

BEGINNER TEACHERS IN THE RECENT RESEARCH: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Keywords

Beginner teacher, induction programs, initial training, tenure exam, teacher mentoring

Abstract

This article aims to analyse recent research dealing with beginning teachers. For this purpose, 26 articles were selected. These articles investigate the issue of mentoring, specific experiences, the induction process and initial teacher training. Each of them was analysed in turn, trying to highlight the common elements and the original elements. Tables was used to summarize very clearly the basic structural elements or to highlight certain developments in the analysis of the identified phenomena.

Following the synthesis of the most important information, it could be seen that most countries use a form of testing of those who start teaching. The results obtained at these tenure exams vary depending on the level of education, environment of residence and area of origin. These examinations are followed by the adaptation period when professional identity is established and many beginning teachers face important challenges.

Many countries have mentoring programs that help teachers in the accommodation process. Mentors need to be trained in order to provide a comfortable working space for beginners. Mentoring is useful for preventing beginner teacher turnover, increasing job satisfaction and improving students' learning outcomes.

1. Introduction

The issue of beginning teachers is important in the context of the concern for training a generation of quality teachers. The challenges of the first years of teaching leave their mark on the entire teaching career. In the first years of teaching, support, help, understanding and advice are needed. Sometimes the difficulties encountered can be so strong that the teacher is forced to abandon this profession.

The main purpose of this article is the analysis of research in recent years that deals with the subject of young teachers. For this, 26 articles of various types were selected. The examination will include both analytical and synthetic elements to create the most complete image possible.

The main areas covered by the latest research in the field are: mentoring (Hobson, & Malderez, 2013; McIntyre, & Hobson, 2016; Smit, & du Toit, 2016; Lavry, 2017; Vikaraman, Mansor, & Hamzah, 2017), specific experiences (LePage, Courey, Fearn, & Cook, 2010; White, 2011; Joseph, 2011; Wiegerova, & Lampertova, 2012), induction process (Hobson, Ashby, McIntyre, & Malderez, 2010; Spătărelu, 2015a; Spătărelu, 2015b; Rahmat, 2016; Spătărelu, 2019a; Kiru, 2020), tools used (Joseph, 2011; White, 2011; Wiegerova, & Lampertova, 2012; Hobson, & Malderez, 2013; Marsh, & Mitchell 2014), initial training (Lavry, 2017; Amorim, & Silva Fernandes, 2018, Spătărelu, 2019a), recommendations (Le Page, Courey, Fearn, & Benson, 2010; Spătărelu, 2019a), Tenure

exam (Spătărelu 2015b, Spătărelu 2019a, Kiru 2020), international comparisons (Hobson, Ashby, McIntyre, Malderez, 2010; Spătărelu, 2015a; Spătărelu 2020), national or zonal analyses (O'Brien, 2009; Joseph, 2011; Spătărelu 2015b; Kiru, 2020), characteristics of the teachers (Duta, Tomoai, Panisoara, 2015; Spătărelu, 2019a).

Each theme will be analysed in turn, trying to highlight the common elements and the original elements. Tables will be used to summarize very clearly the basic structural elements or to highlight certain developments in the analysis of the identified phenomena. The articles will be analysed in order of their relevance and visibility.

2. Mentoring and beginner teachers

One of the most common citations in this field is the article written by Hobson and Malderez (2013). The purpose of their research is to identify the causes that prevent the mentoring activity from achieving its objectives. As a research method is used the interview is applied to beginning teachers in primary and secondary education. The results indicate that mentoring in England has some problems in the area of the relationship between mentor and beginner, against the background of a certain national legislative context. As a general idea, it is necessary to reach a consensus on the meaning and purpose of the mentor and to provide appropriate training for this role. As an original element, the article identifies the practice of criticism or judgment as an obstacle in making the connection between mentor and beginner.

The second article under consideration maintains the focus on identity, but this time the identity of the mentor is not discussed but of the novice teacher. McIntyre and Hobson (2016) aim to examine the impact of mentoring and other teacher support programs. Structured interviews and case studies are used as

methods. The subjects were primary and secondary school teachers. The results show that external mentors encourage the development of identity in three specific aspects: the one related to the performing school culture, the one related to the community of practice and the one related to the development as a specialist in a certain field. The idea of the importance of external mentors in the context of the theory of the third space is emphasized. The theory of the third space refers to the community space where someone spends his time when he is not at home or at work. The third space has the greatest impact on the formation of professional identity.

Older articles (Watkins, & Whalley, 1993) try to address much more practical issues such as providing practical advice on the main problems and solving them. Thus, the main deficiencies related to the specifics of the school, communication problems, challenges and conflicts, issues of resources, management of learning experiences, multiple mentors and the school's ability to learn from experience are discussed. Articles of this type do not focus on research but on offering advice and recommendations for visible improvements in practice in the area of mentoring.

