

Professional Inductions of Teachers in Europe and Elsewhere

Edited by
Milena Valenčič Zuljan
and Janez Vogrinc



University of *Ljubljana*
Faculty of *Education*



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Foreword

Sometimes, the importance and the complexity of the role that we ask our teachers to play in our societies do not get full recognition. Teachers are asked to prepare our young people to be the citizens of tomorrow; to develop their talents and fulfil their potential for personal growth and well-being; and to acquire the complex range of knowledge and skills they will need as workers.

Moreover, in addition to their traditional skills, today we expect our teachers to make use of the latest technologies; to keep up-to-date with the latest developments in their subjects and in pedagogy; and to effectively manage their classrooms. Finally, in many parts of Europe today's classrooms are much more diverse than in the past. Classrooms tend to integrate pupils from different social backgrounds, different levels of ability and disability, and sometimes pupils with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. We know from talking to teachers that this can really be a challenge.

As a consequence, improving the quality of teacher education is vital to improve the opportunities of our young people and it will ultimately help the European Union in terms of both its social cohesion and competitiveness. The European Commission works closely with Member States to improve the quality of education and training in the EU, and has recently published a Communication outlining how Member States could improve the quality of the education that our teachers receive¹.

We would like to see a situation in which all teachers can engage in education and professional development throughout their careers, in a culture of reflective practice and self-evaluation. We believe that teachers should have an effective programme of induction during their first years in the profession and should have access to guidance and mentoring by experienced teachers or other professionals throughout their careers. Teaching is a demanding profession and our teachers deserve every possible support. If teachers are given access to a well-resourced, coherent and attractive support system from the beginning to the end of their careers, I believe that their performance will be improved, their job satisfaction will be raised, and they will be encouraged to stay in the profession for longer.

I therefore welcome this monograph which provides an important contribution to the Europe-wide debate on these issues.

Ján Figel
EU Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth
European Commission, Brussels



¹ »Improving the Quality of Teacher Education«, at http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/objectives_en.html

Extract from a Review

The main theme of this monograph - mentoring and induction of beginning teachers – is certainly highly relevant to the quality of future teachers in Europe and elsewhere. The contributions from different countries are characterised by a great variety, which is understandable as not only authors' positions but also their contexts – policies, development processes, and research traditions – vary a lot. However, most of the authors are highly competent in the field they present.

The citations and the use of literature sources reveal the usual »gap« between the dominant Anglo-research community and other linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Thus, some authors only cite literature in their mother tongue which cannot be accessed by »important others«. A publication like this can help in building useful bridges between the communities.

The contributions are logically grouped into two parts. The papers in the first part deal with the general context (system of teacher education) and topics such as developing teachers' general and specific competencies (socio-emotional competencies are important in this respect). Some descriptions of existing contexts show the complexity and dilemmas that are part of discussions and regulations in the field of teacher education across Europe and the world. Some examples: the »eternal« phase of transition in Italy, the negative role of central bureaucracy in Australia, etc. Also, some common topics emerge such as the central question of the relationship between theory and practice and of (lack of) coherence in initial teacher education, conflicts between the role of different subjects, between »subject matter« and the professional field etc.

The second part focuses on teacher induction – the system, models, theoretical backgrounds and research studies which represent an interesting mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The focus is thus constantly moving between the macro- and micro-level, between system variables and experiences of individual teacher novices and their mentors.

Some countries have developed a good system of induction and even education of mentors – others, for various reasons, do not have such a system and are trying to develop it. In most cases, there is no lack of supporting evidence, but there is a lack of political will. As regards models, a relatively new model (and one not easy to follow) is presented – the Canadian model, characterised by placing beginning teachers in inquiry groups functioning as learning communities.

In spite of such variety, there are some common themes emerging from research studies, like the urgent need for novice teachers to get qualified support in their first year of »regular« work in the school. Even areas where they meet most problems are similar in different countries, for example communication with parents,

classroom management, discipline problems, developing self-confidence and professional identity. Also, the need for qualified mentors (and also school heads) is apparent from the studies.

