fully acquired competence activities (analytical, theoretical, mainly practical, etc.) and not knowledge received in a particular area. If the primary objective is to promote learning, the student prepares a portfolio which reflects the learning-teaching process. The teacher makes regular reflection on the portfolio; regular

feedback and formal assessment promote cooperation of students and teachers, their dialogue on/in the process of learning-training. Over time, the ability to self-reflection can be formed in a student and thus portfolio promotes their meta-cognitive abilities, their transformation into an autonomous subject of education, it strengthens their responsibility for the learning process. Therefore, learning processes, evaluation, and self-assessment are manifested in plexus. Creating a portfolio during teaching internship and its application in the state certification of future teachers is necessarily required by the Hungarian legislation.

**The aim** of this study was to explore the existing experience of invoking the portfolio at the state certification of the education students in Hungarian universities and its possible use in Ukraine..

## 2. Methods of Analysis

To reach the goal of the study the author analysed the professional literature, legal and regulatory documents, databases, electronic resources and documentations of universities and governments meant to ensure the quality of higher education in Ukraine and Hungary.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The theoretical basis of the portfolio use in learning and its practical application in training and educational work was studied by J. Barton and A. Collins [8], L. Darling-Hammond and J. Snyder [9], I. Falus and M. Kimmel [10] A. Karpati [11], and others. They concluded that portfolio can be an effective means of the evaluation of academic performance and can gradually gain wide distribution, complementing the traditional forms of knowledge transfer and evaluation and changing the role of the teacher in the teaching and learning process. For several years, portfolio has become a mandatory element of training and state certification of the faculties in Hungary.

State certification of the education students in Hungary is held in the form of a unified state exam. During the examination the student's internship experience, the ability to operate knowledge of psychology, pedagogy and teaching methods are to be assessed.

Let us consider a typical example of the structure of the unified state exam that is introduced at the University of Szeged [5]. Given the state qualification and program requirements to the education of future teachers, the preparation stage for the defence of the thesis has two constituents.

The first constituent is compiling the portfolio with the idea of the generalization of the school internship experience, which was held under the guidance of a teacher-mentor and was focused on the study of teachers' profession, systematization of the experiences of the individual professional practice, and lessons. This component also presented as a separate item in the portfolio of the student is formed during the practice.

The second constituent is writing the thesis, which can be defended in multiple formats, namely:

- a scientifically sound analysis of the best teaching experience;

- a thoroughly developed project on the chosen theme in methods of teaching ;

- a study guide made by the student.

Assembling the portfolio the student does not receive additional credits as it is a part of preparing to the state examination and the procedure of the defence of the thesis. The above items amount to 5 credits.

Despite the training in two specialties at each of the levels it is required to produce and defend of a qualifying work. 5 credits are obtained for Master thesis on the basis of psycho-pedagogical training.

We note, in passing, that the portfolio is one of the tools that are intensively introduced into the education of teachers in Hungary [1]. Experience with the portfolio shows that it can be effectively used in learning and educational work [8,10]. Researchers believe that the portfolio serves as an effective tool for evaluating academic performance and gradually acquires large-scale use, contributing to traditional forms of knowledge transmission, its evaluation, changing the role of teachers in the educational process [9,11]. For several years portfolio has been functioning as a mandatory element of preparation, training, and state certification of teaching staff in Hungary [2].

The state standard requires documentation of the student's own work during the internship in the portfolio, as well as of the effectiveness of teaching practice and personal development. Compilation of a portfolio is supervised by the school head of the practice and the supervisor from the higher education institution. Portfolio is a component of a teacher qualification exam.

In pedagogical community the consensus is that the process of lifelong learning should be based on a highly developed infrastructure of adult education, and the acquisition of new competencies should be organized through the implementation of new teaching methods and the evaluation system. The inclusion of portfolio into the structure of internships and state examination of education students in Hungary, which makes it possible to verify the current level of the development of teacher competencies, has become one of the best examples of its use in higher education.

According to John Burton and A. Collins [8], portfolio is a set of documents that proves the fact of human knowledge and experience in a particular area of activity. Portfolio of a future teacher should reflect the level of the development of teacher competencies of the education student during their school internship.

