

Comparison of the Applicability of Graduates of Pedagogical Faculties to Practice at SOŠD

Martin Zatkalík¹, Silvia Bartelt²

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Abstract

The article focuses on comparing the readiness of two groups of early-career teachers to enter the teaching profession at the Secondary Vocational School of Transport in Bratislava (SOŠD). In practice, disproportions are observed in the induction process between full-time graduates of faculties of education and employees who complete their teaching qualifications alongside their employment. We assume that the extent of teaching practice during university studies significantly affects the success of the adaptation process and the ability of an early-career teacher to work effectively with students.

Keywords: Quality of Graduates of the Faculty of Education of the University, Teaching Practice, Adaptive Education, Career System of Pedagogical Employees

1 Introduction

The most serious problems in the implementation of vocational education and training (VET) include not only the shortage of a new generation of teachers but also the quality of higher education (HE) graduates prepared to enter the teaching profession. This study focuses on a systematic comparison of two groups of HE graduates and their readiness to work as pedagogical staff. The first group includes recent graduates hired as teachers, while the second group consists of employees who completed their studies while already employed at a school. We consider the limited extent of teaching practice during HE studies to be a potential cause of insufficient competencies.

Analysis of the adaptation process of beginning teachers shows differences in their level of readiness and ability to integrate into the school environment. Graduates of part-time studies usually adapt more effectively and demonstrate greater stability in pedagogical practice.

¹ Secondary Vocational School of Transport, Kvačalova 20, 821 08 Bratislava, Slovakia.

E-Mail: riaditel@sosdba.sk

² Secondary Vocational School of Transport, Kvačalova 20, 821 08 Bratislava, Slovakia.

E-Mail: bartelt@sosdba.sk

Conversely, graduates of full-time university studies require more intensive support and mentoring. The main challenges identified include work discipline, communication, and pedagogical competencies, as well as adaptation to specific work tasks and readiness for practical situations in school.

The SWOT analysis points to systemic factors influencing the quality of the adaptation process; specifically, the insufficient practical training of Faculty of Education (PF) graduates increases the demands on schools and the necessity for intensive mentoring. On the contrary, the dual education model at SOŠD, with its high share of practical training, significantly improves the readiness of graduates for direct entry into the profession and can serve as inspiration for the reform of teacher training.

The Secondary Vocational School of Transport in Bratislava prepares students within the dual education system for direct entry into the labour market. The significantly higher time allocation, comprising at least 50 percent of practical training for SOŠD students, allows them to enter the profession with a high level of expertise and preparedness, thus minimising the need for additional education after starting work. A significant positive factor is also the higher level of socialisation into the work environment, as evidenced by statistics on the employability of graduates in the given field.

On the contrary, graduates of faculties of education encounter a relatively low level of compulsory practice during their studies, which requires the implementation of an adaptation process during employment. Experience from SOŠD also indicates that not all graduates meet the requirements of the teaching profession, not only from a professional perspective but also from a personal perspective. This includes punctuality, communication skills and administrative competencies necessary to manage the school agenda. The main objective of this analysis is to identify existing shortcomings and propose recommendations that could contribute to increasing the quality of pedagogical training and the employability of graduates in the labour market.

The article is structured into three parts:

1. An analysis of the adaptation process in secondary vocational education within the career system of the Slovak Republic with the aim of identifying strengths and weaknesses (SWOT).
2. A comparison of the turnover of admitted university graduates with workers who study externally in addition to their employment at school, in the context of their applicability in the work environment.
3. The identification of key aspects of graduate readiness.

The result is an opening of the given issue and a proposal of possible solutions and recommendations for practice.

2 Analysis of the Adaptation Process to SOŠD and the Career System

2.1 Introduction to the Career System

We have an established pedagogical development system at SOŠD:

Type	Goal	Content / characteristics
Adaptation process	Facilitate the integration of a new teacher into the school environment and work tasks	Mentoring, familiarisation with the school and work tasks, development of an adaptation plan, monitoring of progress and evaluation of adaptation
Updating education	Maintaining the up-to-date professional and pedagogical knowledge of teaching staff classified as independent or with 1st and 2nd certifications	Developments in subject areas, new methods and technologies, and legislative and curricular changes
Innovative education	Introducing new approaches and modernising teaching, successful completion is this stage provides the basis for a salary increase	Experimenting with teaching methods, digital and interactive tools, developing creativity and innovative thinking, sharing best practice
Specialised education	Deepening professional knowledge and acquiring specialised competencies	Professional expertise in a specific field, specific pedagogical skills, preparation for professional positions or certifications, support for career growth
Further education	Deepening professional and pedagogical competences	Updating professional competence, modern teaching methods, development of personal and managerial skills, legislative and methodological updates
Functional education	Improving practical and pedagogical skills – for leading pedagogical staff	The aim is to strengthen teachers' abilities to lead teaching effectively, solve specific problems in the classroom and apply proven pedagogical practices in practice

Table 1: Career development system at SOŠD.