Vikaraman, Mansor, and Hamzad (2017) distinguish between mentoring and coaching. The first involves providing professional help, the second focuses on career development assistance. Beginner teachers need assistance both in terms of professional development and in terms of personal development. The implications of the research lead to the idea that the mentor must also have the training of a coach, who also deals with personal balance, self-control and the influences and perceptions of each individual. Based on the answers provided by a questionnaire applied to a group of novice teachers, it was established, among other things, that mentors need to be trained in order to provide a comfortable working space for beginners and that mentors need to emotionally support teachers.

Smit and du Toit (2016) investigate the development of beginning teachers under the supervision of peer mentors. The investigative action will be in the form of action research which includes: context viewing, planning, observation, reflection, planning, action, observation, reflection, etc. Reflection actions are interpreted according to the profile of each mentor. It is recommended to use psychological tools to know the thinking style of each person involved to facilitate learning in general and mentoring in particular.

Lawry (2017) is of the opinion that there is controversy regarding the nature of mentoring. There are several different types of mentoring goals that can have various implications for pedagogical processes. Research shows that mentoring is useful for preventing beginner teacher turnover, increasing job satisfaction and improving students' learning outcomes. But more needs to be done to investigate how beginners can be helped in the learning process.

3. Beginner teachers' experiences

White (2011) presents the ways in which, as an educator of beginning teachers, she managed to develop an effective modelling system in such a way that students reflect on what they have learned. Among the methods she uses are: identifying and analysing good models offered by professional practice, promoting metacognitive processes, developing the ability to reflect, monitoring the responses of students to monitoring, listening to students' experiences with their own teaching and using various teaching methods.

LePage et al. (2010) present evidence of experiences and knowledge that helps teacher educators develop the skills and dispositions they need for effective teaching by identifying and analysing the signature pedagogies involved in inclusive education.

Joseph (2011) uses narrative reflections to draw attention to the problems young teachers face and how they try to stay true to their chosen profession. The adaptation process is the process by which professional identity is established. Wiegerova and Lampertova (2012) use teacher diaries as research tools to study the process of integrating novice teachers into teaching activities in primary education. Due to their importance, journals should become mandatory in the process of adapting to the formation of reflection skills. They have the opportunity to see and understand inner experiences and the school environment. Moreover, they could become important research tools.

In earlier research, Buchner (1997) shows that despite the fact that vocational training programs have tried to improve over time, novice teachers continue to experience the same problems when they start working. This shows that training programs alone cannot solve this problem and that other methods must be used. The causes of the shock at the beginning could be: personality or attitude problems, problems induced by the school climate, problems related to teaching and the relationship with the class of students, problems related to the multitude of documents to be written and problems related to relationships with persons in the institution or administration. Among the solutions listed include: extending the period of pedagogical practice, reviewing courses to provide the necessary experience, introducing a period of internship, organizing special induction programs.

Later, Ashby, Hobson, Tracey, Malderez, Tomlinson, Roper, Chambers, and Healy (2008) compile a comprehensive review of all teachers' experiences during initial training. Detailed information on recruitment, motivation, preconceptions, expectations, needs, experiences initials, the choice of the first position, the experiences of the first year, the experiences of the following years, and the abandonment of the beginning teachers.

4. Weaknesses of induction programs

The induction of the teaching staff is influenced both by the economic factors (Spătărelu, 2015a; Spătărelu, 2020) and by the specific programs initiated by the educational institutions or by the education systems. International comparisons show that most countries use a form of testing of those who start teaching (Hobson et al., 2010).

In Romania, for example, each graduate must take a tenure exam. Teachers can only have a permanent position if they manage to get a very good grade and only if there are vacancies available. Others, with lower grades, can get a job for a short time and have to take the tenure exam until they receive a grade that allows them access to a permanent job. Those with very low grades do not receive the right to practice (Spătărelu, 2015b; Spătărelu 2019a). In Scotland, for example, the novice teacher is provided with a one-year probationary position, but not full-time, providing time for professional development and access to an experienced teacher for professional support (Obrien, 2009).

Research in preschool education has shown that there are no correlations between the induction program and children's performance (Rahmat, 2016), young teachers have more optimistic expectations about educational policies (Spătărelu, 2019b) and their experience on the integration of values morale in teaching is limited (Spătărelu 2019c).

Through interviews, Amorim and Silva Fernandes (2018) analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher training program and how it can support teacher integration. Beginner teachers recognize that initial training is the most important to learn teaching, but also signal certain weaknesses in the system such as the devaluation of pedagogical practice that should be introduced in theoretical training. The need for a more important

focus on pedagogical practice was also underlined by the research conducted by Spătărelu (2019a).

