

# Support of Novice Teachers in their Transition Process from pre-service teacher education to working life

*A qualitative study about the career entry in Lower Austria*

*Susanne Pind-Roßnagl\**

## *Abstract*

In this article a qualitative study is presented, which deals with the transition from pre-service teacher education to career entry in Lower Austria. The researched group are novice teachers in their first year of teaching, who attend an advanced training course, which supports them in their first two years of teaching in order to master and organise the career entry professionally. The aim of the study was to find out, how they experienced their career entry and how they are supported by colleagues and mentors in their transition process and job socialisation by analysing portfolios of development of 33 novice teachers and if there are interdependencies between the experiencing of the career entry and the received support. In the theoretical part of the article models of job socialisation are presented as well as the research stance about social support at the career entry. Novice teachers have to manage a lot of challenges in their first years of job socialisation, where the social support is of importance. The research findings show, that these teachers are supported differently by colleagues and mentors. From colleagues they are supported practically and from mentors professionally. There are interdependencies between how the career entry was experienced and the satisfaction of the received support.

## Unterstützung von Berufseinsteigerinnen/Berufseinsteigern in den Lehrberuf in ihrem Transitionsprozess vom Studium in das Arbeitsleben

*Eine qualitative Studie über den Berufseinstieg in Niederösterreich*

### *Zusammenfassung*

Im vorliegenden Artikel wird eine qualitative Studie präsentiert, die sich mit dem Transitionsprozess beschäftigt, der nach abgeschlossener Lehrerausbildung beim Berufseinstieg in Niederösterreich vollzogen wird. Die beforschte Gruppe besteht aus 33 Teilnehmerinnen/Teilnehmern des Lehrgangs „Den Berufseinstieg professionell meistern und gestalten“, deren Entwicklungsportfolios nach Ende des ersten Semesters ihrer Berufskarriere analysiert wurden. Ziel dieser Studie war es herauszufinden, wie diese den Berufseinstieg erlebt haben und wie sie in diesem Prozess von Kolleginnen/Kollegen und Mentorinnen/Mentoren unterstützt wurden und ob es Zusammenhänge gibt zwischen der Art des Erlebens des Berufseinstiegs und der erhaltenen Unterstützung. Im theoretischen Teil werden Modelle der Berufssozialisation vorgestellt, sowie aktuelle Studien zur sozialen Unterstützung in der Berufseinstiegsphase. Es wird festgestellt, dass die Berufseinsteigenden von den Kolleginnen/Kollegen und den Mentorinnen/Mentoren je anders unterstützt werden: von Mentorinnen/Mentoren werden sie in einer professionellen Art und den Kolleginnen/Kollegen auf praktische Weise unterstützt. Es bestehen Zusammenhänge zwischen der Art des Erlebens des Berufseinstiegs und der Zufriedenheit mit der erhaltenen Unterstützung.

#### *Keywords:*

Novice teachers  
Career entry  
Social support

#### *Schlüsselwörter:*

Berufseinsteigende Lehrkräfte  
Berufseinstieg  
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\* Pädagogische Hochschule Niederösterreich, Mühlgasse 67, 2500 Baden. E-mail: [susanne.pind@ph-noe.ac.at](mailto:susanne.pind@ph-noe.ac.at)

## 1 Introduction

The career entry is one of the most sensible and important phases in the course of job biography (Winkelbauer et al., 2011, Hericks, 2009; Huwendiek et al., 2009, Kraler, 2008; Messner & Reusser, 2000;). So there are some countries in Europe (e.g.: Switzerland, Great Britain, France, Greece, Italy), where obligatory supporting programmes for novice teachers have been implemented (Blömeke & Paine, 2009). In Lower Austria there also exists such a programme for five years now, which has to be attended by all teachers, who start work as primary-school-, middle-school-, special needs-school or polytechnic-school teachers in their first two years of their career entry. This programme is a cooperation project between the federal state government for schools of Lower Austria and the Teacher University College of Lower Austria in Baden. In all the other federal states of Austria, there don't exist obligatory supporting programmes for novice teachers. In Austria new teacher education studies are implemented at the moment and start in October 2015 for primary school teachers and 2016 for secondary-school teachers. There will be an induction phase either after the bachelor's degree or after the master's degree.

