

## University and school-based support for teachers in career entry

*Anja Winkler & Daniela Freisler-Mühlemann*

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### *Abstract:*

In the process of becoming and staying a teacher, career entry is considered a key phase in the professional biography of teachers. During their education at the university, students complete internships in schools and enter the profession directly after graduation. When entering the profession, challenges are perceived in the areas of teaching, extracurricular duties such as administrative and organizational tasks or meetings, and school reforms. Therefore, it's important that support services at universities and schools accompany teachers in handling such challenges in order to create learning opportunities for the professional development of one's own competencies. This presentation focuses on the question of which university and school support services are used for which purpose in order to support the professional development of teachers entering the profession. To answer the question, 24 teachers were retrospectively surveyed with semi-structured, guided interviews at the beginning of their second year in the profession. The results show that the first professional year was perceived by the teachers as interesting overall, but also as demanding and associated with new challenges. The more detailed analysis shows that the teachers entering the profession in various situations seek, above all, the exchange with other teachers about their experiences and difficulties that arise.

### *Extended summary:*

In the process of becoming and staying a teacher, career entry is considered a key phase in the professional biography of teachers. Even in Switzerland, with its single-phase teacher education model, this phase is complex (Hascher & Winkler, 2017). During their education at the university, students complete internships in schools and enter the profession directly after graduation (Freisler-Mühlemann & Winkler, 2022). The tasks are no longer to be handled within the protected framework of teacher education, but within their own responsibility. When entering the profession, challenges are perceived in the areas of teaching, extracurricular duties, such as administrative and organizational tasks or meetings, and school reforms (Richter et al., 2011). By dealing with the challenges, teachers expand their competencies and promote their professional development. Thus, career entry becomes a crucial phase for career exploration and one's own competence development (Hericks, Keller-Schneider & Bonnet, 2019).

Support services at universities and schools are important to aid teachers in career entry in handling these challenges and thus create learning opportunities (Raufelder & Ittel, 2012). In Switzerland in Canton XX, various support services are provided. The university prepares students for entering the profession with courses on collaborative lesson planning, thematic in-depth courses, and discussion groups. At the schools, the students receive a paid accompanying teacher, the so-called mentor, which provides support and offers regular meetings as desired. To what extent which support is used in which situations has hardly been investigated so far. This is despite the fact that support is eminently important at the start of a career for facilitating the professional development of teachers.

In this context, this presentation focuses on the question of which university and school support services are used for which purpose in order to support the professional development of teachers entering the profession. As part of the research project "XX", the 2018 graduating cohort of the program at the Institute of Primary Education of XX was surveyed. In addition to four quantitative questionnaire surveys, 24 teachers from the same cohort were retrospectively surveyed with semi-structured, guided interviews at the beginning of their second year in the profession.

The interviews were conducted on site by two different moderators and recorded with an audio recorder. The interviews were then transcribed and analyzed according to Kuckartz (2018). For this purpose, the statements were categorized deductively according to the questions from the guideline and inductively according to the content of the statements. For the research question of this presentation, the following categories were coded in a new and more detailed way: the perceived challenges, the relevant social support, as well as specifically the support from the school principal, the teacher staff, the university, the mentorship, and the private environment.

They were coded deductively into the categories "type of support" (e.g., sharing or administrative support), "support offered" (e.g., mentoring, school principal, or family), and "area of support" (e.g., parenting, classroom management, or lesson planning) and into inductive subcategories. In total, nine documents were double-coded with a good agreement of the subcategories with a kappa of 0.76. To answer the research question, these three categories are placed in a code relation matrix in MAXQDA22 and correlated. This makes it possible to determine which support offer was claimed in which support type in which support area.

The results show that the first professional year was perceived by the teachers as interesting overall, but also as demanding and associated with new challenges such as parent work, class management and implementation of lesson planning. Accordingly, the supplementary offers from the university, such as the planning courses, discussion groups and in-depth offers, are deemed as important because they enable a reflective examination of the professional demands of the teaching profession in a learning setting, which advances the further development of one's own competencies. Teachers also perceived the school-based support service in the form of professional mentoring as an effective learning opportunity. This is because a responsible contact person introduces them to the school culture, provides them with confidence and operational skills for school and teaching practice, and promotes their reflexivity. The more detailed analysis shows that the teachers entering the profession in various situations seek, above all, the exchange with peers and their family about the experiences and difficulties they face. Furthermore, the school principal is needed as a support especially in the work with parents. In this context, the question of how to optimize and professionalize the support services for teachers entering the profession should be discussed.

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