

Teachers quality in long life learning research for the training needs of teachers on multi-cultural education

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Abstract:

Schools, due to their particular structure, can be considered as social systems, in which high-degree autonomous processes take place. This is particularly obvious in the training process. The education as a part of a wider society is influenced by any social change. Should we cause changes in the school with a simple change in the training of schoolteachers? Our research that which place during the academic year 2002-2003 is concerned with the teachers' attitude. It includes three groups of teachers that participated in District Training Centers and more specific in "multi-cultural Education" programs. Our perspectives along with the proposals of the teachers of our sample try to relate to the above.

1. A Theoretical Frame of Possibilities: School as a Training Organization

The discussion on the growth of schools began in the 1980s, and since then there have been many attempts in order for schools to be described as training organizations. It seems to be an agreement, that processes of growth and change can take place in schools under two conditions:

- Somebody can locate positive conditions in them, as for example wider practical spaces in each school or a particularly good relation of confidence with the person who supervises.
- Favorable internal school conditions exist, as for example a readiness and responsibility of school authorities for innovatory processes. The knowledge of organization cannot be achieved without the knowledge and the readiness of growth of members. It presupposes the presence of common beliefs and objectives.

Schools, due to their particular structure, should be considered as social systems, in which high-degree autonomous processes take place. This is particularly obvious in the training process. School "is activated generally by the individual – or the student or the schoolteacher [...]. From this prospect no one primarily pays attention in concrete legal systems [...] the organizations however [...] develop their own level, whose logic, shapes the individual action and energy and establishes it" (ZECH, 1999, 75). Autonomy is one of the factors that are in effect as essentials for the knowledge of organization (PROBST, 1992). This is rendered particularly explicit, when the teacher is called to face difficulties e.g. in level of language with foreign students.

2. The Contribution of School Teachers in Education

Should we cause changes in school with a simple change in the training of schoolteachers? The general educational-political situation that prevails is referred to the possibility of school growth per region via its continuous change towards conditions of qualitative improvement. All processes however depend on basic factors, such as the will, the capability and the special school forms (PROBST, 1992).

The idea regarding the effect of general measures of schoolteachers training is focused in two fundamental points:

- From one hand it is pointed out in an individual level an insufficient organizational conscience of configuration of representations (Wenzel 1998). Schoolteachers' individual conscience regarding the instructive process is determined in initial level in the form of his course and least in the school as total. The reasons for this dynamic of growth concerning the conscience can be sought in the academic education of schoolteacher, as in his further training. On the other hand it depends on the situation of readiness and the will of each individual separately to act energetically in particular given structures. Only the will cannot function positively and involve results, as those that can be achieved with the adoption of suitable measures that require a constructive mixture and use of existing faculties.
- The organizational development of learning result from individual or it is collective energies and intentions. Substantial for a school, which is

capable of a developing based on the social changes, is the plan that will be shaped per region and that is delimited based on special personal placements, regarding the influence of both the colleagues and the social environment.

It is obvious that the conscience, the faculties of undertaking any competencies and the readiness for changes are connected are in between them, when become reason for organizational learning. In order to shape an organizational conscience and a disposal of undertaking competencies on behalf of the persons in charge, it would be important in all the phases of the training of schoolteachers to give particular attention in the autonomy and in the configuration of productive training processes, in the following forms:

1. Courses, programs of education and learning that require content and methods of academic instructive regulations that results from the social changes and dynamic relations of collaboration, as for example between universities and teachers.
2. A dynamic connection of students-trainees through school growth programs.
3. Further training depending on the internal needs that each school has, even in the form of informal exchange of different schools in the Internet. A characteristic example is the fact that in some schools we have a high percentage of foreign students and in others that percentage is very small or even non-existent. Consequently each schools needs are different.

3. Investigation and Analysis of the Training Needs of Schoolteachers on "Multi-Cultural Education" issues

Education as a part of the wider society is influenced by any social change. In Greek education, during the last years a change takes place. This change is related with the abrupt increase of the number of students that emanate from other countries and particularly Albania. Teachers are the direct recipients of problems that are connected with the difficulties of foreign students. School, as it was written earlier, because of its particular form should be considered as a social system, in which high-degree autonomous processes take place. So we tried via our research to investigate the training needs of teachers on multi-cultural education issues

Our research took place during the academic year 2002-2003 and is concerned with the teachers' attitude. It includes three groups of teachers that participated in District Training Centers and more specific in "Multi-cultural Education" programs. In those programs teachers learn about multicultural theory and relative teaching methods. The one group of teachers emanates from the region and the others from Athens.

