New Teachers' Domains of Interest in the First Year Following their Internship

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Abstract
This study explores issues which new teachers prefer studying within the framework of in-service training courses after their internship year and as part of their professional development. This was examined from three aspects: studied issues, relation between theory and practice and the place where the new teachers wish to study. The study was conducted according to the qualitative-interpretive approach of the case study type. The research population comprised 128 new teachers who attended the in-service training course. The research tools consisted of a focus group and an interview followed by a content analysis. The findings illustrate that the new teachers preferred enhancing their knowledge of the three aspects explored from the professional and personal perspectives. The research findings could facilitate the development of new teachers' in-service training courses which would contribute to their personal and professional growth and would assist building programmes of new teachers' support and induction at school.

Keywords: New teachers, Teachers' professional development, Frameworks of teachers' Professional development.

Introduction
Turning new teachers into professional and high-quality teachers is a process which requires time, efforts and resource allocation. Studies indicate that 46% of new teachers drop out during the first five years of their practice (Cochran-Smith, McQuillan, Mitchell, Terrell, Barnatt, D'Souza, et al., 2012) while 16% do it during the first year (Arbiv-Elyashiv & Zimmerman, 2013). Moreover, researchers point out teachers' difficulties which stem from the gap between the training and the teaching in practice. This gap is manifested by the difficulty to translate theoretical knowledge into practical knowledge in real time (Eisenhamer, Mevarech, El-Yagur, Ziv & Rachamim, 2010; Gilad & Alkalay, 2014).

The main argument investigated in the paper is that new teachers wish to acquire further knowledge about issues which they prefer and consider relevant. Hence, new teachers should be actively involved in designing in-service training courses of professional development. Bodies which support new teachers should know to leverage what the teachers want and prefer studying during the in-service training courses following the internship year and in general. Thus, the new teachers would be more satisfied, persevere in teaching and avoid dropping out of the education system.
Theoretical background

New teachers

Many studies (Ingresoll & Smith, 2004) indicate that the first years of teaching constitute a crucial period for teachers' professional development. Findings show that the first year shapes teachers' image and professional perception. It is essential for their long practice in the education system as well as for their continued professional development in school and in teaching. The literature points out a considerable percentage (46%) dropout of new teachers during their first five years of teaching (Arbiv-Elyashiv & Zimmerman, 2013; Cochran-Smith, et al., 2012).

The key teaching difficulties identified among new teachers are class management, handling problems of discipline, setting expectations for the pupils, coping with pressure at work and vis-à-vis the parents as well as settling conflicts. Moreover, they have to diversify their teaching methods and address learners' different capabilities (Moore & Swan, 2008). During their first year of practice, teachers are engaged more in trying to solve problems of discipline and class management. In this situation they frequently find it hard to identify the appropriate way of teaching, namely integrating disciplinary knowledge and didactic-pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, they encounter difficulties in planning a lesson compatible with the curriculum and adapted to the learners, ensuring an optimal learning which leads to attainments ((Eisenhamer, et al., 2010; Gilad & Alkalay, 2014).

Teachers' professional development

The prevalent consensus is that teachers' quality is the most important factor which affects the learning and attainments of pupils at school. Hence, there is a sense of real urgency regarding the need to educate teachers on a high level (Hargreaves, 2013). The literature mentions the term "teachers' professional development" in various contexts and its definition is not uniform. Some sources highlight teachers' empowerment and growth while others use the general term 'professional development' as an expression of all the learning channels which teachers attend in order to enhance the quality of their teaching. For example, various programmes, in-service training courses, workshops, small group learning, individual tutoring and so on. The different models of teachers' professional development can be divided into three categories: psychological, professional and sociological (Fullan, 2007; Reichenberg, Kleeman & Sagee, 2013). Zeichner and Liston (1996) maintain that only through reflection about their teaching, teachers become more competent, more capable and generally speaking better teachers.

