

Teaching career and personal development of teachers

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Rezumat: Studiile realizate în diferite țări cu referire la cariera didactică, au scos în evidență anumite probleme tipice. Una dintre problemele cadrelor didactice sînt perspectivele reduse ale avansării în carieră și lipsa unor condiții foarte clare de creștere profesională. Aceste circumstanțe, precum și uzura emoțională sporită, generează plecarea din sistem. În diverse țări, strategiile de motivare a profesorilor se bazează pe oferirea scadelor de promovare profesională, al cărei scop este de a oferi stimulente pentru cadrele didactice de a investi în dezvoltarea lor în prezent și în viitor. Criteriile de promovare de la un nivel la altul (experiență, feedback-ul pozitiv, achiziționarea de grade, participarea la dezvoltarea profesională, recompensa la fiecare nivel etc.). Un profesor trebuie să-și asume responsabilitatea de a gestiona propria carieră. Elementul-cheie al dezvoltării profesionale este perfecționarea continuă, concepută astfel încît fiecare profesor să își creeze un parcurs de dezvoltare semnificativ într-un mediu propice de învățare.

Abstract: Studies conducted in different countries with regard to the teaching career, highlighted some typical problems. One of the common problems for teachers is limited perspective for career advancement and lack of clear terms of career advancement. These circumstances, as well as increased emotional state, generate leaving the system. In many countries, teachers' motivation strategies are based on providing professional promotional scales, whose purpose is to provide incentives for teachers to invest in their present and future development. Criteria for promotion from one level to another are: experience, positive feedback, purchase degrees, participation in professional development, reward every level, etc. A teacher must take responsibility for managing his own career. The key for professional development is learning continuing, designed so that each teacher could create a path of significant growth in a supportive learning environment.

Keywords: Teaching career, career advancement, professional development, personal development.

TEACHING CAREER

A literature review performed by the researcher (OECD, 2012; McKenzie report, 2007; Ezioni, 1979; Paz & Salant, 2012), reveals that since the 80's of the 20th century, there is a world trend of improving the pattern of stable and permanent career pattern that characterizes the teaching career that is not essentially different in its beginning and in its end. The researcher presumes that according to an experience of over 20 years of occupation in the field, in Israel, and a review of the situation as it appears in the global literature, that this international trend stems from a lack of satisfaction from a reality in which teaching career does not allow for many promotional opportunities and that its career courses are short and limited and there is hardly any occupational perspective in this profession. The lack of satisfaction stems, to the opinion of the researcher, as well, from the fact that the array of duties and promotion courses existing in teaching are very limited, there is no definite and obligatory continuation of duties for the purpose of rising in teaching levels, and it is not always clear what is required of a teacher in order for him to advance. Be it so, a teacher who wants to devote his life to teaching is not able to plan his professional future effectively. The barriers and the fog around the occupational perspective of teachers lead to a lack of motivation amongst them and a high level of attrition and the leaving of the profession. In relation to this, the Ezioni Committee (1979) has

determined that "a lack of promotional courses causes a feeling of frustration and hopelessness", and therefore the report determines that "it is necessary to create a system of professional promotion for teachers" within the educational establishment. It should be mentioned that the above described characteristics are compatible with the traditional paradigms according to which career is stable and permanent and the global trend requires the adjustment of the teaching career to the novel paradigms. Out of this understanding, various educational systems around the world began developing various models of promotion scales for teachers in the teaching profession. Thus, for example, teachers in the state of Victoria in Australia are being classified into duties according to a three-level scale. The first one includes a sub-division into: probation teacher, beginning teacher, experienced teacher; and in the second and third levels there are 'leading teachers' who have special teaching duties. In the US there is a promotion scale of four levels of professionalization. The first is leading-teacher offered by the Carnegie Committee in 1986.