For the conduct of the research a specifically parked questionnaire (probability systematic sampling) was used along with semi-constructed interviews.

A total of 278 teachers participated in the research. From this total women was 58% and 42% were men. We consider this percentage a realistic one since the women teachers that are in service exceed the 52% of the total teachers in service. Particularly increased was the attendance of women in the regional District Training Centers.

As for the *level of education* they serve 26% of them were pre-elementary schoolteachers, 68% of them were elementary teachers and 6% of them were high school teachers (specialized in literature).

Regarding the scientific *training* of the teachers in our sample we should note that:

- 83,2% of these teachers have only acquired their basic degree,
- 6,3% have watched the M.D.D.E. or other Seminars
- The rest of them did not answer.

They are in *service*: 28% from 5-10 years, 42,7% from 10-20 years and 29,3% above 20 years. A first estimate points out that the separating line between the two groups of teachers of obligatory education is far more intense in the region, since the syndromes of the Greek educational system still function at that point.

The reasons that led the teachers of our sample to attend programs that arise “Multi-cultural Education” issues were grouped in four categories:

- A **1st category** because students with cultural particularities (immigrants, foreigners, etc) study in the school units they serve.
- A **2nd category** as an effort of briefing or knowledge growth.
- A **3rd category** for as a general interest for the subject
- A **4th category** for various other reasons.
- As for the **first category** we note that our sample presents differentiations depending on the group that constitutes it.
- The reason of attendance the need of theoretical briefing and practical training (45%). The teachers appreciate, that they do not have the appropriate faculties for the confrontation of problems that rise in the school (success or abandonment) from these students.

Teachers write: “*It interests me because I work in a school where the students with Albanian citizenship constitute the 70% of students*” or “*... Because in our school study students from other countries and I would like to learn ways of confronting the problems that have appeared*” or

“*... Because in our society henceforth in our school the problem is visible and in order to confront it we need briefing and preparation*”.

We point out, that apart from the linguistic communication, their reflection includes also the question of operation or the interaction of cultural elements that each student brings. This is reported mainly by the pre-elementary schoolteachers, where the ‘variety’ of territorial origin connected with the age group of students, is unbreakably related with the “problem” and is intensified in the capital.

In the **second category** teachers that want to be informed or acquire knowledge and dexterities regarding the issues, are reported in the “Multi-Cultural Education” (37%). And here appears as a main reason the insufficient basic education and the “insufficient” briefing by the School Advisers or the other institutions and educational authorities.

The interest that teachers have for such a type of social questions is presented in our measurements in the **third category** as a third reason for following-up these programs (7%). As teachers report, even if they do not serve in regions with potential multi-cultural schools they question their multi-cultural interests “*not only as educators but also as citizens*”. Anyhow, in spite of the fact appreciate that the follow-up of such programs helps them in their professional improvement and evolution.

In the **fourth category** we included a variety of answers that emanated from the groups from Athens. The persons from of high school teachers who participated, in order to acquire knowledge, so that they could face the problem of language. They also mentioned that their basic University degree did not qualify them in teaching “*Greek as a second language*”, neither the knowledge for of behavior or discipline problems.

The head teachers of schools answered that their reason was their briefing while aiming at the pedagogic support of personnel of their school unit. Certain viewed this effort as an opportunity for communication, exchange of opinions and discussion with other colleagues.

We also had “humorous” answers such as “*hopes springs eternal*” with reports in the recycling of innate problems of Greek educational system.

Finally, we appreciated that it is particularly important that we mention the proposals of the teachers of our sample, regarding their training:

1. The training programs are turned in strategic or instructive approaches focused on more with the sample and practical applications in multicultural schools
2. Training programs should last more hours and they should be repeated at the duration of school year with various forms (sample meetings, seminars etc)
3. Reformation of the curriculum of the obligatory education. It should specifically include elements, which will incorporate the language, the culture, historical and social information (morality and customs, clothing, diet etc). Moreover, the role the University answering is an important and essential one, because it can create in the growth of such programs and methods and researches.
4. There should be developed approaching strategies on how a reciprocal confidence is constructed between the “school community” and the family of students, so that we could develop an effective communication that will help in the effective school operation and the school success of students.
5. The programs should include the Didactics of Teaching Greek as a second language for the linguistic course and there should more research studies in the already existing instructive material for the multi-cultural schools.

