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**SCHOOL-BASED EXPERIENCE IN NEW GENERATION TEACHER TRAINING****Matvieichenko V.V., Moskalets O.O., Denysova N.B.**

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The article focuses on the interim results of school-based experience within the New Generation School Teacher project at Kyiv Borys Grinchenko University. The procedure of preparing and coordinating school visits is discussed, sample observation assignments and observation reports are presented. The innovative practice efficiency is assessed by analyzing the survey results, obtained at the end of the second and third semesters of project pilot.

**Keywords:** pre-service teacher training, school practice, curriculum

Present-day education in Ukraine is undergoing a significant shift of focus from theoretical knowledge accumulation to practical life-related competences acquisition. Pre-service teacher training needs this shift of priorities more than any other professional schooling, as rising generation of teachers could become the leading factor of far-reaching transformations.

The New Generation School Teacher project (NGST) [4], jointly run by the British Council Ukraine and the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, aims to facilitate the desirable alterations in pre-service teacher training. Both in-class procedures and school-based experience are to be reformed. According to the Curriculum [5], developed by the NGST project team, school-based experience as a crucial component in preparing would-be teachers is granted special attention.

According to the traditional procedure of pre-service teacher training in post-soviet Ukraine, school-based experience in the second and third year of studies was mainly dedicated to general pedagogy issues, often irrelevant to language teaching. It was only the final year of Bachelor program that students had a week or two to observe English classes before they were expected to plan and develop their own teaching [1, p. 19]. «Sink or swim» was the best way to describe the experience, both from the point of view of the trainees and trainers. In the result lots of newly-qualified teachers lacked basic professional skills [2].

The New Generation School Teacher project suggests changing the procedure and integrating school-based experience and university in-class activities throughout the whole three-year-long methodology course [4]. Thus students receive the opportunity to see how methodology theories work in present-day school right after they learn them.

Promising as it looks, the new procedure of pre-service teacher training needs to be tested out. Therefore, in September 2016 ten Ukrainian universities started experimental curriculum pilot. In Kyiv Borys Grinchenko university it was decided to train English Philology students according to the innovative program [3]. After a year and a half, by January 2018, about one hundred and seventy bachelor program students, six university teachers and twenty-nine mentors from five schools had been involved in the project and all of them had participated in the pioneering school-based experience.

In this paper we present the interim results of school-based experience within NGST project pilot at Kyiv Borys Grinchenko university as viewed by three groups of experience participants: university teachers, school mentors and students.

As it is recommended by the experimental curriculum, the school-based experience consists of three steps: guided observation, teacher assistantship and observed teaching.

Guided observation takes place throughout the second year of bachelor program. The students attend school on regular basis and observe how experienced teachers implement the theories discussed at university classes into everyday teaching. Next three semesters students are supposed to master the role of teacher assistants, learning to take charge of one or two teacher's responsibilities at a time, e.g. prepare handouts, mark papers, re-group students etc. By the final semester of studies students are expected to be well-prepared to take the whole scope of teacher's responsibilities as for planning and delivering school sessions under the supervision of mentors and university teachers.

So far, we have experienced three semesters of guided observation (two semesters in 2016/17 academic year and the first semester in year 2017/18) and one semester of teacher assistantship. Therefore, our conclusions are mainly based on the first type of innovative practice supplemented by the first insight of second type experience.

After the first year of project pilot we arrived at the conclusion that the optimal frequency of visits to school is six days per semester. The school visits should start during the second week of a term after minimum two methodology classes at the university have been delivered. Afterwards school practice takes place every second week, so we have sufficient time to provide theoretical input between those school-days and get students prepared to observe the target aspect of teaching. The last visit to school in the first and second semesters should be in early December and early May respectively, as the final weeks of each term at school are dedicated to end-of-term tests and seasonal celebrations, consequently mentors are not always able to demonstrate to students those aspects of work that are to be observed.

Another component of preparation for school visits is guided observation instructions, based on the materials by NGST project team. To make the observation more focused and the observation reports easier to fill in and submit, we provide our

students with digital Observation Report template, as shown in Figure 1.

One visit to school is usually focused on two related topics, e.g. 1) Opportunities for second language acquisition and 2) Types of input; 1) Learner autonomy: students' perspective and 2) Learner autonomy: teachers' actions. Students get two observation report templates; for their visit to school they are recommended to print out at least three copies of each template to be filled in during lesson observations. Students watch and analyse minimum three lessons by different teachers. After the school day they choose which two lesson they want to discuss in their observation reports, fill in the rubrics in the template for the chosen lessons, write the conclusion and submit the report to the university teacher via e-mail.

