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## ACCOUNTABILITY IN TEACHER EDUCATION: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND NEW TRENDS

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**Abstract:** Education as the basis for social development in knowledge, skills and expertise continues to encounter various issues in regard to recent developments. Namely, it continues to carry the burden of society in the establishment of individual goals and roles i.e. teachers are regarded accountable for every milestone that society reaches, positively or negatively. The influence of technology, innovative methods, and recent development in AI, make it quite difficult for teachers to follow the certain trend that is required, nevertheless, accountability in terms of teacher professionalism, knowledge and skills remains an obligation and responsibility. The paper presents a historical overview of the past and then focuses on recent changes and developments in education. The main aim is overall awareness regarding the obstacles and challenges, defining the teachers' role in education and asserting future recommendations. While new teachers might not be aware of the different challenges, the older teachers might believe that they have learned it all from experience. Nevertheless, through discussing the evolution of the professional development of teachers and the way it is linked to the history of teaching education and curriculum development, this paper argues that professional development has always been a part of teaching, and that teachers have been accountable for the overall success, paving the way for future trends which not only enfold different challenges, opportunities and risks, but also provide the means of overcoming any obstacles. This research is a continuation of previous research conducted on professional development, awareness and co-teaching by the author.

**Keywords:** education, professional development, accountability, challenges, history, future trends etc.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Development according to Thomas Guskey is defined as “activities that enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of educators as a way to improve the learning of students”. According to Richards and Farrell (2005), “development generally refers to general growth not focused on a specific job. It serves a longer-term goal and seeks to facilitate growth of teachers’ understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers. It often involves examining different dimensions of a teacher’s practice as a basis for reflective review and can hence be seen as “bottom-up” (2005, pg.4). What is “professional development?” Most would agree that this refers to processes and practices that improve the job-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes of school employees. Ideally, these skills, knowledge, and attitudes should assure the intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development and well-being of each student within the school, regardless of their linguistic, cultural, economic, or national background. (see for instance, Fullan, 2005; Guskey, 2000; and Loucks-Horsley, et al., 2010) Accordingly, if you were to ask many in-service teachers “What does professional development mean to you?” they will answer, “A few days each year.” The professional development offered to teachers and other educational staff often fails to meet teachers’ needs; is brief, infrequent, and mandated by the district or state office; focuses on topics selected by administrators; and allows little opportunity to practice, receive feedback, or to participate in follow-up activities. Effective professional development must be ongoing, interesting, and meet the needs of participating personnel (Casteel and Ballantyne, 2010, pgs. 5-6).

In addition, the proposed five principles which can lead to successful and production professional development if followed are:

Principle 1: Build on foundation of skills, knowledge, and expertise.

Principle 2: Engage participants as learners

Principle 3: Provide practice, feedback, and follow-up

Principle 4: Measure changes in teacher knowledge and skills.

Principle 5: Measure changes in student performance (Fullan, 2005; Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley, Stiles, and Hewson, 1996; and Loucks-Horsley, et al., 2010).

These are the most recent research in the field of accountability and professional development of teachers, although, advancements in professional development had to undergo many changes in order to meet the needed criteria as appointed by the law in education. For the sake of getting acquainted to the historical developments and issues, an outline of the historical events in teacher education and teaching is provided.

## 2. HISTORY

Ducharme and Ducharme (2012), explain the beginning of formal teaching education in the United States through an excerpt from the biography of the second president of the US – John Adams. In 1755, due to not being able to pay for an apprenticeship with a lawyer, he “immediately assumed his new role in a one-room schoolhouse [...] although untried and untrained as a teacher” McCullough (2001, pg.15), as cited in Ducharme and Ducharme (2012). They go on to explain that this was due to no training for teachers existing at that time and that “the first formal teacher preparation began in the 1820s with the establishment of “normal schools” in Vermont and Massachusetts” (Ducharme and Ducharme, 2012). The number of the normal schools meant for teacher training continued to grow through the United States (Ducharme and Ducharme, 2012), and the need for changes in curriculum at the beginning of the 1920s, brought with it the next set of changes in the professional development of teachers. This prompted the Eight Year Study (or the Thirty School Study), conducted between 1930 and 1942, where “30 high schools redesigned their curriculums and initiated innovative practices in student testing, program assessment, student guidance, curriculum design, and staff development” (Kridel, 2010). The curriculum development’s aim was to bring together separate subjects, with “a series of professional development workshops [...] to help teachers reconsider the basic goals and philosophy of their schools and to support the development of their own teaching materials” (Kridel, 2010).

