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The Challenges of Beginner Primary School Teachers

Keywords

Beginner teacher, challenges, initial training, efficiency

Abstract

From the initial vocational training to its subsequent integration, the primary school teacher is constantly faced with a series of challenges in the instructive-educational process. He is expected to respond with professionalism and pedagogical tact. This article aims to identify the “buttons” that deserve to be pressed in order to be effective (vision, purpose, commitment) and to become a leader (competent, trustworthy, who cares about another).

1. Review of Literature

The requirement to prepare students for the ever-changing demands of a knowledge society necessitates curriculum reorganization, modernisation of learning resources, teacher training, and a system of assessment.

New colleagues from the faculty frequently arrive at school at the start of the school year, eager to learn as much as

possible. They are full of questions, they share new ideas and thoughts, and they seek advice from more senior colleagues, leaders of methodical commissions, and even the director.

After observing the activities of numerous new teachers at the school and the issues they encountered, I placed more emphasis on the positive experience through study and research in order to meet the needs of this group of educators.

As various specialized studies say, reflection may be the first step for a teacher to look honestly at what and how is happening, in the classroom with their own students, what they could do better, what they can reply to, what to say stop (Senge, 2012). It is certainly not easy to accept at first that not only children have something to learn, but also that you as a teacher are in the same position as a person who adapts, is flexible, uses scientific information in his own personal development.

On a personal level, keeping a reflective journal, focusing on pedagogical practice, and employing psychological techniques of approach can all assist in overcoming the challenges of the early years of teaching (Spătărelu, 2020). Individual reflection, self-assessment, and how we get involved in knowing our own didactic approach are the ways in which all aspects of the student's knowledge can be applied coherently.

"The mentoring process is more than just a tool; it is a technique for business development, personal development, and professional development. "Mentoring provides a topical but valuable experience through personal experiences and examples" (Hayes, 2000, on-line). Individual teachers' concerns and professional learning goals are not constructed in vacuum, but are constructed within a school context (Monika, 2018). Mentors must obtain proper training to guarantee that the mentee has the best possible environment in which to carry out the activity (Spătărelu, 2020). Each schoolteacher relates to the

best, respectively, the most uninspired professor / mentor he has had, sooner or later, consciously, or unconsciously, throughout the painful process of teacher training. This paradigm, whether true or wrong, acts on motivational forces, resulting in either failures or beneficial career choices. What is known is that the "disciple" must be aware of the landmark's presence and act in the sense of his creative promotion, or critical inhibition, respectively.

2. Methodology

The major goal of this study was to identify the immediate training and personal development needs of primary school teachers in their first five years of employment, as well as strategies to address those needs.

Research Objectives

We have established the following goals considering the stated purpose:

1. describing of how new primary school teachers value the feeling of well-being in the school where they work;
2. identifying the most important training and personal development needs of beginning teachers;
3. analysing how the school acts to meet the training and personal development needs of beginning teachers;
4. analysing opinions about the most important values and personal characteristics of a teacher;
5. examining how beginning teachers find solutions to achieve their goals.

Research Hypothesis

Participating in programs where teachers are taught in specific ways of vocational training and personal development stimulates and motivates them to solve problems creatively, make collective decisions, and maximize classroom activity.

Research Variables

According to the hypothesis and objectives, the two types of variables (independent variables and dependent variables) were established in the research context.

Participation in various professional training and personal development programs on a regular basis is an independent variable.

Age, location, and type of institution where the activity takes place, seniority in education, teaching degree, and type of employment earned are all dependent variables.

Research Methods and Tools

In order to conduct this empirical study, the satisfaction questionnaire for teachers was chosen as the approach for determining the immediate training and personal development needs of novice primary school teachers. It was an online tool,

The questionnaire's questions are divided into two categories based on how the answers are recorded: open-ended questions and closed-ended questions. The responses to the open-ended questions provided me with ample information to research the problem.

Population

The researched population consisted of 19 primary school teachers in the first five years of teaching, as follows: 13 of them teach in an urban school (68.4%) and 6 of them teach in rural areas (31.6%). 15 of them are employed for an

indefinite period (78.9%), and 4 teachers obtained a position for a fixed period (21.1%). 16 of the primary school teachers teach in a private school (84.2%), and 3 teach in a state school (15.8%). Their age is between 22-30 years (14 teachers) and 42-48 years (5 teachers).

3. Results and Discussions

The questionnaire has a total of 20 questions, with 2-3 of them being identical. There are six open questions and fourteen closed questions.

There are some limitations to this study that may lessen the value of generality. Because of the small number of participants, the results can only be applied to a portion of the population. A minority of the educational institutions picked is unable to provide a concrete overview.

When we examine the data from the applicable questionnaire, we can see how important early training is at the start of a teaching profession.

The first item in the questionnaire "I feel..." it had three variants of answers: "Great", "Good", "So-and-so". The majority of teachers responded "Good", (47,7%), which could imply the presence of various plausible causes for the status of "Wonderful" to be dethroned. 31.6% feel "Great", and 21.1% feel "So-and-so".