2.2 Course of the Adaptation Process

The adaptation process for teachers at the Secondary Vocational School of Transport focuses on the calm and gradual integration of the new teacher into the school environment and their professional tasks. Essentially, this constitutes a process of onboarding or orientation, which enables the teacher to participate effectively in teaching and the broader functioning of the school.

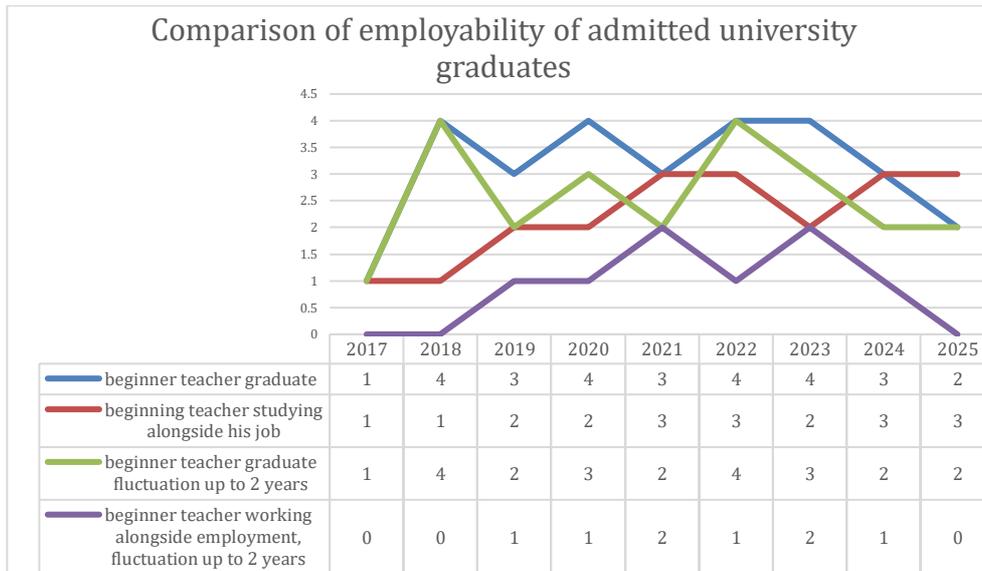
The main components of the adaptation educational process are:

1. Appointment of a mentor – An experienced teacher or senior educator supports the new teacher, advises them, and supervises their initial progress (Hašková et al., 2023).
2. Development of an adaptation plan – The schedule and content of the adaptation process are structured, with specific goals and expectations established.
3. Familiarisation with the school and work environment – This includes school organisation, rules, internal regulations, and the systems utilised.
4. Adaptation to specific work tasks – The gradual acquisition of teaching procedures, classroom management, and student assessment.
5. Monitoring and evaluating the process – Continuous monitoring of how the teacher is adapting, identifying strengths and areas for improvement through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or internal evaluation mechanisms.

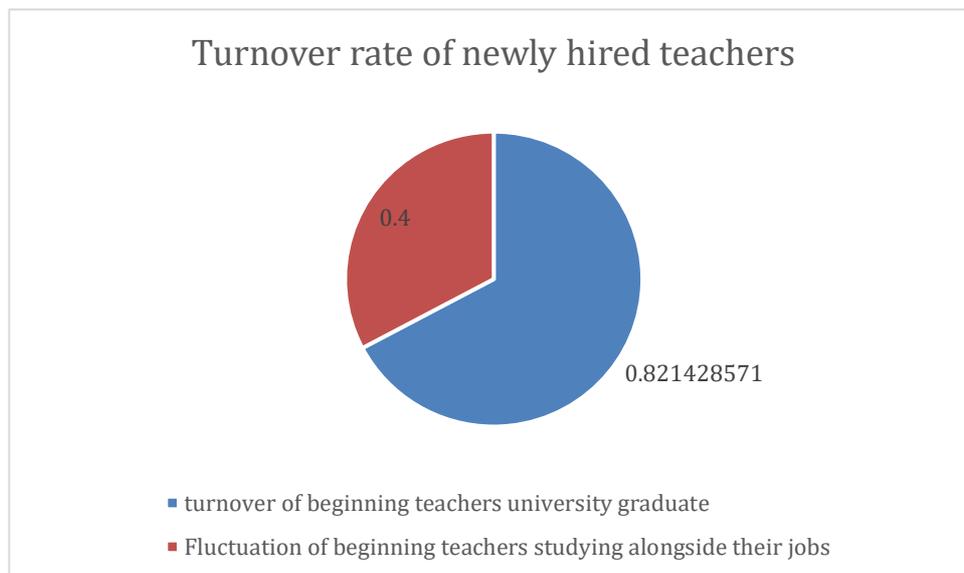
The aim is for the new teacher to quickly gain self-confidence, understand school processes and start working effectively with students. Between 2017 and 2025, 53 new teachers began the adaptation process at the Secondary Vocational School of Transport, of whom 28 were graduates of university faculties of education and 23 were employees who supplemented their qualifications through external studies.