The 1940s and early 1950s saw the addition of “life-adjustment education” (Kridel, 2010). Life adjustment education was suggested by the vocational educator Charles Prosser, whose curriculum “aimed to [...] teach “life skills” that would be particularly valuable for students who did not plan to continue on to college or other types of postsecondary training after high school” (Hunt, 2021). This resulted in the National Science Foundation creating the Physics, Biology and Math curriculum projects in the 1960s, which consisted of professional teacher development through “a set of NSF-sponsored summer institutes” (Kridel, 2010). In these institutes, or more accurately teacher-training workshops, teachers were taught how to teach the new materials which were supposed to “produce the greater numbers of scientists and mathematicians needed to overcome the perceived lead of the Soviet scientists as rapidly as possible” (Kridel, 2010). In the 1970s, “research, responses to innovation and policy direction” (Kridel, 2010), drove changes in the professional development of teachers.

The 1980s in the US professional development of teachers, saw three waves of reform. Accordingly, the first wave – *standards* – consisted of new standards in math and other fields, and although the National Staff Development Council produced standards for teachers that “expected good practice in professional development [...] [they] often gave professional development very low organizational and budgetary priority” (Kridel, 2010). However, that changed with the second wave – *teacher education* – which saw the appearance of professional development schools, whose purpose: “...was for teacher educators to work alongside school practitioners to produce more capable and “classroom-ready” beginning teachers, to improve the practice of the in-service teachers, to enhance the learning of students in the school, and to generate inquiry into classroom practice and student learning.” (Kridel, 2010) The third wave – *restructuring* – involved teachers having new roles as “members of school councils or school improvement teams, and they were intended to influence decisions about curriculum, instruction, testing, and other program matters at the school level” (Kridel, 2010). The importance of professional development in a continually improving world, led to the National Staff Development Council creating national Standards for Staff Development in the 1990s, which “contributed to the 1990s as a decade of standards related to student achievement, teacher competence, professional development, and pre-service teacher education” (Kridel, 2010). The early 2000s saw predictions of the professional development for teachers involving more on- the-job learning, including collaboration between colleagues, involving teachers in both the planning and the implementation of their professional development, as well as keeping both students and teachers in mind when evaluating the impact of the professional development that should take place (Sparks and Hirsh 1997), as cited in Kridel (2010).

## 3. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS IN PRACTICE

There are many different ways for teachers to participate in professional development. Richards and Farrell (2005), list workshops, self-monitoring, teacher support groups, keeping a teaching journal, peer observation, keeping a teaching portfolio, analyzing critical incidents, doing case analysis, peer coaching, team teaching and action research as opportunities for professional development. According to the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), conducted in 2009, an average of 89% of teachers in lower secondary education engaged in professional development. They mostly participated in courses/workshops (related to their subject matter, methods and/or other education-related topics), education conferences or seminars (at which teachers and/or researchers presented their research results and discussed education problems), qualification programs (for example pursuing a degree), observation visits to other schools, participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the professional

development of teachers, individual or collaborative research on a topic of professional interest and mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching, as part of a formal school arrangement. According to Miftari (2018),

*“A very important aspect of teaching and learning is sustaining a good relationship among the learners in the class i.e. promoting the value of working together and helping each other. The term collaboration (which might also be found as cooperation), stands for equal treatment and understanding of the individuals in the classroom; it represents the moral and ethical values of individuals of the society and as so, implies “working together to achieve a certain, common goal.” The prior leads the former. What we wish to teach our learners regarding collaboration is what we ourselves learn from co-teaching and collaboration. The main idea regarding the issue is in accepting the fact that learning, just as teaching, is an ongoing process. This process, indeed can be made easier with the help of the others around us, be it our classmates (as learners) or teacher colleagues” (2018, pg. 273).*

Additionally, the need for technology-prepared teachers and the need for ICT teaching skills, erupted as a necessity during the pandemic, a time when many teachers were mandatorily requested to teach online, when they were previously not prepared for it. This situation called for assistance in learning how to use new platforms and “adapt to new teaching strategies and online management tools” (Houle, 2021). This involved learning how to use virtual teaching environments, such as Google Classroom, Blackboard Learn, Canvas etc. In addition to having to increase their digital literacy skills, through learning how to use “cloud storage, digital storytelling and interactive elements” (Houle, 2021), to bring learning beyond the Zoom meeting where the teacher speaks and the students listen. In addition to technology, another important factor is the issue of inclusiveness. According to Jia and Santi (2021), during the pandemic students with disabilities faced the issues of “education policy design lacking a disability perspective; technology offered [not being] accessible; mainstream schools overlooking the responsibility for educating students with disabilities, and parents of students with disabilities [being] unprepared for distance and home-schooling”. (2021, pgs. 1186-1191) Furthermore, discipline has extended beyond the usual issues of participating in class and keeping quiet, to students needing to be reminded that they cannot wear pajamas, cannot be in bed, cannot be wrapped in blankets and cannot get up in the middle of the lesson to grab a snack (Heim and Strauss, 2020).

