

Practicum online – Initial teacher education students’ experience on teaching practicum during the covid-19 lockdown of schools in 2020 March-June

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As one of the most important part of initial teacher education, field practicum was conceptualized and realized all the time, all over the world as an activity of student teachers in the school in their physical presence. For the first time in the history of formal teacher education, in 2020 March practicum was fully interrupted in the majority of the world because of the school lockdowns everywhere. With mixed data collection methods, we collected data on this unique situation of practical learning of teaching from student teachers at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary. We were interested in their experiences on their practicum when it went online: its impact on their teaching activity, their working relationships with their supervisor in the school and the students, also its impact on their professional identity development and their motivation for teaching as a profession. 117 participants gave answers to our online questionnaire, and with 10 of them we carried out semi-structured interviews as well. Our results show that it was a big shock for most of them, which fundamentally changed their working relationship with their supervisors and students. Many of them had positive experiences in this situation, because they could support their supervisors in distance education, and because they found effective online teaching methods with their students. However, they felt lost in this uncertain situation. They also felt that they lost not only physical closeness with their supervisor and students but also as teachers they lost their professional presence and influence, and mostly functioned as distance teaching program on the internet. Still, they felt that they could develop their identity as teachers, and also they didn’t lose their motivation to become teachers in the future, but they felt they couldn’t imagine their future as distant, “online teachers” again for a longer time.