In Lower Austria the obligatory support consists out of a starting event, meetings with experienced teachers (twice each term), of vocational trainings (two each term) and a final event. Last year some research was done by the author, which brought out, that these teachers need support with their *attitudes, teaching, collaboration* and *development of professionalism* (Pind-Roßnagl, 2014). These research results were integrated in the conceptualisation of a new advanced training course for novice teachers. At the beginning of the school year 2014/15 the novice teachers were able to choose between two forms of support: an obligatory one or an optional one (an advanced training course) for the first time. This course consists out of the obligatory supporting events (meetings and vocational trainings) and professional learning communities, webinars and optional seminars. The professional learning communities consist for example of a mentor, who teaches first-graders at a primary school and one to four novice teachers, who also teach the same level of education in other schools. The participants get certificates with ten ECTS at the end of year two. The mentors themselves are mentors in training and attend postgraduate studies, which are offered in cooperation of the University of Klagenfurt and the Teacher University College of Lower Austria, where they are qualified for supporting novice teachers. They will receive master degrees after eight semesters of studies.

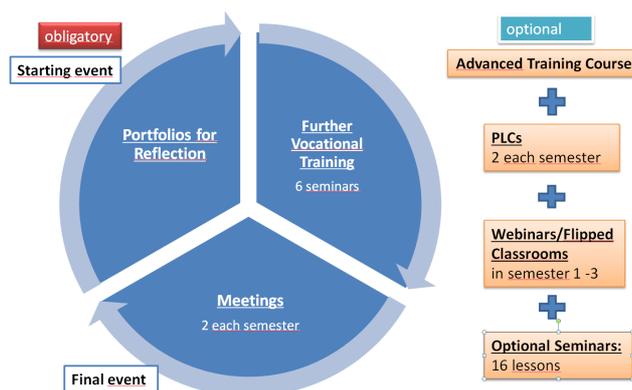


Figure 1: Modell of the Supporting Programme of Novice Teachers in Lower Austria

So it is interesting to find out, how the new optional form of support is experienced by the novice teachers. In this article the following research questions are analysed and discussed, because they seem to be of importance in transition processes and there is a lack of studies about the effect of supporting programmes of novice teachers (compare Blömeke & Paine, 2009).

1. How did novice teachers experience their career-entry? Which coping strategies did they mention?
2. How are novice teachers supported by colleagues?
3. How are novice teachers supported by mentors in professional learning communities?
4. Are there any interdependencies between how the career-entry was experienced and how they are supported by colleagues and mentors?

These are only some research questions, which build the starting point of a bigger study. Even at this early stage according to the literature (see chapter 2.3.1) the hypothesis can be proposed, that novice teachers in Lower Austria use the internal (colleagues) and external (mentors) support differently.

After having presented the background of the study in the following chapter the theoretical backgrounds to the research questions will be presented.

## 2 Transition from pre-service education to working life

### 2.1 Career entry of teachers

Bentler & Bührmann (2008) found out, that support in transition processes is needed in the following areas: knowledge and information, methods and techniques, reflecting oneself, social contacts and support from outside. They suggest special supporting events: integration into group processes (individual support during seminars and workshops), combining events of learning and advice (individualisation, plurality and simultaneousness are needed) and attendance of the process during the whole time (a central contact point). They also come to the following conclusions: The roles of lecturers have to be modified. They should be facilitators, consultants and moderators. There should be special seminars and contact points for transition processes. There is little knowledge about the use and effect of such supporting formats. (ib.)

Tynjälä & Heikkinen (2011) found six challenges with which new teachers have to cope with: *“threat of unemployment, inadequate knowledge and skills, decreased self-efficacy and increased stress, early attrition, newcomers’ role and position in a work community and importance of workplace learning”* (Tynjälä & Heikkinen, 2011, p. 13). The entrance into a new organisation (school as working place) is often accompanied with a sudden change of the personal situation, in which three strategies have to be mastered: acquisition of an adequate role behaviour, development of skills and adaption of values and rules (Welte, 2009).

