

Support for Novice Teachers in Secondary Schools

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Abstract

The article deals with the issue of in-service training and support for beginning teachers. It represents a project aimed at supporting novice secondary school teachers. It describes the outputs of the project and, above all, the main output of the project, which is an interactive support tool for beginning teachers - a web portal - created with the intention of supporting novice secondary school teachers when entering the professional educational environment.

Keywords: novice teacher, secondary school, interactive support, web portal

1 Introduction

A novice teacher is a university graduate who has decided to pursue his/her profession, a teacher without experience. A novice employee can be perceived as young, inexperienced, who has not yet mastered all work procedures, but he/she must be perceived above all as a prospective and promising employee. Beginning employee - this is the designation of a pedagogic or professional employee who is included in the career level novice pedagogic employee when starting the first employment relationship in which he/she will perform pedagogic activities or an employment relationship with another employer after the unsuccessful completion of the adaptation education of the pedagogic employee at the previous employer.

A novice pedagogic employee or a novice professional employee is obliged to complete and successfully complete adaptation training no later than two years after starting the first employment relationship in which he/she performs work (Act No. 138 on pedagogical employees and professional employees and on the amendment of certain laws).

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The discussion about the quality of training of future teachers has been held since the end of the 20th century. After the opening of new universities, teaching studies are offered by a number of different faculties, from pedagogic to more technically oriented. The content of the study programs is equally diverse. Until now, individual universities, sometimes even faculties within one university, determined the form, scope and order of the basic components of teacher training. There are differences between the faculties in the composition and implementation of the pedagogical-psychological component of teacher training and the hourly allocation of professional-didactic disciplines. The most striking differences are in the length of teaching practices (Nálepová, 2019).

Many authors who investigate the development of teacher professionalism agree that teachers go through several stages of professional development during their professional career (Dreyfus, 1987, Berliner, 2001, Messner - Reusser, 2000, Kasáčová, 2002, etc.). According to them, at each stage, the teacher is characterized by typical characteristics, but what is particularly important, also by a typical orientation to which he/she pays the main attention. Therefore, at each stage, he/she needs a different kind of support, education or advice. According to their findings, the beginner concentrates on his/her own activity in the sense of how best to “survive” teaching in his/her own classroom. At this stage, he/she is not yet able to devote himself/herself too deeply to considerations of the didactic transformation of the curriculum, nor to targeted interventions stimulating individual student development (Kosová, 2019).

In the following parts of the paper, we are devoted to the preparation of future secondary school teachers and to the project implemented by us, the main output of which is an interactive support tool for novice teachers - a web portal - created with the intention of supporting novice secondary school teachers when entering the profession.

2 Preparation of future secondary school teachers at DTI University

The main mission of DTI University is **to provide, organize and ensure university education in accredited study programs, carry out creative scientific research and provide further education** through a wide range of courses and educational activities. The university focuses on the production and dissemination of knowledge and innovations, primarily in the field of applied study programs and scientific disciplines, with an emphasis on the preparation of experts in demand on the labour market, with the aim of contributing to the building of a knowledge-based and sustainably competitive economy of Slovakia. For this purpose, it cooperates with domestic and foreign universities, the business sphere, the public sector and non-governmental organizations and participates in international projects.

DTI University prepares future secondary school teachers. Students can choose bachelor's study programs focused on teaching: Teaching practical training and Teaching practical

training in economic subjects. Subsequently, the master's study program Teaching economic subjects is focused on the educational skills of economy teachers. Considering the focus of the paper, we will focus more closely on the master's study program.

The study program Teaching economic subjects allows to expand and deepen the knowledge gained by studying at the bachelor's degree of university studies in the study programs Teaching practical training in economic subjects, Teaching practical training or in related study programs. In addition to knowledge from the disciplines of their professional specialization, graduates of the study program also gain knowledge from the theory of vocational education, pedagogical-psychological subjects, skills from field didactics of economic subjects, science methodology, pedagogical research, etc.

A graduate of the master's level of higher education in the field of study of teaching and pedagogical sciences is:

- qualified to work as a teacher of economic subjects at secondary vocational schools,
 - qualified to practice the profession of a school methodologist for teaching groups of economic subjects as part of professional teaching,
 - a specialized employee of the state administration, or methodology of professional institutions for the field of vocational education and training,
 - capable of projecting, implementing and reflecting on teaching in the classroom, i.e., mastering teaching skills,
 - capable of participating in the development of methodological materials for the teaching process and in designing the lifelong education of adults with a professional focus,
 - able to use the knowledge gained from research and development methods in the didactics of his/her field,
 - ready to study at postgraduate doctoral studies(PhD.),
 - ready to permanently learn and improve professionally through further education.
- (<https://www.dti.sk/studium/3-ucitelstvo-ekonomickych-predmetov>)

We care about the best possible inclusion of graduates - teachers in the work process and facilitating the work of novice teachers. In this context, we decided to solve a project, the results of which would be beneficial for novice secondary school teachers in Slovakia.