Teachers' professional development is a continuous and incessant process (Knowles, 1989). Studies of teachers' practice illustrate awareness of the development stages of teachers as adult learners. Huberman (1993) defines three stages of teachers' professional development: beginning, middle and end of their career. Teachers' lifelong learning does not focus only on the professional perspective but also on the multiple facets of their personal, social and professional personality. Good teachers are those who learn throughout their whole life not merely as teachers but also as intelligent and thinking people, active members in the community and society. Lifelong teachers see to it that their pupils are lifelong learners. Teachers' professional development is mainly based on in-service learning. Teachers are connected to their personality and previous life experience, representing a unique set of pedagogical beliefs and practical conduct in teaching. Professional development in this
context is considered as a personal development integrated with social and cultural mutual relations of individuals with their environment (Kozminsky, 2011).

**Professional development frameworks for new teachers in Israel**

The Israeli Ministry of Education designed a professional development program for new teachers. This program is based on the assumption that the stage of induction into the teaching profession includes the internship year and the first year of practice which follows it. This stage has a crucial impact on the continued professional life of education practitioners regarding their willingness to persevere in the profession as well as their job perception and professional identity consolidation (Gilad & Alkalay, 2014).

There are two professional development frameworks for new teachers: a 40-hour peer group workshop which takes place in a teacher education college and a 20-hour individual tutoring by a teacher-mentor at school. The workshop conducted in the college is designed for professional development and empowerment through support by the peer group and by a professional practitioner. During the workshop the participants present their difficulties, hesitations, feelings, dilemmas, experiences and problems in the field. The workshop allows new teachers to look at things from the perspective of a peer group, facilitating identification and sharing, collaborative learning from the experience of others. The fact that the workshop takes place in one of the teacher education institutions aims to: 1. allow continuity of training and professional development in a teacher education college; 2. facilitate a free and open discourse in practice outside the workplace; 3. view the workshop particularly as a place for reflective discourse of professional development rather than a place for in-service training course which is content-oriented or regional practice centers-oriented. The support program of new teachers at school underscores the following goals: assistance and cognitive, emotional and social support while learning the new teachers' preferred issues more thoroughly. A special emphasis is put on viewing the learning a process which empowers the teachers so that they function as independent teachers in the school setup. Furthermore, great importance is attributed to developing competences of assertiveness, facing a class and conducting a promoting educational dialogue (Ministry of Education, 2014).

**Research questions**

1. Which issues new teachers prefer studying following their internship year?
2. What is the relation between theory and practice of the issues which new teachers prefer studying?
3. Where do new teachers wish to study their preferred issues, in an academic institute or at school?

**Methodology**

**Research method**

The study was conducted by the qualitative-interpretive approach of the case study type. This approach allows comprehension, description and interpretation of occurrences in the field and includes also the covert aspects from the viewpoint of the participants themselves. One of the important advantages of this type of research resides in its ability to provide insights about events in the actual contexts and situations in which they transpire. A case study is inductive since it presents the data out of the situation independently of assumptions and it enables expression of situations from different perspectives (Shkedi, 2012).
Research population
The participants were 128 new teachers who completed their internship year and studied in a 1-year compulsory in-service training course for new teachers. The in-service training course consisted of 60 hours and took place at an academic college of education (40 hours) and at school (20 hours). The participants taught at primary and secondary schools in the Jewish and Arab sectors.

Research tools
The research tools comprised a focus group (Liamputtong, 2011) and a semi-structured interview (Shkedi, 2012). The questions in the focus group related to new teachers' preferences in the context of issues to be studied in the in-service-training course, theoretical and practical aspects of the studied issues and the place of learning. Sixteen focus groups were conducted each consisting of eight new teachers. Each focus group lasted two to three hours and the new teachers were requested to answer the questions asked alternately by the two researchers. One researcher conducted the discussion and the other documented it and vice versa. Out of the entire sample, 16 new teachers were chosen, one from each focus group and they were the interviewees in a semi-structured interview. The interview questions focused on preferred issues to be studied for the in-service training course as part of teachers' professional development in the education system.