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Evaluating the growth of preservice teaching in the United States: a systematic approach

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INTRODUCTION

This paper describes a two-pronged system of evaluating future teachers in a graduate-level teacher licensure program in the state of Ohio in the United States. The program integrates both external (state-required, federally recommended) modes of assessments as well as internal, program assessments to bring about positive teacher growth.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The external assessments rely on the Praxis Series of Professional assessments for Beginning Teachers, developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton, New Jersey. The three categories of assessments in The Praxis Series correspond to the three levels in teacher development: (1) entering a teacher training program, Praxis I assesses academic skills (reading, writing, and mathematics skills); (2) licensure for entering the profession, Praxis II assesses subject areas (knowledge of the subjects candidates will teach, general and subject-specific pedagogical skills and knowledge, pedagogy, and the principles of teaching and learning), and; (3) in the first year of teaching, Praxis III assesses Classroom performance. (the skills of beginning teachers in classroom settings). For a list of Praxis Series examinations, and for the requirements for the state of Ohio for 2004-5, see <http://www.ets.org/praxis/prxoh.html>.

DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW OF HOW EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT IS CONDUCTED

Praxis I (Academic Skills Assessments) is designed to be taken early in a student's undergraduate experience. Students at The Ohio State University at Mansfield (OSU-M), however, follow a slightly different path in academic skills assessment. In place of Praxis I, they take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) at the end of their undergraduate experience. Nevertheless, both tests measure reading, writing, and mathematics skills, and are made available by the ETS through either a paper-based or computer-based format. Examples of the Praxis I and GRE tests for 2004-5 can be found at ETS website and at <http://www.ets.org/praxis/prxtest.html#ppst>.

Praxis II (Subject Assessments) measures candidates' knowledge of the subjects they will teach, and general and subject-specific pedagogical skills and knowledge. Students in the OSU at Mansfield take the Praxis II exams after they have been accepted in to the M.Ed. program, and during the third or fourth quarters of the six quarter teacher licensure program. This timing insures that they have completed the relevant undergraduate course work in the subjects they will teach (Science, English, Social Studies, Math, and related subjects), as well as the general and subject specific pedagogy courses in the licensure program. ETS makes Praxis II available as a paper-based test. Examples of the Praxis II tests for 2004-5 can be found at <http://www.ets.org/praxis/prxtest.html#ppst>. OSU-M faculty are kept abreast of how students are faring on the Praxis II exam. In most cohorts more than 90% of the students pass the assessment on their first try, and all pass before they exit the program.

OSU-M students who complete the M.Ed. licensure program and pass Praxis II are granted an entry year provisional teaching license that is valid for two years. During that time they are required by the state of Ohio to pass the Praxis III exam. Praxis III (Classroom Performance Assessments) assess the skills of beginning teachers in classroom settings. The framework of knowledge and skills for a beginning teacher consists of 19 assessment criteria in four interrelated domains. See Appendix A. These domains embrace the teaching and learning experiences of the beginning teacher, including instructional planning, creating a learning environment, instruction, and teacher professionalism. Praxis III aims to recognize the centrality of the teaching context as well as the many diverse forms that excellent teaching can take. The Praxis III exam uses three means of assessment: (1) direct observation of classroom practice; (2) review of documentation prepared by the teacher; (3) and interviews. OSU-M provides support for Praxis III to its OSU-M M.Ed. students when they are in the program through the activities and assessments mentioned above. OSU-M also provides informal support for Praxis III to its OSU-M M.Ed. graduates once they are in their teaching positions.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE INSTRUMENTS USED IN THE EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

ETS acknowledges that the Praxis Series for teacher licensure is a gateway to the profession and thus a form of high stakes testing. Failing any part of the series results in the delay or termination of one's career choice. Nevertheless, ETS maintains that its tests conform to the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association, 1999), have been developed with state-of-the-art techniques, and are thus valid. For more on this see Validity of Licensing Tests at <http://ftp.ets.org/pub/tandl/validity.pdf>

INTERNAL ASSESSMENTS

The internal assessments are specific to the integrated teacher education program at OSU-M. OSU-M offers the future teacher a highly-ranked and innovative teacher education program leading to a Master of Education (M.Ed.) and preparation for an entry provisional 2-year state license in Early Childhood (Grades PreK-3) or Middle Childhood (Grades 4-9). The OSU-M Department of Teaching and Learning staff consists of eight faculty members. The OSU-M mission is the preparation of professionals who are have a deep knowledge of subject matter, pedagogy, and of teaching diverse and special populations. The program also stresses curricular integration, and teaching in ways that are reflective, student-centered and developmentally appropriate. Working together, OSU-M faculty and students create a community of learners whose varied interests and concerns continually advance both personal and professional knowledge regarding how best to educate all children. Program themes include: (1) developmental issues in teaching and learning; (2) varied meaning and implications of integrated curriculum; (3) sociocultural issues in teaching and learning; (4)