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COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE INDUCTION OF TEACHERS IN THE EUROPEAN STATES SYSTEMS

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Abstract

In this increasingly globalized world, people are in competition not only locally but also internationally. The problem that prefigured the research has focused on finding the next reality: less developed countries, that invest little in education, register lower levels of training for both students and teachers, and in developed countries, education systems attracts the best graduates to the profession, turn school into organizations run exclusively on the basis of professional standards, not through bureaucratic and rigid forms of administration and control. In order to drag conclusions in this research, we did the comparative analytical study of the education systems in Finland, Germany, Estonia and UK regarding the initial teachers training. Then we stopped precisely on the way that teachers induction is realized in pre-university education. The investigated problem was that: in the European states that have achieved high performance in education according to the Pisa conducted by the OECD, all their education systems should have a large share of common elements. Looking at important issues, we noticed that there are common characteristics including: the need to provide teachers with the appropriate initial training, making the teaching career an attractive choice and the existence of a national teachers induction program. The existence of the professional induction programs of the debutants must be a priority for Romanian school, as it is in the other countries from Europe. This goal can be achieved by designing and developing the a quality in-service training system.

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Keywords: Induction, customized induction program, mentor, mentoring, training, performance.



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1. Introduction

The globalization and modernization that the current world knows generates a series of challenges for teachers and school systems. The growth and diversification of human interconnection, the rapid technological change in everyday life and the availability of a huge amount of information are just a few of the factors that contribute to making truly dramatic changes in education. In this increasingly globalized world, teachers compete not only locally but also internationally.

The problem that prefigures research has focused on finding the following reality: poorer countries, which invest few resources in education, are aware of lower levels of training debutants, and education systems in developed countries, attract the best graduates to the professorship, that transforms schools into organizations run exclusively on the basis of professional standards, not by bureaucratic and rigid forms of administration and control.

In order to draw conclusions in this respect, we did the comparative analytical study of the education systems in Finland, Germany, Estonia and the UK regarding the induction of the debutants. Then we stopped to the way these states provide mentoring to teachers working early childhood education.

2. Problem Statement

The investigated problem - Induction of teaching staff in the educational systems of the European states that have recorded performance in PISA testing conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) - comparative research.

3. Research Questions

The research questions relate to the following assumptions:

1. There are common characteristics of teacher induction models in the first ranked European states according to PISA.
2. The experience of these countries can constitute a set of patterns that can inspire the process of teacher induction in Romania.

If the European states have recorded educational performance in accordance with the OECD's PISA testing, all their education systems should have a large share of common elements in the induction of teachers, and if so what are the common elements of the four states whose education system we approached to study. Or can there be major differences between the education systems of these states?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the comparative research had focused on specific issues, such as:

1. Identify the main legislative issues that define the specificities of mentoring programs in this four countries.
2. Identify the range of factors that lead to the success of teacher induction in early childhood education.
3. Making comparisons between several European education systems by highlighting similarities and differences between their mentoring programs.

4. Highlighting and explaining the imprint of national uniqueness in the field of teacher induction within the studied mentoring programs used in their educational systems.
5. Building a theoretical model on the possibilities of reforming the national programs in this field.

5. Research Methods

The methodology used exploited: content analysis: study of legislative documents, specific methodologies for substantiation and application of induction programs in different European states; translation, text analysis and system analysis: quantitative and qualitative data and comparative method.

COMPARATIVE METHOD IN EDUCATION SCIENCES: EXPLORATION OF EDUCATIONAL REALITY AND TRAINING LEARNING COMPETENCES:

The method of comparison is not just a simple action of thought, it involves approaches and distances from the object so that it takes place in stages and on levels of knowledge, being a dynamic process of pedagogical knowledge with four levels of comparative act: description, interpretation, juxtaposition and comparison.

We present the stages of the research initiated and some examples of the studies initiated in each of the stages:

1. Following the synthesis of the descriptive studies we observe the following aspects regarding the induction of the teachers:

a) Finnish teachers have one of the highest levels of professional training in the world, so they enjoy a great deal of trust in society. Not only the Ministry of Education is constantly interested in their training, but also are the local authorities, who seek to train and select top teachers. Finland ranks fifth in the PISA test results.

b) Measures have been taken in Estonia to make the professorship more attractive, to reorganize the continuing education of teachers and managers, and to provide feedback on the performance of teachers as well as to improve their digital competence. Professional standards form a conceptual basis for teacher induction. Universities are responsible for the development of teacher education, but everything is under the guidance of the Ministry of Education and Research. Estonia ranks third in PISA tests.

c) The quality of teachers is a key priority of the UK government, and in recent years a number of policy measures have been implemented in this area (in March 2016, the White Paper: Educational Excellence Everywhere) such as ensuring that teachers benefit from more opportunities to work flexibly, replacing QTS with a stronger accreditation, encouraging teachers to work in areas where they are in greatest need, training teachers in behavior management, recruiting and induction better. The development of a new standard for teacher professional development was also the result of the desire to train a world-class teacher. The UK is ranked 15th.

d) Responsibility for teacher training rests in Germany with the ministries of education and culture and the national ministries of the Länder. Germany is on the 16th place in the PISA tests.

2. Interpretation consists of an analysis of the facts gathered and described, their explanatory interpretation. The need to ensure high-quality teaching has become one of the key policy objectives of the European states under review. Their main concern is to provide adequate teacher induction and make the

teaching career an attractive choice. It is therefore important to collect and analyze reliable information on the current situation of this profession in European countries.