To make sure that students get an opportunity to observe different teachers working with different age groups, a visit schedule is prepared by the university teacher and the representative of school mentors a day before the actual visit. Students are split into micro-groups, and each micro-group has an individual schedule for lesson observations. We make it a point to let students

see the whole variety of teaching styles and methods used by mentors. When students get their schedule they know beforehand what time, where and whom they are going to observe. The same schedule is forwarded to mentors so that they also know how many trainees and when they are going to receive.

Figure 2 demonstrates a sample schedule for school-based experience of a group of 26 students that were split into 7 micro-groups. Each slot contains information about the lesson time and place, teacher's name and the number of micro-groups to be present at the lesson.

To get to know whether this school practice is effective, the second and third year students were given an anonymous survey in which they were asked questions on observation practice process. The questions were supposed to provide information on how students benefited from the observation practice; whether it helped them to understand the material presented in the sessions at the University and, the most important, whether students received practice-oriented experience after performing observation tasks during the observation at school.

The answers of the second year students revealed that more than half of them (69,4% of this group of survey participants) totally or rather agreed that the observation practice had been useful for them. Almost 66% of the respondents found the observation interesting and challenging for them. 72,3% of students indicated that observation assignments helped them to focus on specific aspects of lessons. Besides, 80,5% of survey participants admitted that they had got sufficient guidance for the observation practice from their University methodology teachers. 47,2% of students noticed that they also received sufficient help from mentors during the observation practice. As a result, half of the students (54,7%) think that it will be easy for them to act as an assistant to the teachers they observed during their teacher assistantship practice. Though students will try their hand at teaching only in a year (the fourth year of studying), 41,7% of them feel they will be ready to conduct classes.

At the end of the survey students were offered open-ended questions about what they liked, disliked or wanted to change in the observation practice.

Observation Report 4b	
Name _____	Group _____
Observation date _____	Observation time _____
School _____	Class _____
Teacher _____	
<b>Task Focus: Age factor in language learning. Explicit and implicit language teaching</b>	
Observe at least 3 classes (primary, middle and high school classes if possible). Monitor the explicit and implicit language teaching techniques the teachers use throughout the lessons. Note down evidence.	
NB! Prepare at least 3 templates for your observation, one template for each class observed.	
Explicit teaching	Evidence (detailed description of teacher's instruction, learners' actions, outcome, feedback)
Teacher directs students' attention toward a specific learning objective	
Rules are given before any examples are seen	
Material is taught to students in a very straightforward manner	
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Fig. 1. Sample Observation Report template

Lesson 3 (10.25-11.10)	Lesson 4 (11.20-12.04)	Lesson 5 (12.30-13.15)	Lesson 6 (13.25-14.10)
P-ko I.M. (Room 338)  Micro-groups 5,6, 7	N-ko Y.O. (Room. 340)  Micro-groups 5,6	B-ko Y.V. (Room 414)  Micro-groups 5,6	V-ka N.V. (Room 223)  Micro-groups 5,6
V-ka N.V. (Room 223)  Micro-groups 1,2	M-ko S.B. (Room 320)  Micro-groups 2, 7	N-ko Y.O. (Room 340)  Micro-groups 1,2	B-ko Y.V. (Room 414)  Micro-groups 1,2
P-va A.A. (Room 224)  Micro-groups 3,4	P-ko I.M. (Room 338)  Micro-groups 1,3,4	M-ko S.B. (Room 320)  Micro-groups 3,4	
	V-ka N.V. (Room 223)  Micro-group 6	P-na A.O. (Room 203)  Micro-group 7	N-ko Y.O. (Room 340)  Micro-groups 3,4,7

Fig. 2. Sample schedule of a school visit

The major part of the answers were positive and showed students' real interest in teaching. Students liked to watch the work of teachers in class, different aspects of teaching and methods of work, the possibility of getting new experience. They liked to observe the relations between the teachers and their students. The observation practice helped them to learn more about school teaching.

What students disliked about the observation practice was the fact that they had not been involved in the process of teaching. As for the changes in the observation practice, they would like to have a closer contact with school teachers to get more information about the learning/teaching process. On the whole, the answers show that the observation practice appeals to second-year students.

The third year students were given almost similar questions. Though the general tone of answers was quite the same, some differences could be spotted.

First of all, we were interested whether the third year students still considered the school practice useful for them. The results surpassed all our expectations. There was not a single student who thought it was useless. The statement «The Observation/Assistantship Practice has been useful for you» was strongly and rather supported by 45% and 40% of respondents respectively, leaving only 15% uncertain.

Almost 75% of the survey participants found the observation/assistantship practice interesting and 60% of students considered it to be challenging.

There was an important change of attitude to the career prospects, revealed by the statement «When you graduate from the University you would like to work as a school teacher». It did not find any support from the second year students. They opted for the variant «totally disagree» (22,2%) or «rather disagree» (19,4%). The other 38,9% of survey participants opted for «not sure».