To determine the level of readiness, we established a criterion that the graduate should remain in the post for at least two years after graduation. The monitored criterion was the termination of employment due to the low quality of the educational activities implemented by the teaching staff.

The survey was conducted by collecting data for the period 2017 to 2025 with the following results:



Graph 1: Comparison of the employability of full-time and part-time university graduates within secondary vocational education and training institutions between 2017 and 2025.



Graph 2: Staff turnover rate of newly hired employees at SOŠD from 2017 to 2025

The survey indicates that during the monitored period, 53 teachers started the adaptation training process; however, only 38 teachers completed it. Seventeen graduates successfully integrated and remained in the profession, of whom 12 were part-time graduates and five were full-time graduates.

The failure to complete induction was due to the termination of employment for the following reasons:

- *Failure to comply with work discipline and working hours*

Repeated tardiness, unexcused absences, or failure to meet work attendance requirements according to the agreed schedule.

- *Insufficient work habits and professionalism*

Failure to master basic duties related to work organization, work procedures, or fundamental hygiene standards.

- *Insufficient pedagogical and communication skills*

Inability to communicate effectively with students or colleagues, inappropriate behaviour in a pedagogical environment, and poor leadership or motivation skills.

- *Failure to complete the adaptation process*

Inability to adopt required procedures and standards during adaptive education, lack of flexibility in adopting school processes.

- *Inappropriate professional conduct*

Violation of internal school regulations, lack of initiative, low level of responsibility or an unwillingness to cooperate within a team.

- *Insufficient preparation for practical work*

Inability to perform fundamental work activities and tasks learned through practice in accordance with the employer's expectations.

2.3 Factors Influencing the Quality of the Educational Process

The fact that not every early-career teacher at the school successfully completes the adaptation process suggests a link between the professional development of teaching staff and the school's personnel policy, specifically regarding the employment of university graduates.

This phenomenon can be examined through a SWOT analysis, in which the strengths and weaknesses sections identify factors affecting the stability and quality of the teaching staff.

Factor	Description
Strengths	Teachers who have successfully completed their induction and remained at the school bring high levels of expertise, knowledge of institutional processes, and motivation, all of which enhance the quality of teaching.
Weaknesses	A lack of practice leads to difficulties in mastering core professional duties among teaching graduates and results in a low level of socialisation into the school environment.
Opportunities	Motivating and developing those graduates who successfully complete the induction process allows for the building of a strong, loyal and forward-looking team of teachers. The school can establish a system of mentoring and support to increase the success rate of the induction process.

Threats	Teacher shortages and the failure to complete induction can lead to staffing deficits, increased pressure on current staff, reduced teaching quality, and a negative impact on the school’s reputation. A shortage of education graduates and low success rates in initial teacher training reduce the availability of qualified teachers and can strain the existing workforce.
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Table 2: SWOT analysis.

On the one hand, the school's openness to accepting promising early-career teachers, who bring fresh approaches, current knowledge, and modern pedagogical methods to the educational process, can be considered a strength. In this way, the school supports generational change and increases its innovative potential. At the same time, it maintains an induction system that helps new teachers integrate into the pedagogical team and master the school's internal processes.

On the other hand, the fact that not all novice teachers successfully complete the induction process is a weakness. This issue may be related to the demands of teaching in vocational education, but specifically to a lack of practical experience among graduates and limited opportunities for mentoring from experienced colleagues (Radulović et al., 2024).

This can result in high teacher turnover, which negatively affects the continuity of the educational process and increases the personnel burden on school management. The Secondary Vocational School of Transport, Kvačalova 20, Bratislava, employs a dual education model with a high proportion of practical training (at least 50%). Consequently, the student spends a significant part of their studies in a real working environment with an employer. Theoretical education, pedagogical and special educational support, as well as the professional training of instructors at the employers’ premises, are provided directly by the school. This system allows graduates to enter the labour market professionally competent and prepared, without the need for extensive additional induction.

3 Vocational Training of Graduates of Teaching and Study Fields for Direct Entry into the Labour Market vs. Graduates of University Teaching

3.1 Secondary Vocational School in Transport and Employability of Graduates

Before its introduction, students repeatedly encountered shortcomings such as a lack of practical skills, a lower level of professional training, and insufficient discipline regarding commuting and the personal prerequisites necessary for the profession. In the context of technical and vocational schools, it is evident that a high proportion of practical training and

a close connection with industry significantly increase the employability of graduates in the labour market. Such a model contributes to the better preparation of students for real working conditions and reduces the need for further training by employers.