In Britain, a new job has been developed of a 'senior skilled teacher', a job that is required to fulfil professional duties beyond the ordinary duties in class. Thus, for example, amongst his duties are: counselling to other teachers, creation of teaching materials of high standard, assisting teachers in difficulties, guiding of new teachers, working with teachers in other schools and more (Paz &

Salant, 2012). From the idea of professional career scale for teachers, the researcher has concluded that it attempts to change the situation in which the teaching career has a stable and permanent pattern, and which purpose is to give incentive to teachers to invest in their development in the present with a glance to the future, to supply teachers with a perspective of development and change, to pull in people who appreciate opportunities of personal and professional development into the teaching career, and to encourage professional development. The McKenzie report from 2007, which has reviewed successful educational systems and examined the way the quality of teachers and teaching is improved, has discovered that the global effort to improve the quality of teachers and teaching is characterized by two lines of policy: one, an individual teacher-oriented policy, and the second is organization-oriented policy. In relation to this, an individual teacher-oriented policy defines: levels of the scale; criteria to promotion from one level to another (experience, positive feedback, acquisition of degrees, participating in professional development, etc.); reward at each level; the emphasis is on improvement and personal promotion of the individual teacher. An organization-oriented policy, also defines levels for promotion; however, the definition of promotion is responsibility and acceptance of leading and leadership roles. Teachers in their advanced stages of career integrate teaching in a class with a variety of leadership duties in the school, district or country. This policy allows for a school to offer promotional courses for teachers and make the most out of their skills in the process, for the benefit of the school. From these two lines of policy, as it appears from the McKenzie report, it can be seen that there is an intention to supply teachers with a developmental perspective, opportunities for personal and professional development and to encourage professional development.

The teachers' condition report of the OECD countries (2012), similarly to the McKenzie report, indicates more diverse career courses in several countries. For example: teachers in Australia work in a career structure comprised of two to four levels, with annual pay gradation in each level. The level usually are: beginning teacher; experienced teacher; experienced teacher with responsibility (leading teacher) or a study field of grade coordinator; vice principal; principal; area/district staff positions. The report indicates that a progress from one level to another, especially in the high levels, usually requires an application for publicly published positions. With a rise up in the scale of ranks, teachers are expected to have a more profound knowledge, exhibit more sophisticated and effective teaching, accept upon themselves responsibilities for more peripheral aspects of study programs in a school, assist colleagues, etc. in the level of 'leading teacher' they are expected to

exhibit an excellent teaching, educational leadership, initiative and ability to manage changes. In England and in Wales, a new career rank has been launched in 1998 – Advance Skills Teacher (AST) – which was meant to provide alternative promotion courses for teachers who wish to continue teaching in classes. Their duties are to supply pedagogical leadership in their school and in other schools. It is customary that these teachers devote 20% of their time for an outreach duty – supporting the professional development of their colleagues – and in the rest of the time to teach in classes. Ireland has launched four categories for promotional positions: principal; vice principal; principal's assistant; in-charge teacher. Each one of these positions has specific areas of management and allocation of pay and time. In addition to teaching in a class, principals' assistants and in-charge teachers have a special responsibility for academic, administrative and education-personal issues, amongst which is organizing of schedules, maintaining the contact with parents' unions, supervision over school equipment and its availability, etc. a team comprised of a principal, executive committee chairman and external independent evaluator is the choosing body of the special position holders. Throughout the career, about half the teachers can expect to get appointed to one of these positions. Experienced teachers in Quebec, Canada, can work as tutors of beginning teachers. Experienced teachers guide and instruct the beginning teachers and participate in focused training. They get incremental pay or reduction in teaching duties. Some experienced teachers are also offered an opportunity to become researchers-colleagues of Academics and take part in collaborative researches on the subjects of teaching, learning, class management and success or failure of pupils. Additionally, experienced teachers occasionally get a partial release from their regular duties so that they are able to support their less experienced colleagues (Educational Echo, 2012).

Regarding career in general, in a reality we live in, we have to consider that:

1. Career is characterized by much dynamicity.
2. Psychological aspects add up to career purposes the likes of self-realization and a sense of pride.
3. Choice, rather than need, constitutes the source of career.
4. The working individual is autonomous.
5. Additional considerations add up to the considerations of pay of the employee.

And regarding teachers' career, it should be claimed that a teacher has to assume the responsibility of managing his own career.

In order to transfer from an existing state to a future desirable state, a teacher is required as any person that wishes to make changes, to act according to change

management approach, an attitude which purpose is to maximize the advantages entailed in changes by acquiring tools. In the basis of this approach there are five basic principles:

1. Every individual has unique needs for change.
2. Different people react in different ways to a change.
3. Change often entails loss.
4. Expectations have to be managed realistically.
5. Fears stemming from change have to be handled.