We agree with the presented opinions of authors dedicated to quality in education and teacher training (Depešová, Tureková, 2014, Tureková et al., 2022, Hašková et al., 2019, Berková et al., 2019, Hargaš, 2019, Matějka & Miština, 2022) and consider it important to constantly improve the training of future teachers and subsequently support novice teachers. Based on the above, we have prepared a project to support novice secondary school teachers. The proposed project is a reflection of the ongoing need for a better connection between higher education and the practice of beginning teachers. The creation of such interactive support will enable the monitoring of the conditions, needs and comments of beginning teachers, which will be able to be transferred to the undergraduate training of teacher students. The presented project is multidisciplinary and comprehensively solves the problems faced by novice secondary school teachers.

3 A project aimed at supporting beginning secondary school teachers

The main goal of the project is to create an interactive support tool for novice secondary school teachers in Slovakia. In order to achieve the main goal of the project, it will be necessary to fulfil the following sub-goals:

In the first year of the project, the goal is to search for and analyse current professional publications, websites and portals dealing with the issue of novice secondary school teachers. There will be analysed sources from Slovakia and abroad. The results of the analysis will be digitally available to novice secondary school teachers on the created portal.

Another sub-goal based on the results of the analysis will be the creation of a research tool for identifying the needs of novice teachers. The selected identified needs of teachers will form the content framework of the created support tool.

The goal in the second year of the project will be the creation of interactive support for novice teachers of upper secondary education. During the creation itself, we will take into account the results of analyses of literary sources, as well as available websites not only in Slovakia but also abroad. The creation of the interactive creation itself will also be supported by research, with which we will gain an overview of the most frequent needs of novice teachers. Based on the mentioned research, we will include the identified and analysed content elements in the structure of the created interactive support for beginning teachers.

From the mentioned outputs, we will present the results of analyses at international conferences and professional events with the subject matter, at workshops and seminars organized for novice teachers.

4 The most important results achieved during the solution of the project

In accordance with the set goals and schedule of the project, the research team implemented the planned activities. The researchers searched for and analysed contemporary professional publications, websites and portals dealing with the issue of novice secondary school teachers. Sources available in Slovakia and abroad were analysed. The results of the analysis will be digitally available to novice secondary school teachers on the portal, the creation of which is planned for September 2023. Based on the results of the analysis, the research team created a research tool to identify the needs of beginning teachers. The selected identified needs of teachers will form the content framework of the support tool, which will be in accordance with the planned goals created in 2023. The planned goals of the project related to the evaluated period have been fulfilled.

The research team achieved the following most important results in the evaluated period: monitoring of available data for beginning secondary school teachers, creation of a research tool, organization of the international scientific conference SCHOLA 2022, solution of a Master's thesis in the area of the mentioned issue and creation of an Interactive support tool for beginning teachers, which is the most significant output project solutions and its version will be refined in the course of 2023.

Monitoring of available data for beginning secondary school teachers

In the evaluated period, the research team implemented the monitoring of available data for beginning secondary school teachers. The team analysed domestic and foreign literature, web portals and relevant results of research and studies that served to create a research tool and implement applied research.

Research tool

The research team prepared and created a research tool for determining the educational needs of novice secondary school teachers.

The researchers prepared for the implementation and began to implement applied research to identify the needs of novice secondary school teachers. Members of the research team created research samples in the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic. A database of selected secondary schools was created for the implementation of the research. In order to identify the needs of beginning teachers, secondary schools from several regions of Slovakia (Trenčín, Trnava, Bratislava, Nitra and Košice regions) and from the Czech Republic were selected.

With the created research tool, we focus primarily on the following aspects of the teachers' work:

mastering the curriculum of subjects, mastering the methodology of teaching subjects, processing written preparation, formulating the goals of the teaching process, preparing the School Education Program, activating students in class, establishing contacts with students, relationships with students, respecting students' learning styles, testing and evaluating students, effective use of teaching time, working with teaching aids, working with didactic technology, working with ICT, respecting the principle of adequacy, formulating questions, observing the teaching timetable, responding to unexpected developments in teaching, organizing pupils' independent work, solving disciplinary offences, choosing a suitable teaching method, choosing a suitable organizational form, using innovative methods and forms of teaching, explaining the curriculum, maintaining school documentation, respecting the individual educational needs of pupils, motivating pupils, creating a good climate in the teaching process, communicating with parents, working as a class teacher, working in a subject committee, self-reflection.

We are also interested in how they evaluate the preparation for the teaching profession during university studies, what they consider the most complicated for novice teachers when starting work, and what, according to the respondents' opinions, would make the work of novice teachers easier.

International scientific conference SCHOLA 2022

We prepared the international scientific conference SCHOLA 2022. At the conference, information was presented in connection with the implementation of the project.

Master's thesis solution

In accordance with the topic of the project, a Master's thesis entitled "Determining the needs of novice teachers of vocational subjects at secondary schools" is being solved.