3.2 Universities and Faculties of Education: the Readiness of Graduates

Studies at the Faculty of Education of the University for future teachers focus primarily on general pedagogical and psychological training, didactics, and teaching methodology. The aim of these subjects is to enable students to master the theoretical foundations required to implement the educational process. Although teaching practice is a component of the degree, its scope remains relatively limited. Slovak legislation transfers the responsibility for the induction process to the school, where teacher training occurs directly during the period of employment. Consequently, graduates enter the teaching profession with comprehensive theoretical training but with little or no experience in a real school environment. As an employer, the school must provide significant induction support, mentoring, and supervision to ensure the process is successful.

3.3 Comparison – Key Aspects of Graduate Readiness

Aspect	Graduate – studying alongside employment, or employment during university studies	Graduate of the Faculty of Education / University of Teacher Education
Amount of practice during studies	At least 50% practice in a real environment	Relatively low level of teaching experience
Professional preparation for the profession	Higher education in the field directly enters practice	Theoretical preparation for teaching
Turnover rate	Lower turnover rate	Higher turnover rate
Personal readiness (attendance, motivation, communication)	Better communication skills and work ethic	Risky – teacher graduates experience a lack of practical training.
Candidate selection and psychological testing	Vocational schools, in collaboration with universities, have the opportunity to select students based more closely on their genuine interest and ability to practise their chosen profession.	It reveals the low level of initial psychological screening and a lack of genuine interest in pursuing a teaching career after graduation.
Level of socialisation	Adapted to the work environment	A more challenging problem with work habits

Table 3: Key aspects of graduate readiness in addition to employment and full-time study.

3.4 Importance for Practice

The internship model with a time allocation of more than 50% at the Secondary Vocational School of Transport is highly suitable for increasing the readiness of graduates and their direct entry into the labour market without the need for extensive induction. The induction of a teacher graduate without an internship is more complex as university studies are more theoretically oriented and the internship period is relatively short, meaning that schools must invest in adaptive education. Disadvantages include increased costs (time, mentoring, and training) and the potential risk regarding the graduate's level of preparation; where personal prerequisites are lacking, a negative impact on the quality of teaching may arise.

The study model with an internship share of more than 50% for a university student brings several advantages: a more significant portion of the course involves school-based work, there is the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, and the student receives financial and material security. Furthermore, mentor assistance and the completion of the internship improve the readiness of graduates and significantly increase work performance.

Current shifts (digital generations and changing motivations) and technological changes (digital tools and hybrid forms of teaching) are significantly altering the teacher's profile. Graduates of faculties of education must be prepared not only for traditional teaching but also for modern learning methods, digital competences, and adaptation to change. Consequently, practice and induction processes must also incorporate these dimensions (Hašková et al., 2024).

4 Research Results and Recommendations for Practice

By comparing the preparedness of graduates from part-time and full-time teaching programmes, we found that a model with a high proportion of teaching practice can significantly improve graduates' readiness for the profession. The study of education at universities in the Slovak Republic still faces challenges, such as the quality of practical training and the personal prerequisites necessary for high-quality teaching. It is essential to introduce measures such as increasing the proportion of teaching practice, selecting suitable candidates, and providing mentoring and induction during studies. The starting point remains the integration of vocational education and teacher training.

This paper serves as an incentive for discussion and systemic transformation, ensuring that graduates enter the teaching profession fully prepared and that schools acquire excellent new teachers without the need for extensive additional induction.

Based on the analysis and results, we recommend the following steps:

1. **Increase the proportion of teaching practice in teacher training** - We recommend that faculties of education introduce a system where teaching practice constitutes more than 50% of the curriculum. If graduates completed a significant portion of their practice during their studies, they could enter the profession as prepared teachers without the need for an extensive adaptation process.
2. **Improve the selection of applicants for teacher training** - Introduce personality screening, motivational interviews, psychological testing, and aptitude tests (e.g. the ability to engage students, independent learning, and attendance). This can reduce the risk of recruiting teachers with inappropriate attributes.
3. **Intensify the connection between theory and practice** - Faculties of education should establish partnerships with primary and secondary schools to create a network of training schools where student teachers can complete extended periods of placement. Vocational schools can also serve as partners, as technical disciplines involve a significant proportion of practical training.
4. **Take digital and generational changes into account** - teachers' adaptive practice must include competencies in the areas of digital technologies, hybrid teaching, motivating digital learners, and creating interactive activities.
5. **Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of adaptation programmes** - Schools should regularly evaluate the success of adaptation processes (e.g. how quickly a new teacher adapts, the resulting outcomes, satisfaction levels, and staff turnover) and adjust programmes according to specific needs.

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