According to self-management approach, a management of five main purposes is required in order for the process to be effective. These purposes are in the basis of the model of ADKAR (Internet reference 2):

1. Awareness of the need for change – a person interested in change has to be aware of the reason for which he requests the change.
2. Desire to participate and support the change – a person must desire the change he asks for.
3. Knowledge of how to change – he must know the measures he has to take in order to reach the desired target.
4. Ability to implement the change – he must examine whether he has the required ability and skills for the implementation of change.
5. Reinforcement to maintain the change – he must examine whether he is in possession of the self-capability required for maintaining the change, that it is viable.

(www.change-management.com/tutorial-adkar-overview.htm&prev=/search,

<http://www.teamtechnology.co.uk/changemanagement.html>).

These purposes that lie in the basis of the self-management approach are attributed to all the people requesting to make changes and therefore, it can include the group of teachers that wish to make changes in their teaching career. In order for a teacher to reach the desired state from his standpoint, he must use four strategies that seem important for him:

1. **Target identification** – a teacher must look into himself and identify his aspirations. He must explore by himself, which life he would like to have? Which values and targets are important for him to realize in his life? And whether the wished-for change is compatible with the change he wishes for?
2. **Awareness of self-capability** – in order to achieve the target he set for himself, he must identify his skills and fields of interest. Additionally, he must indicate the points of strength and weakness in various situations and duties and examine whether he has the self-capability to achieve the

change he wishes for himself.

3. **Personal development and innovation** – a teacher must develop new skills through a process of perpetual learning in order to reach a state in which he always has something to offer.
4. **Receiving information on the economy state** – a teacher must explore the existing opportunities, the working environment. This research will allow him to understand what his chances are to integrate in a certain field and profession, and develop a career there.

According to the management approach, awareness and motivation are two critical components of the change model. If a teacher has a high motivation for expected results, for better or for worse, and awareness for the reasons according to which he believes that personal development is necessary and for skills and knowledge necessary to support personal development – the personal development would be optimal.

It seems that it is correct to say that motivation is a necessary condition for personal development; however, it is not a sufficient condition. A teacher who wishes to advance in the teaching career must have a clear picture of the position he wishes, in order for the advancement to be positive for him.

TEACHERS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

From the literature review (Paz & Salant, 2012; Kfir, 2009; Berg et al., 2005) it can be seen that presently, there is an international trend to perceive personal development of teachers as a unified and long term sequence and not as a single event, such as a professional workshop or training days. This perception requires teachers to constantly change throughout their professional career lives. The meaning of this is that being a teacher means to study endlessly. Just as a doctor cannot remain in a Med-school level of knowledge, a teacher should know that his professional specialization does not end with his assuming the position. Paz & Salant (2012) indicate three main reasons for this global tendency: first, our becoming a society of knowledge, the second, the development of the teaching profession and third is the existence of public pressures for making the profession more efficient.

The perception of professional development of teachers as a unified sequence is expressed in the term 'life-long learning' that the teaching profession has borrowed from other areas of life and occupation that poses the need for structuration of professional development so that each teacher would have a significant development course in a learning supportive environment (Kfir, 2009). Additionally, this perception is expressed in the term 'career circle' (Paz & Salant, 2012). The teaching career in practice includes several different stages that

altogether are termed a ‘career circle’. The meaning is that when teachers’ progress from one stage to another, the need for change of professional development opportunities they receive, arises. From addressing teaching as life-long learning (Kfir, 2009) and as a career circle (Paz & Salant, 2012) and from dealing with the term of personal development, the researcher presumes that the tendency to perceive the professional development of teachers as a unified sequence stems from a desire to respond to the natural tendency that is inherent in a person for personal development, which exists throughout his entire life. This assumption is supported by Berg et al. (2005), according to which “teachers become frustrated due to unsuccessful attempts to experience and grow and leave the profession”, a statement that is accepted by the researcher as an inadequate or improper professional development might be in the focus of the decision to leave the profession.

In the previous part it has been stated that the global effort to improve the quality of teachers and teaching arising from the McKenzie report (2007) that is characterized by two lines of policy: one is an individual-oriented policy and the other is organization-oriented policy. Despite the fact that each one has a unique policy and distinguished strategies, these two lines of policy lead to personal development of teachers through professional development in the teaching career. In order to achieve this goal, in individual-oriented policy, a career scale has been determined on which there are criteria for promotion from one stage to another, with an emphasis on personal promotion and improvement of the individual teacher. The purpose of the career scale is to provide an incentive for teachers to invest in their personal development in the present from a glance to the future, to provide teachers with a perspective of development and change, to pull people into the profession who appreciate opportunities for professional and personal development and encourage professional promotion. Additionally, in this policy what is being emphasized is the autonomy of a teacher to choose the training apprenticeships and courses that are suitable for him and rewards him for taking part in them. In organization-oriented policy, the purpose of personal/professional development is achieved as well, through defining of stages for promotion; however, the definition of promotion is responsibility and accepting of leadership roles. Teachers in their advanced stages of career combine teaching in a class with a variety of leadership duties in a school, district or country. Such policy allows the school to propose promotional courses for teachers and get the most out of their skills in the process, for the benefit of the school. Such a policy of promotion of teachers from a general school perspective is implemented in Montgomery County in the state of