During the formation of the portfolio the student can make sure of their abilities:

- generalize and apply in real teaching the knowledge accumulated during the internship;

- collect and process the contents of professional literature and, based on it, plan and organize their own educational activities;

- evaluate the effectiveness of training or teaching performance objectives;

- collect materials about the achievements and development of students and the teaching-learning process;

- analyze the factual material;

- formulate opinions about the process of teaching and learning, the students' work, and the teacher's personal performance;

- apply results in their own work.

The portfolio consists of two parts: documents and an essay. According to the recommendations of L. Darling-Hammond and J. Snyder [9], the documents are grouped by the following features:

1) A - the documents compiled during the traineeship (lessons plans, notes, diary of the practice, notes on the visited lessons, records of discussions, thematic plans, reports on extracurricular activities, video and tape recordings, photographs, methodological notes of meetings, tests, etc.)

2) B - documents that contain the reflections of the student (entries and comments on extracurricular activities (work of groups, staff meetings, parent meetings, etc.), critical summaries of the experience of extracurricular activities, analysis and advice in dealing with a pedagogical problem; synopsis and critical remarks on speeches at the conference, notes and explanations to certain documents and etc.).

3) C - documents on the practice of future teacher prepared by others; these types of documents do not have restrictions, they must first and foremost concern the teacher's work of the student (reviews of the head of practice, teachers, classmates and school, school management, etc.).

To be presented at the state exam, the portfolio, which is made up during the practice, needs some additional processing. In the final portfolio, the student must include only those materials the analysis of which enables the reviewer to objectively characterize the degree of the development of student's competencies.

In the part *Portfolio component* the student's level of personal growth as a teacher is summarized, evaluated, and analyzed. The materials in the portfolio are qualified as the documented facts of the student's performance. *The Summary* may be structured in any form, the basic requirement for the abstract is the reflection of a number of aspects: preparation for the internship; task statements at the beginning and during the practice; Purpose of Lesson; Teacher competences and objectives; features of the lessons; conclusions made after the lesson; extracurricular educational work; familiarization with the school as the organization and the system of support; development of nine teacher competencies; and self-reflection. The volume of abstract is at least 15,000 characters (8-9 pages).

Assessing students' portfolios, experts take into account the eight criteria, exposing each criterion from 1 to 5:

- coverage of all competencies (number and depth of analysis of competences, the degree of understanding of the relationship between them);

- portfolios structure (relationship between the documents and the lecture, the proportions of individual parts and the relationship between them);

- the relevance of the documents for the characteristics of the student, their structuring (compliance purpose, consistency, transparency, and diversity);

- the quality of selected documents (adequacy, disclosure of the contents, thoroughness, professional credibility, accuracy, scientific, and methodological diversity of culture); the quality of illustrations (editing, transparency and applicability);

- the clarity of structure of the abstract; consistency, and professional relevance;

- the adequacy of the analysis and judgments made in the abstract, self-criticism, the depth, and the level of processing;

- terminology (professional compliance and accuracy);

- the language and design of the portfolio (the ease and simplicity of presentation, diversity, literacy, aesthetics, and design diligence).

In case of the unsatisfactory evaluation of the submitted materials on one of the criteria, the student is not allowed to take the state exam. Based on the essay and documents submitted in portfolios the reviewer assesses the level of the depth and self-criticism of self-examination. Given this, the student has to analytically, critically, and constructively choose materials and prepare the text of the abstract.

It should be noted that, regardless of the number of qualifications (in one or two teachers' specialties), a student must compile one portfolio, do one thesis and answer during the state exam to questions of one examination card.

Working on the thesis, the student must prove his professional ability to integrate and use in teaching the knowledge learned in different disciplines [3]; choose literature in the context of scientific research; to plan their own teaching activities and evaluate the impact of training or teaching tasks; accumulate practical experience; comprehend the advances in the development of students; analyze evidence, draw conclusions and implement the results in own activities.

In the thesis work the student's ability to handle a topic of discipline, application of teaching methods, pedagogy and psychology at secondary and high school or for the purposes of adults must be adequately reflected [7]. The volume of the thesis is 27-45 thousand characters (15-25 pages). Thesis is assessed on the following criteria: the importance of the issue; depth of analysis of professional literature; reliability of conclusions formulated under the comprehension of the primary sources; structuring of material; judgments clarity, accessibility of the material; compliance with the formal requirements, accuracy of references.