Terhart (2007) says, that novice teachers have to appraise what works and what does not work, which can be done by reflection. He also found out, that each teacher manages the developing tasks differently and with different persistence, but there are always conditions, which support or inhibit development and that must be included (for example the conditions at the working place). (ib.) These findings show, how it is supposed to support novice teachers in order to manage the challenges of the career entry and as Terhart said, that the working place conditions are of importance for developing. The following chapter will elaborate on these aspects.

### 2.2 Job socialisation and development of novice teachers

In this chapter a brief outline will be presented about how teachers are socialised in different stages of their career, where the support is of importance. All the challenges, which were mentioned before, cannot be mastered at the same time. There are different phases, which novice teachers go through in order to develop themselves and to manage the challenges. These phases are described in models of job socialisation. There are a lot of different models of socialisation, so only some will be presented, which especially focus the first years of job socialisation.

Lewin found three phases of job socialisation in his model of change: *unfreezing, moving* and *refreezing*. In the first phase attitudes have to be opened in order to be able to change your attitudes. In the second phase attitudes are changed and new ones appear and in the third phase the new attitudes have to be assured. (Lewin. In: König & Volmer, 2008, p. 332)

Feldmann also describes three phases and calls them *anticipatory socialisation, encounter* and *change and acquisition* (Feldmann. In: Welte, 2008/09). The first phase starts before the career entry, because during the pre-service education the students already have certain expectations, ideas and attitudes about the job, the colleagues and the director. The *encounter phase* starts with the beginning of the teaching at the new school, where the process of the construction of the role starts. The time and life structures change, new social relationships are built, uncertainties and deficiencies of information exist. In this phase it is important to find one’s role, to get started with the teaching, to be included into the group, to handle role conflicts and to handle conflicts with the outer world of the school. The last phase of *change and acquisition* is entangled with the second phase and it cannot be said, when it starts. Mostly there are rituals, which symbolise the end of the

career entry. The role requirements are mastered, the tasks are achieved and the values and rules are adjusted. The aim is to become an accepted member and to keep one's own identity. (Welte, 2009)

Maynard and Furlong (1995) describe five stages, a teacher goes through in the first years of teaching: *early idealism* (identify themselves with the pupils and reject older teachers), *survival* (feel overwhelmed and seek for methods), *recognizing difficulties* (the complexity of teaching is realised and self-doubts appear), *reaching a plateau* (cope with routines and resist new approaches), *moving on* (quality of student learning is important) (ibid., p. 12-13).

Fuller & Brown (1975) also presented a model consisting of three phases, which only describe the development of teaching: *survival stage* (surviving in class is important), *mastery stage* (teaching is important) and *routine stage* (individual problems of pupils can be mastered) (ib. In: Lipowsky, p. 50).