Thus, in spite of the variety of approaches and findings reported in the individual papers, this monograph can be regarded as an important stepping stone towards educating teachers better prepared to face the challenges of tomorrow, teachers who will be more satisfied and less inclined to leave the profession - if only the existing knowledge gets a chance of being put into practice. As one of the contributors from the other side of the world put it, »There is no lack of advice or understanding of the issues facing teacher education. There is a significant lack of political will in addressing them«.

*Prof. Ddr. Barica Marentič Požarnik
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia*

The research work of the authors in this monograph has aimed at finding what is going on in internationally in the area that is so crucial for quality professional activity of teachers – the induction of a novice teacher and further training. We get an insight into the key features of the teacher education teachers in countries ranging from Japan to Europe and the USA. Many of the authors (for example, the German contributor) provide a detailed insight into the system of education in their country and the role of teacher education in these systems. Unfortunately, none of the countries included in the volume are satisfied with their system of teacher development, even though in the recent year this field has been getting more and more attention.

The pedagogical concepts underlying individual approaches to induction differ considerably; in some countries they are clearly defined, in others only vaguely. In most of the systems, induction is viewed as situational, reflective and constructivist learning, and this is the basis for analysing the possibilities of developing the induction process and further education. An interesting perspective is provided by the contributor from Japan, where they insist on teacher candidates gaining as much knowledge and practical skill as possible in the pre-service period. Despite that, they consider induction the decisive phase of a teacher's career. One of the increasingly popular models is that of groups of novice teachers functioning as learning communities in which mentoring plays an important role in creating better conditions for teachers to enter into their profession.

To conclude this review, we wish to cite the paper on mentoring in anglophone Canada, which captures the gist: the problems and challenges faced by novice teachers are the same worldwide. Approaches used by institutions and authorities should be systematic and based on the needs of the novice teacher. Mentoring is considered adequate because an older and more experienced colleague, when the

right person is selected, is the most familiar with the problems faced by a novice teacher.

If we agree with the previous statements, the questions still remains to what extent such a model of induction supports and enables the transfer of learning into practice. Most researchers report dissatisfaction with how this problem is being solved in their context, which indicates a need for different models of induction. One of the possibilities is offered by Slovenia: a cognitive-constructivist model of induction focusing on cognitive conflict created by considering the novice's experience. It is also possible to consider using some solutions from the systems of induction in the fields of medicine and law.

The present monograph offers important findings in the area of teacher induction. The findings are important primarily because of the wide array of countries presented and the original approaches to researching the topic. I am sure that this will be an encouragement for researchers to embark on finding new, more effective models of teacher induction which, as is agreed throughout the world, is a very important phase of teacher development and needs more attention than it has received so far.

As I look at the facts presented in this book from a different angle and ask myself whether something could have been left out and neglected, I do not think that was possible. Even the parts which at first seem distantly related to the topic are valuable – precisely because they bring a different perspective that is just as important. To sum up, major work well done, and I am deeply convinced that the book will be of value to all educators. I am pleased to congratulate the publisher and the authors. May it benefit those whom it is aimed at.

*Prof. Dr. Grozdanka Gojkov
University of Novi Sad, Serbia*

Introduction

According to the authors of the Green Book on Teacher Education in Europe (Buchberger et al, 2001, p. 63), systematic induction of teachers into the professional culture of a school is a blind spot of today's teacher education. Many positive effects that are achieved during pre-service education are annulled in the initial phase of professional activity. Clearly, there is a need for a systematic model of a culture of induction of trainees and novices in the teaching profession in individual countries. At the same time this is a challenge for researchers and teacher educators at an international scale who are willing to cooperate, exchange experiences and findings, and build new partnerships.