The mandatory elements of an instruction book are:

- psychological, pedagogical and didactic principles (up to 9,000 characters (5 pages));

- independent development of one of the training topics in a form that can be used as a study guide;

- documentation of empirical verification of suitability of educational and methodological manual which contains educational assessment tools and treatment outcomes, results and their interpretation (up to 9,000 characters (5 pages)).

The developed teaching aids are evaluated by several criteria:

- displaying thorough knowledge of subject themes in a self-developed manual;

- reflection of the difficulties of the process of studying the topic and clarifying the theoretical foundations of issue;

- methods for checking the relevance of an instruction book;

- the effects of the relevance of methodological manuals.

The structure of the exam items at the state examination in the University of Szeged is worth considering [4]:

- The theme / title of the item;

- A: psychological and pedagogical aspects of the theme;
- B: issues of teaching methods related to the theme of the item.

Questions of position "A" and "B" are developed by a proper department. Through the oral answers the level of students' knowledge of psychological and pedagogical subjects and teaching methods are clarified.

As an example, the psychological and pedagogical subjects of a comprehensive state examination are given below [4].

1. School as a social subsystem.

A. The functions of education, socio-economic environment of the Hungarian education system. The present system of Hungarian general education institutions, the possible development of general education.

2. The role of the teacher, teacher profession.

A. The development of teachers, teachers' competences, and efficiency factors of teachers, teacher freedom.

3. Education, knowledge, and subject knowledge.

A. The relationship between thinking and language. Scientific knowledge about teaching, learning theory, common and different features of the natural and school training, organization and knowledge change.

4. Problems of learning.

A. Partial infringement of abilities at school. Dyslexia, dysgraphia.

5. Values, aims, key competences.

A. Educational objectives and values of education-learning process in democratic societies. Key competencies and related competence.

6. Regulation of content of training («input»).

A. Social and cultural aspects of the training program, types of applications, selection of educational material, domestic practice program management.

7. Promoting the development of knowledge of concepts.

A. Features of the formation of public knowledge, information systems concepts, methods of teaching-learning.

8. The development of abilities.

A. The process of development of abilities, skills, meaning of cognition.

9. Motivation.

A. Learning motivation.

10. Regulation of content of training («output»).

A. Quality, efficiency and regulation after completing the Hungarian general education.

11. Pedagogical evaluation.

A. Functions, levels, items, evaluation guidelines, methods and means of evaluation in the educational process, characteristics of student achievement.

12. Pupil-teenager. The biological, social and psychological basis for age-related changes in adolescence.

13. Disadvantaged students.

A. The difficulties caused by social deviations being in the minority, and their relationship with school failure.

14. Talented students.

A. Talents.

15. Psychological characteristics of class.

A. The group phenomena in the classroom: group structures, norms and role conflicts between groups. Sociometry.

16. The student-teacher relationship.

A. The relationship of student-teacher and psychological basis of evaluation: stereotypes attributive processes and attitude.

17. Methods and learning strategies.

A. The methods and learning strategies, their effective application. Forms of learning.

18. Selection, evaluation and use of educational tools.

A. Traditional and innovative learning environment, teaching facilities.

In accordance with the requirements of this part of the state examination the student should focus on the issue stated in the card, organize theory and practice, characterize domestic and international experience, highlight advanced technologies of training, and critically analyze their own experience. This way one can demonstrate the level of professional training. Concerning the level of development of their own teacher competencies the student also reports in the second part of the state exam, but with other accents and modified perspective.

Only students who have completed the course, i.e. fulfilled all requirements of the curriculum, have received positive reviews of the thesis, presented the portfolio are allowed to do the state examination.

Evaluating the answer in the state exam, examiners take into account the [5]:

- Arithmetic average of estimates for the thesis (supervisor review, the portfolio assessment, in the case of at least one unsatisfactory evaluation the student is not allowed to state exam);

- defence of the thesis;

- characteristics of the answers to questions;

- analysis of completing the group practices (estimated by the methodologist of the school);

- evaluation of the teaching internship (the mentor and institution representatives give the mark).

Thus, the structure, elements, comprehensive evaluation of the unified state examination, which is done by future teacher, allow to objectivity ascertain the real level of teacher competencies.

## 4. Conclusions

The Hungarian experience of including the portfolio into the teaching practice and state certification of the education students suggests that the portfolio is an efficient tool in verifying the level of a teacher's competencies and can also be effectively used in the system of higher education in Ukraine.

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