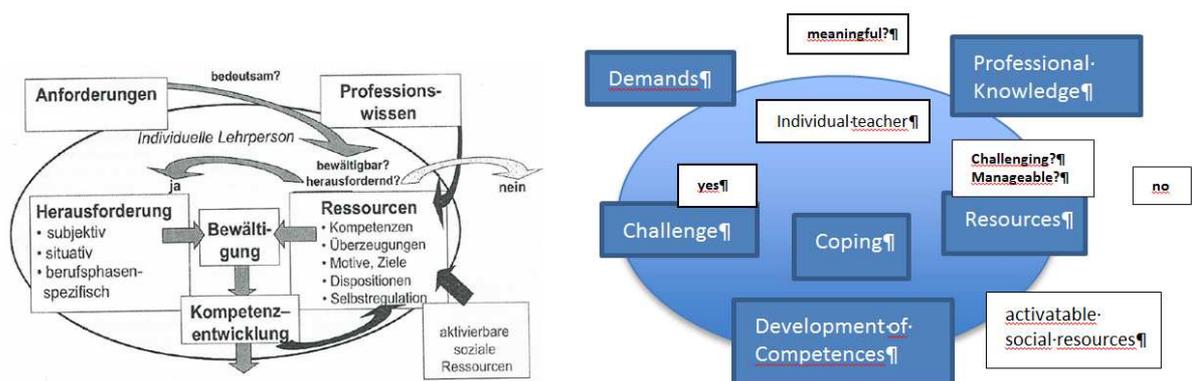
In order to develop another aspect is of importance: professionalism, which should be the aim of supporting programmes in induction phases. This was the conclusion of a conference about the career entry, which took place in Zurich in June 2014 (see also: [http://www.phzh.ch/de/ueber\\_uns/Medien/News/Tagung-Berufseinstieg-von-Lehrpersonen-a26708.html](http://www.phzh.ch/de/ueber_uns/Medien/News/Tagung-Berufseinstieg-von-Lehrpersonen-a26708.html)). So not only the job socialisation should be kept in mind, but also models of professional development. In Lower Austria the EPIK concept (Entwicklung von Professionalität im Internationalen Kontext, i.e. Developing Professionalism in an International Context) is used. It says, that teacher act professionally, when the following domains are addressed: reflection and discourse (sharing knowledge and skills), professional awareness (the self as expert), personal mastery (the power of individual prowess), collegiality (the productivity of cooperation) and ability to differentiate (dealing with differences large and small). The five domains are helpful for scientific purposes, but also for practical support and for help concerning the daily teaching. (Schratz et al., 2011, see also: [www.epik.schule.at](http://www.epik.schule.at))

Having regard to the above the following chapter will present a literature review about social support and research results concerning social support at the career entry.

### 2.3 Social support for novice teachers

Social support means, the amount of emotional, instrumental or informational support someone gets in order to manage irksome situations (translated from Asendorpf, 2007, p. 307).

Keller-Schneider (2011) presents a model, which describes the correlation of demands, challenges and individual resources, which are important to manage tasks of development during the phase of career entry. How someone develops also depends on the activation of social resources. (ib.) In this study the social resources are the focus of interest, because they are very important in order to handle stress.



**Figure 2: Frame model of noticing demands and developing competencies**

(Keller-Schneider, M. In: Keller-Schneider, M. & Hericks, U., 2011, p. 26; Keller-Schneider, 2010, p. 113, translated by the author)

In order to manage developing tasks, problem solving and coping strategies are needed. The concept of developing tasks (see also Havighurst, R.J. In: Albisser et al., 2011) shows, that challenges have to be mastered. Doing this new experiences are made, which can trigger development crises and individual demands. For solving problems own and external resources are available. If development tasks are solved, new resources and

competencies are produced, if not, no new experiences are made and no competencies are developed. (Albisser et al., 2011)

Frese & Semmer (1991) describe five different forms of how social support can affect somebody: social support as *primary need*, social support *in order to keep self-assurance alive*, social support in order to *reduce stress*, social support *in order to reduce the notice of stress* and social support and *emotional security*. They state, that social support cannot be put on the level with social network, because the number of friends and the frequency of meetings with them does not tell anything about the quality of support. They can also strain a person. (ib.) As the social support is considered an important one in the phase of career entry, some research was already done according to this topic and the results will be presented in the next chapter.

### 2.3.1 Social support at career entry – current state of research

There are some studies concerning this topic, but it must be considered in mind, that the following presentation concerns trainee teachers in Germany, who are in their second phase of teacher education, which is different to the researched in this study. In Austria novice teachers received their bachelors' degrees and are as responsible as experienced teachers. Nevertheless it is considered by the author, that these research findings are of importance for the presented study here.

Richter et al. (2011) presented a study about the social support of mentors and peers. 551 trainee teachers were surveyed twice in one year. They come to the conclusion, that both groups are noticed as important sources for support, but each group supports different aspects of competencies. The informational and emotional support of mentors affects the teacher-self-efficacy beliefs and reduces emotional exhaustion. The support of peers can have positive and negative effects.