5. Specific instruments for induction programs

Regarding the methods and tools used in investigating the topics related to beginning teachers, the following were identified: the use of video materials (Marsh, & Mitchel, 2014), modeling and reflective dialogue (White, 2011), narrative reflection (Joseph, 2011), interviews (Hobson, & Malderez, 2013), action research (Smit, du Toit, 2016), international comparisons (Hobson et al., 2010), quantitative research (Duta, Tomoaica, & Panisoara, 2014, Spătărelu, 2020; Kiru, 2020), review of literature (Ashby et al., 2008; de Oliveira Padura, & Franca-Carvalho, 2019)

6. Conclusions

Following the synthesis of the most important information, it could be seen that most countries use a form of testing of those who start teaching. The results obtained at these tenure exams vary depending on the level of education, environment of residence and area of origin. These examinations are followed by the adaptation period when professional identity is established and many beginning teachers face important challenges.

Many countries have mentoring programs that help teachers in the accommodation process. Mentors need to be trained in order to provide a comfortable working space for beginners. Mentoring is useful for preventing beginner teacher turnover, increasing job satisfaction and improving students' learning outcomes. Some studies discuss the idea of equipping mentors with qualities of coaches to improve the relationship between them and beginning teachers and even the use of mentors from outside.

In addition to these ideas, it has been proposed to use reflective journals, and the use of psychological tools for analysing thinking styles. The need for a stronger focus on pedagogical practice and the development of special strategies for teachers teaching in areas with specific needs was emphasized.

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Tables, figures and appendices

Table 1. Centralization of essential information

Year	Author	Title	Journal	Method and instruments	Results and Conclusions
2010	Hobson et al.	International approaches to teacher selection and recruitment.	<i>OECD Education Working Papers</i>	International comparisons	International comparisons show that most countries use a form of testing of those who start teaching
2010	LePage et al.	Curriculum Recommendations for Inclusive Teacher Education	International Journal of Whole Schooling	Analysis of official documents	Analysing the signature pedagogies involved in inclusive education
2011	White	Working towards explicit modelling: experiences of a new teacher educator	Professional development in education	Reflective methods	Developing an effective modelling system in such a way that students reflect on what they have learned
2011	Joseph	Early Career teaching: Learning to be a teacher and staying in the job	Australian journal of teacher education	Narrative reflections	The adaptation process is the process by which professional identity is established

2012	Wiegerova and Lamper tova	A teacher's diary as a research instrument to determine the integration process of a beginner teacher into daily life at a primary school.	The Future of Education.	teacher's diary analyses	Diaries should become mandatory in the process of adapting to the formation of reflection skills
2013	Hobson and Malder ez	Judge mentoring and other threats to realizing the potential of school-based mentoring in teacher education	International journal of mentoring and coaching in education	interviews	Relationship between mentor and beginner needs to be improved
2015	Spătăre lu	Graduates' Insertions on Pre-secondary Education Labour Market.	<i>Plus Education</i>	quantitative analysis	The results obtained at the tenure exam vary depending on the level of education, environment of residence and area of origin.

2016	McIntyre and Hobson	Supporting beginner teacher identity development: external mentors and the third space	Research Papers in Education	Structured interviews and case studies	The idea of the importance of external mentors in the context of the theory of the third space is emphasized
2016	Smit and du Toit	Transforming beginner teacher mentoring interventions for social reform	South African Journal of Education	Action research	It is recommended to use psychological tools to know the thinking style of each person involved to facilitate learning in general and mentoring in particular
2017	Vikarman, Mansor, and Hamzad	Mentoring and coaching practices for beginner teachers—A need for mentor coaching skills training and principal's support	Creative Education	Questionnaire	Mentors need to be trained in order to provide a comfortable working space for beginners

2017	Lawry	The Effect of Mentor Teachers on Initial Teacher Training and Emergence as a Beginner Teacher.	Journal of Initial Teacher Inquiry	Literature review	Mentoring is useful for preventing beginner teacher turnover, increasing job satisfaction and improving students' learning outcomes
2019	Spătăre lu	Student Satisfaction, Teaching Practicum and Academic Achievement	Journal of Education Studies	quantitative analysis	The need for greater concentration on pedagogical practicum
2020	Kiru	Beginner teachers and the challenges of the tenure exams: A longitudinal zonal analysis of official data from pre-secondary education.	IJRDO - Journal of Educational Research	quantitative analysis	The needs for specific educational programs for initial training of the teachers who teach in specific areas

2020	Spătăre lu	Beginner Teachers in Primary Education: Comparisons Among European Countries	Journal of Education Studies	quantitative analysis	There is a need for educational and social policies that encourage young people to choose and to remain in the teaching profession.
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