3. Juxtaposition is a transition to a genuine comparison and the first step proper. This technique is to record in different columns the distinctive signs of the objects to be compared in a certain order to make it possible to highlight the similarities, similarities and differences. At this point in the research, we reported on the Eurydice studies on the induction of teachers.

In the evaluation of programs from different European countries, we considered theoretical considerations such as:

- a) "The mentor is a key role in induction programs, designed to support the socialization of novice teachers in the school context and their professional development" (Crasovan, 2016, p. 58).
- b) Mentoring can have different types of goals and objectives and can be approached from different perspectives, "the humanist perspective, the perspective of constructive critique and the prospect of the onset" (Garrido, 1995, p. 125).
- c) Wang, Odell & Sharon, and Schwille (2008) show that the mentor can facilitate professional development and provide emotional support to the novice members of the school community. A number of studies have addressed the characteristics, skills and competencies of mentors (Table 01).

Table 01. Teacher induction in European countries

Finland	Germany	Estonia	UK
In Finland, there is no national induction program for new teachers. Induction programs are organized locally and are funded by local authorities.	Students who have undergone teacher training courses must follow the induction phase since the academic year 2003/2004 (Terhart, 2003, p. 73).	All newly qualified teachers are required to make a year of induction. During this period they are hired and paid according to the post, with a reduction in the teaching program. They receive support in the form of personalized development programs, professional dialogue, monitoring and evaluation of progress according to national standards. The mentor is part of the school staff. Provides support and guidance and monitors progress.	Organizing the induction period for newly qualified teachers was a central topic of the Permanent Conference of Ministers of Education and Culture. Following the recommendations of the 1999 Expert Committee, the provisions on the posting of young teachers should aim at the progressive development of professional competence. In addition, a system for supporting the induction period of newly qualified teachers, including in-service training measures tailored specifically to the needs of newly qualified teachers, should be created.

6. Findings

Dottrens & Rossello (1976) show that comparison itself: In order to find the essential distinctive signs, a description and explanation is not enough, an estimation, an examination, a reflection, a

consideration is needed, an evaluation is needed, which is done at the level the comparison itself, in the suite of confrontations (pp. 66-67).

In teacher education programs for preschool and primary education, specific teacher training includes theoretical and practical parts and is different from training for a particular subject.

Deinum, Mandag, Hofman and Buitink (2005) claim that initial Teacher Training Programs develop students' knowledge and skills related to educational research.

Structured induction programs, which provide additional training, personalized help and counselling for debutants, exist. In the UK, induction is, at the same time, considered a probationary period and is linked to access to a permanent contract.

In January 2016, in Finland, the Ministry of Education and Culture appointed a Teacher Education Forum to reform the core education and induction of teachers. Almost one hundred forum members and experts participated in working on the Teacher Education Development Programme. In addition, nearly two thousand experts in the education sector, students and teachers participated in preparing the development programme. Teacher education development is part of the Government's key project to reform comprehensive school, learning environments and teachers' competence. Therefore "mentoring will become a more systematic part of teachers' induction training, especially in early parts of their careers" (OECD, 2017, p. 33). This means that educational institutions will train more peer group mentors.

In Estonia, the induction year programme is designed for novice teachers of pre-school child care institutions, special-education teachers, speech therapists, teachers of general-education schools and vocational educational institutions. It is based on the framework requirements set out in the National Teacher-Training Development Plan. During the induction year the novice teacher works, and is paid as other teachers.

While the first university-based phase in theory and knowledge-oriented, the second phase is practice and skills-oriented, this mixed model is quite unique in Europe and , as the OECD note, produce a high quality teacher education, that provide and exceptional opportunity to link important parts of teacher education directly to school practice and the development of teacher careers, starting with the induction period.

7. Conclusion

There is no single model of effective induction policies; the induction programs studied have a great diversity: they can be voluntary or compulsory, localized (local or regional) or nationally; which may or may not be related to probationary periods or teachers' competency assessment. Case studies are used to illustrate the key aspects of induction programs and a variety of ways in which they can be put into practice.

The design of these programs should be based on the observation that first-time teachers need three basic types of support: personal, social, and professional.

Examining important aspects of teacher induction in the European states that were at the forefront of PISA testing, we noticed that there are common characteristics of educational systems, including: the need to provide teachers with appropriate initial training, continuous professional development and making the teaching career an attractive choice (PISA 2015, 2016).

The qualities of a mentor need a special attention. Mentors must be selected according to rigorous criteria, such as intrinsic qualities (interpersonal skills, communication, and adult learning knowledge). Otherwise, there is a risk that mentors may have a little influence on the debutans by limiting their exposure to an innovative or effective teaching style in experimenting with different approaches and teaching strategies.

In conclusion, the induction of teachers must be a priority of the Romanian education system, as is in the case of other European countries. Reforming the induction process must be a condition for achieving an essential mission: the teaching career.

The study's hypotheses allowed new hypotheses to be derived that would substantiate further future research. Valued research methods were at the same time strategies for learning some topics of interest in the problems of initial and continuous teacher education in Europe.

Acknowledgments

The development of the induction process can be achieved by: designing and developing the initial training system through higher education institutions in relation to a set of competencies on the one hand and a set of quality standards on the other; placing the induction process in the European context of induction; the orientation of the training system towards mobility and evolution both at the level of initial training and at the level of continuous training.

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