Julia Kosinár (2013) presented a study about asymmetrical relationships during traineeship, where she contrasted two cases of trainee teachers. She found out, that the two participants did not use the internal resources at the schools, but the external ones, which were offered by the national institute. This could be a hint, that novice teachers in Lower Austria use the internal (colleagues) and external (mentors) support differently. At the moment neither colleagues nor mentors have evaluating tasks, which is differently to Germany. In Germany mentors are colleagues on the one hand and on the other hand they are judges. Her conclusion is similar to Richter et al.: the social support is very important and it affects the teacher-self-efficacy and the emotional exhaustion of the trainee teachers. Kosinár also determines, that cooperation in asymmetrical relationships is not possible as long as there is a judgement function of the mentor. Cooperation is only possible in symmetrical relationships with peers.

Tynjälä & Heikkinen (2011) presented a review article about international studies on transition, workplace learning and induction to work. They found out, that common learning among colleagues and collegial support are very important for developing professionally. It often happens in professional learning communities, lesson studies or learning studies, joint work or study groups. Often these communities flow into broader networks, which are very important in order to broaden your knowledge. They come to the conclusion, that it is good to have *formal* (intentional learning in educational institutions with certificates), *informal* (unintentional learning, that happens by chance) and *non-formal* (intentional learning at workplace without certificates) possibilities of learning for developing professionally throughout a teacher's career. There are also different kinds of practice architectures: in *semantic space* (language and communication), in *physical space* (actions of teachers) and in *social space* (relationships between individuals, groups), which are connected. (Kemmis et al., 2010, p. 27. In: ib.)

In the Potsdamer LAK-Study Schubarth et al. (2007) also concluded among other things, that trainee teachers should be professionally and socially supported and advice should be provided.

Summing up it can be said, that the social support is very important in transition processes in order to develop professionally and that it effects the teacher self-efficacy beliefs.

## 3 Research design

The qualitative study, which is presented here, is part of a bigger study, which is done in the context of a dissertation and shows only some aspects, which are not focused in the dissertation. In order to get answers to the research questions the portfolios of development of the novice teachers, who attend the optional training course, were analysed after the first semester of their teaching career. There are 34 participants, but one told,

that he does not want to be part of the research. For analysing the data the method of open coding of the Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1996) was used.

In the following part, the method of analysing will be described more precisely. The author searched the passages in the portfolios, where answers to the research questions could be found and underlined them. For these passages initial labels were attached (called open codes or in vivo codes). Then the author searched the literature in order to find larger codes in accord with the topic or the author grouped the open codes and in vivo codes into larger codes. (Urquhart, 2013) In the next step, these larger codes were written down in a chart. The open codes and in vivo codes were allocated to the larger codes. The author made a chart, where each participant was listed by a number with his/her statement according to the larger codes. This chart is not presented here, only the summary of the findings is listed. In the chart you can find the open or in vivo codes, which were mentioned most in the first line. After each chart the findings are described more precisely. In order to be able to do that, each researched person got a number, which is presented in parentheses, e.g. P1 means, that participant one mentioned these findings in his/her portfolio of development.

### 3.1 Theoretical Background for analysing data

In this chapter the theoretical backgrounds are presented, which were used for analysing data. Using Grounded Theory means, that the use of literature has a different role. It is used in every research phase, but especially for analysing data. (STRAUSS & CORBIN 1996, p. 31-33) So the author found codes in the text and searched the literature in order to find similar research findings, which could be used for grouping the codes. This helps to compare the results with other research findings.

Fydrich et al (1999) used a self-report questionnaire for the assessment of social support (F-SozU by Sommer & Fydrich, 1989, 1991) which consisted of scales about emotional support, instrumental support, social integration and social strain. They also used some addition scales: reciprocity of social support, satisfaction with social support and availability of a person of trust. (ib.) These scales constitute the basis for analysing the support novice teachers get from their colleagues and their mentors in professional learning communities. For Fydrich et al. social support is a noticed and/or anticipated one from the social network. (Fydrich et al., 2009)

For the analysis of how the novice teacher had experienced their career entry, the transactional model of stress & coping by Lazarus & Folkman (1984) was used. The author of this article thinks, that the career entry is a very stressing and challenging situation and so she wanted to find out, how the researched appraised the situation. Lazarus & Folkman say, that there are three different interpretations of how you appraise a situation: positive, threatening/harmful/challenging or irrelevant (= primary appraisal). Then a person should analyse the available resources, if they are sufficient or not (= secondary appraisal). On the basis of the appraisal a person sets coping strategies, which can be orientated on the problem or on emotions. In the end the situation will be appraised in a new way (= reappraisal) – learning and adaption take place. (ib.)