In a broader sense building a culture of induction of novice teachers begins with a student's entry into a course of studies leading to a teaching qualification. The key factors here are the content and the methods, the overt and the hidden curriculum. Teacher educators also have to be aware of the specific experience our students bring to the program. Future teachers namely embark on their studies with more than the students of other academic disciplines – not just a desire to teach, but a wealth of memories which have shaped their deeply-rooted conceptions of instruction, learning and teaching. All the theoretical dimensions of instruction have been experienced through years of schooling – every future teacher has been a primary and a secondary school student, and this has a strong impact on their future professional activity.

More specifically, however, building a culture of induction begins with a novice teacher's first employment in an educational institution. The novice teacher's professional development is affected not only by the regulations concerning this period and the certification requirements, but also by the atmosphere within which induction takes place in a specific institution. A key person in the process of induction is the mentor, who should be appropriately trained, and the headmaster. From the perspective of lifelong learning and a modern model of mentoring, other teachers at the school and the staffroom climate also play an important role. Last but not least, cooperation between schools and the tertiary institutions educating teachers should ensure a high level of competence of novice teachers.

In Slovenia, a project was carried out in 2004/05 and 2006/07 entitled: "Partnership of faculties and schools: A model of systematic induction of trainees and novices in the teaching profession", which was co-financed by the European Social Fund at the EU and the Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia.

The main aim of the project was to form and evaluate a model of systematic professional induction of teachers which will enable intensive professional development of novice teachers and prepare them for effective professional activity. For this purpose, the project team developed a description of the competences of a

novice teacher and the competences of a mentor, carried out a mentor training project, wrote a handbook for novice teachers and textbook for mentors ...

One of the key aims of the project was to shed light on induction as the sensitive period of a teacher's entry into the profession from a broader international perspective. We have invited various scientists in the area of teacher education to contribute to the present volume in order to exchange their findings on various aspects of induction; the legal aspect, the role of the mentor and certification. We were interested in recent research from different countries into the roles of the headmaster and mentor in the process of induction, the competences novice teachers should develop during the induction period, the competences of a mentor, the difficulties novice teachers face, the difficulties mentors face... We also wished to present proposals of organizational and normative change which researchers believe are necessary for a quality teacher induction.

The volume contains 22 papers from 18 countries. All papers were reviewed by two experts, and some of them by a third reviewer. Even though the scientific quality of the papers varies, the editors and reviewers agreed to publish all the contributions, since each of them presents a different perspective and thus contributes to the whole picture.

The volume is divided into two parts: *Teacher education: context, dilemmas, competencies* and *Teacher induction: models and research*. We provide here a brief introduction to each of the papers.

In his article, Richard Bates analyses the Australian teacher education. There are no national standards for teachers in the early childhood sector, no mechanisms for the certification or accreditation of the various courses, no registration bodies for professionals and no consistency in the occupational standards or award rates for employment. Primary and Secondary teacher education are almost always lumped together as 'teacher education' despite the fact that the trajectories and requirements for the two sectors are significantly different. Australian primary school teachers are required to teach across all (usually six or seven) curriculum areas with particular emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Secondary teachers typically teach within two curriculum subjects (although it often the case that they are required to teach outside their areas of specific content knowledge).

Franco Zambelli analyses teacher training and recruitment in Italy. The teaching profession in Italy is still in a state of transition, trying to find its identity and role. A teaching qualification is a *conditio sine qua non* for admission to the entrance examinations necessary to acquire a permanent contract. After passing this examination and being taken on in a school, a teacher has to undergo a (training) probationary year, after which he or she acquires permanent status. The trainee teacher receives information and training about his/her own subject, teaching methods, educational psychology and pedagogy, and managing learning dynamics. Some of the activities that the trainee is involved in are carried out as e-learning. The aim of at least part of this training is to refresh the trainee's knowledge about

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Janez Vogrinc works as a lecturer in statistics and methodology at the Faculty of Education in Ljubljana. He is involved in several projects dealing with educational concepts, professional development of educators and teaching/learning practices, action research, mentoring ... He has published in the area of research methods, both qualitative and quantitative. His primary research area is criteria for evaluating the quality of results of qualitative research.



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