Teachers responded to the second question by describing how they would like to be called out by their students. 8 of them noted the "Miss", 10 prefer to be addressed by their first names, and 1 teacher says she would have preferred to be addressed by his first name, but "given the circumstances, - Miss – it became lovely." The respect and trust that a student has for his or her teacher is based on many other aspects of their personalities and styles, not just the formula of address.

Although some modern teachers welcome students addressing them by their first names, the majority of teachers still have an old-school mentality, and addressing them by their first names could result in disciplinary action in the worst-case situation (Harzing, 2010).

On the third question, the teachers were asked to choose from a list of the most significant challenges they confront at the start of their careers. The following list is according to the resulting percentages:

- Lack of experience
- Discordance between theory and practice
- Absence of a model offered by experienced teachers
- Absence of an efficient pedagogical practice
- Ineffective mentoring
- Completing school documents
- Inadequate classroom discipline management
- Design and planning of teaching activities
- Completing school documents
- The presence of extra tasks
- A breakdown in communication with parents
- The tenure evaluation

To evaluate individual attitudes toward some of the problems encountered by beginning teachers, survey participants were asked to complete a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7, allowing them to check their level of agreement. As a result, discrepancy between theory and practice are frequent, according to the surveyed teachers. 63,1% of them "agree somewhat", "mostly agree", and "completely agree". "One of the best ways to link theory and practice is through a process of self-critical and systematic inquiry about teaching. Not only is knowledge generated through the inquiry project, but the

personal and professional relationships of the interns and mentors are strengthened. " (Senge, 2012)

The lack of professional experience is an important difficulty in the first years of activity. 68,4 % of the teachers agree with this. A high percentage of 74% opted for "mostly agree" and "totally agree" regarding the lack of empathy of colleagues towards a beginner, which can affect the development of teaching. 47,4 % of teachers completely agree that required to complete the daily school documents is difficult. 47% of them receive additional work tasks, such as completing documents for special occasions. It should be noted that the tasks are present in the case of all 3 surveyed teachers working in the public system. 94,7% of teachers "totally agree" that communication with parents, as partners in education, is essential for the optimal development of the instructional-educational process.

For 42.1% of primary school teachers, the tenure exam at the beginning of their teaching career is a difficult obstacle. For 47.4% of teachers, the mathematical activities have a high degree of difficulty among all the activities carried out classes. 73,7 % of them chose to "mostly agree" that the lack of a role model provided by a mentor or experienced teacher affects personal development.

Item 19 of the questionnaire asked study participants to come up with three questions to ask a good mentor. We could notice three major areas of interest based on the questions asked:

- Collaboration with students' families
- Classroom discipline management
- Personal and professional training balance

Two items on the questionnaire treated with teachers' perceptions of the climate in the school where they work. A very open climate prevailed at the level of the school

organization in which 52 % of the questionnaire participants worked. Private schools in urban areas serve the majority of the population. A medium open climate is represented by 26,3 % of novice teachers.

To item number 18, "At school I did not expect to..." teachers mention the real challenges they face and that complement the list of problems they face: "I do not communicate with colleagues", "the relationship with parents to be so difficult", "to come with enthusiasm every day", "to stay overtime so frequently", "to have to teach simultaneously". An assault of such statements can reveal details about the existing reality, commitment, personal and school vision.

Another three questions in the survey were designed to determine the most significant values and personal attributes of a teacher, according to the respondents. Kindness, respect, empathy, honesty, and patience are the most crucial virtues for teachers to pass on to their students. Adaptability, responsibility, patience, creativity, optimistic attitude, and stress resistance are among the most significant personal qualities / competences listed in order of selection.

When asked how teachers overcame the challenges they had in their early years of teaching, they applied the solutions listed below:

- Self-learning
- Embracing the positive role model of experienced teachers
- Emphasis on pedagogical practice
- Reflective journaling
- Collaboration between administrators and teachers

4. Conclusions

Trying a thorough analysis of the results obtained, it can be seen that the majority of the new teachers questioned feel "Good" in their places of work, conforming to an open climate, demonstrating their interest in personal and professional development.

In terms of the identified needs for carrying out teaching activities in optimal conditions, the interviewed teachers emphasized the need for professional training, which included both specialized information (pedagogical competences, classroom management) and psycho-social information (communication skills, relationship with parents).

Mentoring, according to the interviewed teachers, is an important aspect of their educational present. The mentor's position is critical in both the observation and analysis sessions since he serves as a focal point for the practical activity.

Due to the general tendency among teachers to divide knowledge teaching and value education into two distinct works, there is a strong need for participation in programs in which value education and best - practice teaching strategies are strongly intertwined.

Given the complexity of their responsibilities, the full range of knowledge and skills they must master, and the importance of having sufficient practical experience in real classrooms as part of their initial training, it is hardly surprising that initial teacher training courses are required.

Peter Senge writes in his book "Schools that Teach" (2012) that students will never regard learning as natural and necessary if they do not see their teachers learning, collaborating, and seeking information about the most appropriate pedagogical means. The teacher, like the parent, serves as a model for the child.

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Tables, Figures and Appendices

Table 1

Sample

Primary School Teachers	Trainees	Substitute teachers	Definitivat	II Degree
19	6	2	9	2

Note. The table above shows the distribution of the teachers surveyed in terms of their teaching degree