#### **4. THE FUTURE OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS**

The future remains to be unpredictable in what it might bring our way; the relevance of something which was assumed important today, might lose its relevance overnight, thus making it an even harder for educators to keep track of the changes and the needed professionalism. As for the time being, there are some areas of focus, which tend to lead the path.

##### **Hybrid Learning**

A mixture of school and home teaching and learning through the computer provides learners with various opportunities to join instruction and be active participants in the process even from home. Educational settings that combine ICT applications with face-to-face learning are often referred to as blended learning models. Hybrid learning, also relevant in this context, is a pedagogical approach that combines face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction (O’Byrne and Pytash, 2015). Accordingly, teachers were thrown into the deep end of what was once a scary endeavor, and now they are equipped with new knowledge that improves their skills as an educator (Idrizi, 2021). Although teachers feel that they need more professional development and training in using technology the skills gained put them in a position where they are much more willing to accept the ICT heavy future in which schools are headed toward (Idrizi, 2021).

Learning spaces are traditionally personal. Within the learning space—be it physical, institutional or online/virtual—students connect with the engagement strategies they consider to be typically successful for them. Intensified instances of collaborative and self-directed student work are but one example of a flexible learning environment in which student cohorts work independently within learning spaces where the traditional lecture has been abandoned. When content is available anytime and anywhere, learning is no longer dependent on educators transmitting their knowledge; a learning space can allow for this change (Bennett et al., 2020, pg.4).

##### **Inclusive Education**

Inclusive education developed recently in North Macedonia, and as of 2021 is actively practiced in all primary schools. The main aim of inclusiveness is to bring together all the students in the same classroom, no matter the differences in their development, including here students diagnosed with ADHD, autism and other developmental issues. As much as teachers were pro to the changes in the educational process, many of them found themselves to be under-trained and unprofessional. The diverse classroom settings were not an easy task at all and teachers were not only unsuccessful but were also taken accountable. This made room for a new area of co-teaching, namely that

of the *technical assistant*, which applies to teachers who have completed courses on special education, psychology and guidance and who are specialized in assisting the teachers with the tasks and dealing with any encountered issues within the diverse classrooms. These minor changes in the educational process developed a new path for the pre-service teachers in the faculty of education at IBU, by which inter-institutional agreements were adopted with different special education centers and schools as part of the Internship procedures.

#### **Increased Collaboration between Colleagues and Institutions**

The future of professional development of teachers will require and allow for more teacher trainings to take place and for more teacher support, teacher observations (i.e. the TAG method, Edutopia, 2019), team coaching and observation of peers from other institutions (OECD TALIS, 2009). Different opportunities such as ERASMUS+ and MEVLANA help in providing teacher trainings as well mobilities for both students and staff. The experience in different countries of the region provides teachers with knowledge, skills and expertise and with diverse learners and settings (see ERASMUS+ programme guide, 2025).

#### **Adapting to AI in Education**

The relevance of AI in our everyday teaching is not only a challenge, it is also a must. The issue of how much AI should be allowed in research, the ethical and moral code of its' implication and the different issues that teachers encounter nowadays is simply that of technological development and something that we cannot prevent. The most suitable thing that we can do is establish a norm on the institutional regulation that would define the honesty and dishonesty code i.e. the amount of AI in scientific research and papers and a way how to prevent it. One thing that is advisable is going back to “old school” traditional teaching, in which teachers would do the homework and written tasks and assignments during class, with which, plagiarism of any type or the influence of AI would be prevented.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

Since the days of the first teacher training schools, the educational system and the opportunities for professional development have been constantly evolving and enhancing. With new discoveries about human nature, in the way we learn, the way emotions affect our sense of self-efficacy and motivation and with new research about what students need to achieve their learning goals, which has led to new instructional strategies and even methodologies, has shown that each generation of teachers has had the need to adapt and learn new things, in order to best support students' learning. Whether teachers want to or not, they have participated in a constantly changing system, either through changes in curriculum, or policies, and thus making the choice for continuous professional development a natural extension of life which involves learning, improvement and growth, both on an individual level, and a professional one. Participating in professional development is nothing more than being aware that the world is always evolving and that we are active participants in the evolution of teaching. Therefore, adapting our teaching theory to the innovative trends is compulsory if we wish to achieve success. The challenges along the way make our job more enjoyable and at times, even more interesting. Hence, being aware of teacher accountability in students' progress and overall scores continues to be a debatable issue.

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