Virginia, and it is termed ‘professional growth system for teachers’. This is a system in which teachers can progress to leadership positions that support and assist other teachers in their school. Leadership roles include: teachers responsible for professional development, coaching teachers in fields of contents, teachers who lead teams and counselling teachers (Paz & Salant, 2012). A similar policy is expressed in the “new horizon” reform in Israel. The reform has defined nine promotion levels throughout the teaching career (clause 38 of the agreement), the differences between which are recognized in salary and content of professional development. An organization-oriented rendition of the career scale, set forth in the agreement of “new horizon”, means that teachers in more advance levels would get definite leadership positions that have impact on the entire system (Ministry of Education, 2009). The “Charter Teacher” program (internet reference 5) that represents the commitment of Scotland to seriously invest in the quality of studies, training and development of teachers, tried to change the career structure, term of employment and the salary in the teaching profession. Teachers who have reached the top pay scale (usually after 6 years of practical experience) are entitled to a charter teacher’s status, an alternative course in the career for those who aspire to remain and teach in a class with an improved pay structure. Starting from 2008, teachers have been able to become charter teachers through a program for those with Master’s degree of one of the nine qualified suppliers of the general training council of Scotland (GTC). The motivation teachers had to participate in the program – has been extremely high due to the fact that qualification lies in the hands of a professional body such as the GTCS that grants a precious qualification and recognition.

The charter program indicates that teachers get a strong sense of professional autonomy and control over the professional development of learning in their career, while being able to choose what they desire. Their status changes and they have goals to aspire to. Paz & Salant (2012) report that teachers that achieve such a status become positive and satisfied in relation to their professional development and to their enthusiasm from assuming challenges, and tasks as well, and from sharing of their learning experience practice with other colleagues. The inner-role teachers’ training in Norway is focused on the investment in continued professional development of teachers, while the organizational means for professional development are flexible in relation to contents and methods and they can be adjusted for present needs. Many of the training courses offered in Norway stem from the need for being updated on the fields of knowledge and pedagogy of teachers. Other courses stem from various reforms implemented in

the educational system. The character of professional development in Norway can be explained as training that stems from the frequent changes in the educational system and the need for personal development and professional updating of teachers, in order to adjust the school to the world of a changing society (Volenski & Melamed, 2006).

From the various models in the different countries that have been reviewed by the researcher, and from the terms of motivation and career, the components required to be a part of the teaching career for the achieving of the purpose, turn up. The components can be divided into two dimensions: one is teacher-dependent and the other is organization-dependent. Teacher-dependent dimension – means that the origin point for personal development is motivation. In order for development to occur, a teacher needs a motive for development. The components of motivation as can be seen from the part on motivation, and that are required for personal development are: **need and/or desire** – the professional development can stem from a necessity – a teacher asks for a certain job because he need to. For example, his financial situation is harsh and he requests for a job in order to get a raise in his pay. Professional development can also stem from a choice and recognition – a teacher asks a certain job because he wants. For example a sense of saturation from current job can bring a teacher to search for a new job. **Striving at reaching of a purpose** – a teacher must identify the job he aspires for in terms of target recognition. **Sense of capability** – on order for professional development to occur a teacher is required to test his abilities and skills and the level they are suitable with the purpose he has set for himself. **Action** – a teacher must take the appropriate measures that are required for arriving at the wished for job.

The second dimension is as mentioned earlier, organization-dependent – the meaning is that it is not enough for teachers to be full with motivation in order for professional development to occur. Motivation is a necessary condition; however, it is not a sufficient one. For this purpose certain suitable conditions are required that allows for it, in terms of a promise of a sustainable professional development program throughout the career, which means, the recognition of a need for development throughout the career and the need for analyzing the individual development needs of teachers and he recognition of the existence if different career

stages in order to design suitable professional development for each stage.

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