An interactive support tool for beginning teachers

The intention is to create interactive support for novice teachers of upper secondary education who enter the profession with individual needs for pedagogical development. Interactive support consists of a web portal under the authority of DTI University. The interactive nature of the support is in the sense of constant updating of the scope and content of the created support. However, the portal will be available and open to all novice secondary school teachers, where they will have the opportunity to ask questions, share experiences of good practice and discuss and consult with advisers in the field of didactics. The created interactive support will be communicated to DTI University students in the field of study Teaching and Pedagogical Sciences (study programs Teaching practical training, Teaching practical training in economic subjects, Teaching economic subjects), who represent the future target group that will use the needs of the created interactive support. After completing their studies, they will be able to find help and support in putting them into practice. Interactive support - a web portal - has been created and according to the project schedule, it will be gradually completed as the solvers planned. The web portal is shown in Figure 1.

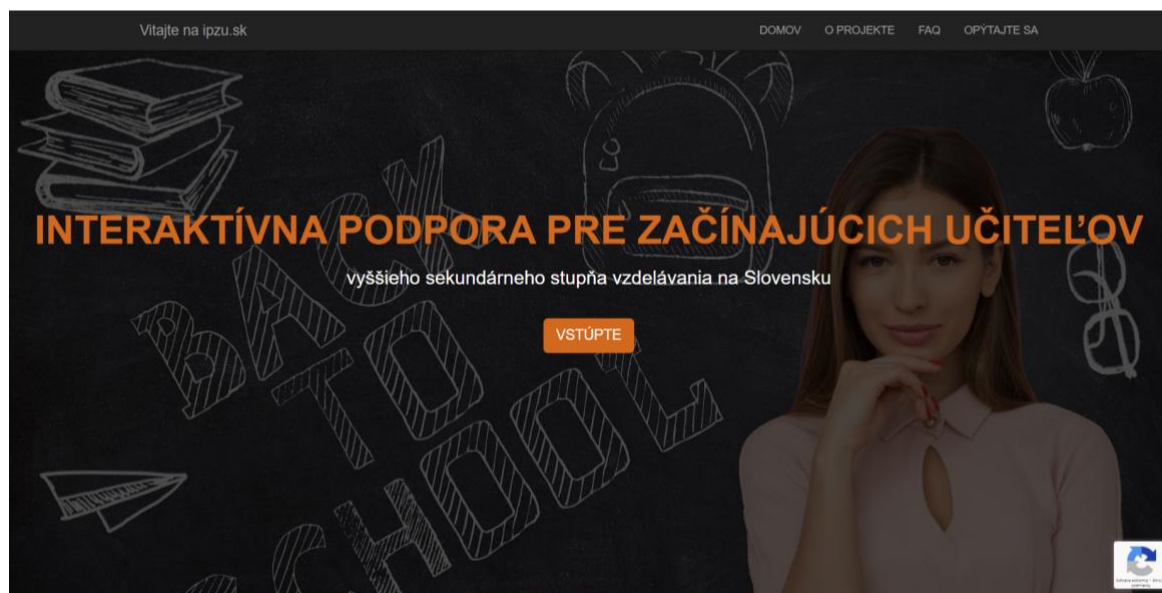


Figure 1: Web portal - an interactive support tool for beginning teachers.

Description, analysis and evaluation of the current state of professional publications, websites and portals for novice teachers will be made available digitally on the created portal.

Furthermore, based on the identification and analysis of the needs of novice teachers in secondary schools, the identified elements will be included in the content of the created interactive support tool.

The actual availability of the created support tool will be preceded by an assessment of its proposed structure, content and functionality.

The members of the research team will prepare and implement a webinar for students finishing their undergraduate training, for novice teachers from educational practice, for introductory teachers and for secondary school principals in order to present the results of applied research and the created interactive support with the aim of familiarization, subsequent commenting on the mentioned materials and subsequent coordination of proposals of the research team with colleagues in practice.

The interactive nature of the support is in the sense of constant updating of the scope and content of the created support. However, the portal will be available and open to all novice secondary school teachers, where they will have the opportunity to ask questions, share experiences of good practice and discuss and consult with advisers in the field of didactics.

5 Conclusion

We consider the preparation of secondary school teachers and the support of novice teachers to be very important. At DTI University, we train future secondary school teachers. At the same time, we decided to support novice teachers by creating interactive support for novice secondary school teachers who enter the profession with individual needs for pedagogical development. Interactive support consists of a web portal under the authority of DTI University. The interactive nature of the support is in the sense of constant updating of the scope and content of the created support. The portal will be available and open to all novice secondary school teachers, where they will have the opportunity to ask questions, share experiences of good practice and discuss and consult with advisors in the field of didactics. The created interactive support will be communicated to DTI University students in the field of study Teaching and Pedagogical Sciences, who represent the future target group that will use the needs of the created interactive support. After completing their studies, they will be able to find help and support in putting them into practice.

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