The same question addressed to the third year students gained 35% from those who would like to see themselves as a school teacher. We consider it to be a positive tendency in the attitude of our students to teaching. Though only 10% of respondents rather agreed to work at a school similar to the one they had their observation/assistantship practice and 55% of them doubted this statement, a positive transformation of students' attitude to their prospective teaching career has been detected.

We are also proud to say that students demonstrated genuine appreciation of university and school teachers' effort to provide them with high-quality instruction. Ninety-five percent of the survey participants said they had got sufficient guidance from University teachers of Methodology. 75% of students mentioned sufficient help from school teachers.

The observation tasks prepared by us were to direct our students thoroughly in their observation process at a school. The majority of survey participants (45%) agreed that observation tasks were useful for them and 55% of students found the observation tasks interesting. 85% of the respondents admitted that observation tasks helped them to focus on specific aspects of lessons.

The survey results also demonstrate that the third-year students are optimistic about their present-day ability to teach. 73,7% of respondents found it easy to act as an assistant to their mentors. Many of the survey participants think that next year it will be easy for them to plan and deliver teaching by themselves.

At the end of the survey third year students were given open-ended questions about what they liked, disliked or wanted to change in the observation practice.

Most answers are positive. Students like to observe different teachers and their forms of work in class; to view difficulties they may face. They like acting as teacher assistants and are not afraid of the prospects to be responsible for lessons or at least some parts of lessons. They feel they get new skills and experience during their school visits.

What they do not like is the fact that they are not able to choose the school they want to be in and the location of the school. We will work at it and see what we can do about it.

As for the changes in school trainee practice, they, as well as second year students, would like to have a more interaction with school teachers. Some respondents insist on having an observation/assistantship practice every week and not every other week as they do at the moment.

To sum it up we can state that the survey helped us see students' interest in observation practice and, consequently, in teaching.

We also surveyed school mentors to know their opinion on the new procedure of school practice.

Half of the mentors (54,5%) think it is useful for University students to have the observation practice every other week throughout the three years of studying. They also agree it is reasonable for students to attend classes of different teachers and not to be attached to one and the same teacher all year long.

Not all school teachers agree to see a University teacher in their classroom during the observation practice. The question whether it is desirable to see a University teacher in class during the observation practice gained 0% of the answer «Yes». 27,3% of schoolteachers indicated that they would better see a teacher from the University. 18,2% of the respondents were uncertain about the question. 45,5% of survey participants marked that they would rather not see a University teacher in their classroom. It could provide food for thought for university teachers and a possible direction of mutual professional development.

Though not many of the teacher-mentors are acquainted with the contents of the pilot methodology course (only 27,3% supported the question with the answer «Yes»), half of the mentors admitted getting the information on observation tasks (54,5%). The same percent of respondents (54,5%) expressed their desire to get more information on observation practice.

The question whether it is useful/advisable for schoolteachers to visit methodology sessions at university gained 36,4% of strong and 27,3% of moderate support. 27,3% of participants opted for the variant «I am not sure».

No specific recommendations were given as for how to make the observation practice more effec-

tive, but still the answers we have got from survey participants make us think of positive tendencies in mentors attitude to the new format and procedures of students' school practice.

Thus we can conclude that though the first three semesters of NGST project pilot were quite

challenging, the new procedure of school-based experience has won students' and mentors' approval and support. Therefore, further work in the chosen direction has a good chance to contribute to positive changes in Ukrainian system of pre-service teacher training.

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## ШКІЛЬНА ПРАКТИКА У ПІДГОТОВЦІ ВЧИТЕЛЯ НОВОГО ПОКОЛІННЯ

### Анотація

Стаття присвячена проміжним результатам шкільної практики за експериментальною програмою проекту «Шкільний вчитель нового покоління» у Київському університеті імені Бориса Грінченка. Представлено процес підготовки та організацію візитів до школи, продемонстровано зразки завдань спостереження та шаблонів для звітів. Надана оцінка ефективності інноваційної практики на основі результатів опитувань учасників експерименту наприкінці другого та третього семестрів пілотування проекту.

**Ключові слова:** підготовка майбутнього вчителя, шкільна практика, програма.

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## ШКОЛЬНАЯ ПРАКТИКА В ПОДГОТОВКЕ УЧИТЕЛЯ НОВОГО ПОКОЛЕНИЯ

### Аннотация

Статья посвящается промежуточным результатам школьной практики по экспериментальной программе проекта «Школьный учитель нового поколения» в Киевском университете имени Бориса Гринченко. Представлен процесс подготовки и организации визитов в школу, продемонстрированы образцы заданий наблюдения и шаблонов отчетности. Проведена оценка эффективности инновационной практики на основе результатов опроса участников эксперимента к концу второго и третьего семестров пилотирования проекта.

**Ключевые слова:** подготовка будущего учителя, школьная практика, программа.