### 3.2 Findings and interpretations

In this chapter the findings of the analysis of the data (the portfolios of development at the end of the first semester of the teaching career) and the interpretations are presented according to the first three research questions. The fourth question will be answered and discussed in the chapter 3.3.

#### 3.2.1 Experiencing career entry and coping strategies

In the following chart the findings of the research questions: How did novice teachers experience their career-entry? Which coping strategies did they mention? are illustrated. For finding the larger codes the theory about coping with stress of Lazarus & Folkman (1984) built a basis. In the first row you can see the larger codes and how often reports were mentioned accordingly in the portfolios (numbers in the first row).

Positive 22	Threatening 12	Chaotic/ Unsystematic 8	Challenging 9	Coping strategies 6
very positive, Pleasant, Exciting, Fear was without cause, successfully be thrown in at the deep end	stressful, time consuming, not prepared well by others, sometimes hopeless, very demanding, requirements increased by leaps and bounds,	chaotic, hectic, aimless, tumultuous, uncertainty, diversified, confusing, being thrown a curve	lots of new information, problems with discipline, parent-teacher- conferences, teaching more lessons (overtime hours), organisational tasks,	learned a lot, work hard on myself, live from day to day, it costed quite an effort and nerves, weekly change of planning structure, first week as phase of familiarisation

Figure 3: Experiencing career entry and using coping strategies

Some novice teachers reported experiences in more than one column. For example participant 13 tells, that the career entry was experienced positive, but he/she was badly prepared by others for it and so it costed quite an effort and nerves. Participant 17 reports, that the career entry was very time consuming, he/she felt like being thrown a curve, but it was positive. Participant 25 wrote, that he/she was thrown in at the deep end and managed it successfully although he/she had overtime hours and used the first week as phase of familiarisation. Twelve (P1, P2, P6, P14, P21, P24, P26, P28, P29, P30, P32, P34) only reported positive experiences. So it will be of further interest to find out, if they report, that they are very satisfied with the received support by colleagues and mentors, too (see next analysis).

Two (P18, P23) said, that it was threatening and challenging and two (P10, P25) experienced it as chaotic and challenging. Three (P13, P16, P20) mentioned it was positive and threatening. As there are six participants (P12, P15, P22, P23, P27, P31), who experienced the career entry as stressful, the author wants to look at them more deeply in order to find out, how they could cope with the situation. None of them mentioned coping strategies, so the further analysis should try to find out, if they mentioned them elsewhere in the texts of the portfolios of development (but this will be part of the bigger study).

### 3.2.2 Received support by colleagues

In the following chart you can find the analysis of the data according to the research question: How are novice teachers supported by colleagues? The larger codes were adopted from the survey about social support (F-SozU) by Sommer & Fydrich (1989, 1991).

Received emotional support 14	Received instrumentally/ practical/ informational support 22	Reciprocity of social support 11	Satisfaction with social support, social integration, wish to be supported more 28	Social strain 5
a feeling of social affiliation, cooperative, amicable, always stick together, being accepted without condition	questions, problems, deeds, materials, everywhere, preparation and post processing	Everybody helps everybody, working hand in hand, interchange materials, planning together, fair split of work, Open-minded reaction to my proposals	very satisfied, satisfied, could not be better, amicable/familial, diverse, not satisfied	hardly overcome without support, little words and deeds/no interchange of materials, very diverse, difficult to cope with the tattling

Figure 4: Support by colleagues

From those participants, who only reported positive experiences of their career entry, eight tell, that they are very satisfied with the support, P26 is satisfied, P30 found it familial, P28 didn't report anything according to this topic, P6 experienced it diverse, because of teaching at different schools. So maybe this could be the reason, that they experienced the career entry very positive because of the good support by colleagues.

Those participants, who reported stressful career entries are mostly (P12, P15, P27, P31) very satisfied or satisfied (P22) with the support by colleagues. There is only one participant (P23), who does not get any support by his colleagues. Maybe this is the reason for experiencing the career entry as threatening /stressful and challenging. P10 and P25, who told, that the career entry was chaotic and challenging, did not report anything about how satisfied they are with the support, but tell, that they get it, when there are problems or questions.

There are 13 participants (P2, P8, P10, P13, P17, P 22, P24, P25, P26, P27, P29, P32), who tell, that they get support, when they have questions and nine of them get support, when they have problems, too. It seems, that these novice teachers have very active roles, because they have to approach their colleagues, when they have problems and questions. It is also very interesting, that the social support is reciprocal for eleven participants. There are five novice teachers, who are provided with support preparing lessons (P8, P15, P21, P25, P33). So it will be interesting to find out, what kind of support they get by mentors, which will be discussed along with the next research question.

Four participants tell, that they have feelings of affiliation (P2, P8, P14, P31), which is very interesting, when they report such a feeling at the end of their first semester of teaching: P2 and P14 experienced the career entry positive, P8 only reported, that he/she has to work hard on himself and P31 experienced it as threatening. Five said, that the emotional support is cooperative (P5, P10, P24, P27, P29).

### 3.2.3 Received support by mentors

The last chart presents the findings to the research question: How are novice teachers supported by mentors in professional learning communities? For the analysis the same larger codes were used as for the support by colleagues in order to find similarities or differences.

Received emotional support	Received instrumentally/practical/informational support	Reciprocity of social support	Satisfaction with social support, social integration, wish to be supported more	Social strain
27	29	21	30	28
confidence, nice and pleasant, experience solicitousness, disclose feelings	hints and advices, materials, experiences, problems, didactics, reflections, discussions	exchange-service, finding solutions together, reciprocal hints and advices, benefit from each other	Helpful, Very satisfied, satisfied	teaching, teacher personality, guiding a class, social learning, cooperation with parents and team-teacher, evaluating pupils, stress, trying out something new,

Figure 5: Support by mentors

From those participants, who only reported positive experiences of their career entry four (P1, P14, P24, P28) are very satisfied, six (P2, P6, P21, P26, P29, P32, P34) are satisfied with the support by mentors and one (P30) did not mention, how satisfied he/she is with the support. From the two participants, who said, that the career entry was threatening and challenging, P18 experiences the support by the mentor as satisfying and P23 tells, that it is helpful, but that he/she only gets support during the meetings. So this novice teacher is not supported by his/her colleagues and only a bit by the mentor. From the two participants, who experienced the career entry as chaotic and challenging, P10 says, that there is confidence and he/she gets support with materials and ideas, but does not tell anything about how satisfied he/she is with the support of the mentor and P25 is satisfied, because he/she can talk about his/her problems and feelings with the mentor, exchanges materials and also gets support with e-mails and on the phone.

Two of the four participants, who tell, that they have feelings of affiliation with their colleagues, feel confident with their mentors (P2, P31), P14 and P8 are able to disclose feelings. It seems as if it is easy for these novice teachers to easily establish good and fast contact to other people. This is another hint, that further research should take into consideration the different personalities of the novice teachers. (see Terhart chapter 2.1)

From the six participants (P12, P15, P22, P23, P27, P31), who experienced the career entry as stressful, P12 and P23 think, that the support of the mentors is helpful, P15 and P27 are very satisfied (with their colleagues, too) and P22 and P31 are satisfied with it. So it is again interesting, that P23, who did not get any support by his colleagues, tells, that the support by the mentor is helpful. Maybe this could be a hint, that this could depend on his/her personality.

It is very interesting, that the reciprocity of support is reported almost twice as much (21 reports) in the professional learning communities as with the colleagues (11 reports).

## 4 Conclusion and prospects

Comparing the received support between colleagues and mentors it can be noticed, that there are differences: From colleagues they get support, when they have questions, with deeds, everywhere and with preparation and post processing. From mentors they get support through exchanging experiences, reflecting and discussing them and they get hints and advices. They don't do these things with their colleagues. A reason for this could be, that they feel more confident doing this with a person, who does not know the situation at school. They are supported from both with materials and when they have problems. It seems, that the support of the mentors is more a professionally one (see chapter 2.2) and that of the colleagues a more practical one. As they see colleagues every day, they get immediate support. They meet the mentors only twice a term and get support, which helps them to solve problems, which are more difficult. This can also be an indicator, that this has to do something with the received training and support mentors get by attending a master-programme, which prepares them for the work with novice teachers and where they get to know themselves, what it means to work professionally. Richter et al. and Kosinar (compare chapter 2.3.1) also found out, that there are different kinds of support. The researched by Richter were the mentors of trainee teachers, who are colleagues, too and peers - the latter are not focused in this study. Kosinar's researched were trainee teachers in the second phase of teacher education. So in both cases, the researched are not in the same position as they are in Austria, because in Austria the novice teachers have their bachelor degree and are as responsible as experienced teachers.

The reported facts, which strain them, show, that they are in the *encounter phase* (compare chapter 2.2), because they try to find their teacher personalities (this can be compared with finding one's own role), have a lot of questions concerning teaching, guiding classes, evaluating pupils or trying out new things (it can be compared with getting started with teaching), cooperation with parents (can be compared with handling conflicts with the outer world) and team-teachers (can be compared with role-conflicts).

Kosinar (compare chapter 2.31) said, that cooperation is only possible in symmetrical relationships with peers. This cannot be confirmed, because novice teachers tell, that there is reciprocity of support with colleagues and even more with mentors. A reason therefore is the fact, that neither colleagues nor mentors have evaluating functions, which is different to Germany.

As Keller-Schneider (compare chapter 2.3) says, it depends on the social support how a novice teacher develops. It can be said, that the novice teachers, who attend the advanced training course, get a lot of support by colleagues and mentors, but they also get support by experienced teachers in meetings and by their peers. There is a platform, where each participant uploads teaching materials and in the professional learning communities, there are mostly some other novice teachers, too. It will be interesting to find out, how they have developed in their first two years and which role the social support had played further on.

Tynjälä & Heikkinen (compare chapter 2.3.1) tell, that there should be different kinds of practice architectures connected in semantic, physical space and social space in order to support the novice teachers best. They are all included in the professional learning communities, where novice teachers and mentors meet, because they exchange a lot orally, meet each other at least twice a semester and they will set actions together next year, when they will do lesson or learning studies in the professional learning communities. So they also provide the basis for developing professionally as the EPIK-concept proposes (compare chapter 2.2).

The answer to the fourth research question: Are there any interdependencies between how the career-entry was experienced and how they are supported by colleagues and mentors? is as follows: Those participants, who reported, that the career entry was experienced positive are satisfied with the support by colleagues and mentors as well as those, who told, that the career entry was stressful. There is one participant, who does not get any support from his/her colleagues and only some by the mentor. So he/she has to master almost everything alone. It will be of further interest, how he/she develops in comparison to those, who are satisfied with the support. It also appears, that there is interdependence between how someone experienced

his/her career entry and his/her personality – an aspect, which will be focused in further studies (results by Keller-Schneider and Terhart also come to this conclusion).

In summary it can be said, that the social support of mentors and colleagues is a satisfying one for the novice teachers and important in their career entry. They are able to get the support they need by using different kinds of supporting systems. The hypothesis, that the internal (colleagues) and external (mentors) support are used differently by the novice teachers, can be confirmed (compare chapter 2.3.1). The experiencing of the career entry is connected with the support: those who experienced the career entry positive, were very satisfied or satisfied. Those, who experienced it challenging and/or threatening and/or chaotic are not more than satisfied or did not mention anything. This study brought about, that there are many questions, which are not answered yet and further studies are needed.

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