Data processing
The interviews and the focus group minutes were typed and coded. At the first stage, the obtained data were divided into sub-categories according to the key themes yielded by the interpretive analysis. A high number of sub-categories were received. At the second stage, the sub-categories were united into a smaller number of classifications. This was done according to Goulding (1999) who suggested uniting ideas and exposing the theoretical explanation of the investigated occurrence. The analysis was triangulated leading to a 68% agreement between the two researchers (Shkedi, 2012).

Findings
The findings illustrate the new teachers' preferences of issues to be studied and expanded following the internship year: studied issues, relation between the theory and practice of the studied issues and their preferred place of study.

Studied issues preferred by the new teachers
Table No. 1: Studied issues preferred by new teachers from the professional and personal perspective (N=128) in percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studied issues from a professional perspective</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Studied issues from a personal perspective</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coping with problems of discipline and violence</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting a dialogue with parents, teachers and school management</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Personal empowerment</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class management: creating optimal learning conditions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Self-confidence improvement</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School organizational structure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Anger release</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting acquainted with</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Positive thinking</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Studied issues preferred by new teachers from the professional perspective

Coping with problems of discipline and violence in class was the main and meaningful issue which the teachers wished to study during the in-service training course (47%). The new teachers pointed out that they lacked the tools for dealing with problems of discipline. Most of the teachers used metaphors from the world of flora, fauna and inanimate objects for describing their difficulty in this respect. For example: a jungle, a ship sailing with no direction and a field of thorns. One of the teachers said: 'I would have liked to receive advice so that I could ignore the discipline problems and teach better'. Another teacher told: 'I walked in the classroom... felt I was on the battlefield... I threatened, yelled and asked the pupils to be quiet but they continued disrupting the lesson'.

Conducting a dialogue with parents, teachers and school management was the second issue that new teachers wanted to study (23%). They understood that a dialogue was an effective educational tool for communicating with the parents, teachers and school management. One teacher indicated: 'I don't know how to talk with the parents. I speak spontaneously and get into the defensive... I know this is not helpful'.

Class management was ranked by the new teachers in the third place and constituted 12% of the six issues. The new teachers perceived that class management encompassed the following components: creating optimal learning conditions, motivation, collaboration, attention, supportive social environment, individuals and a group as well as mutual relationships. Twelve percent of the new teachers wanted to study how to manage a class according to the above mentioned components, emphasizing an optimal class climate which enables a deep approach to learning. One of the teachers claimed: "I can't manage a lesson when pupils respond together to my question. I wish to learn how to teach them to listen one to the other'.

According to the new teachers, it was important getting acquainted with the school organizational structure (10%), namely the school vision, school regulations and rules, job definition, hierarchy and authorities. One teacher described: 'I was lost among all the position holders and failed to understand who is subordinate to who. I wanted to change a date of a test and did not know who to contact, the subject coordinator, age-group coordinator, school assistant principal or...'.

The new teachers argued they were not advised about their rights as teaching practitioners but were extensively informed of their duties. This issue was in fact ranked as fifth out of the six issues. However, the teachers pointed out that it was relevant to their future horizon as teaching practitioners. Moreover, the new teachers stipulated they had no available and current information regarding their wages and employment conditions such as: promotion ranks, study fund, sick days and other social benefits.

Although the new teachers specified that they had studied teaching methods and strategies during their teacher education program, 2% of them wished to study innovative teaching methods. They indicated that when they entered a classroom they felt there was room for further learning of innovative and updated teaching methods, mainly in heterogeneous classes comprised of pupils who are gifted, weak or have learning disabilities. One teacher said: 'It
obliges me to invest time, knowledge and energy for planning a wide variety of lesson plans. In such a situation I fail to respond to the pupils' needs'.

**Studied issues preferred by new teachers from the personal perspective**

Time management was the first out of the five issues which the new teachers were interested to study from the personal perspective (30%). According to them they are required to perform numerous and complex tasks which are time-consuming. Some of these tasks are routine and pre-defined while others are dictated to them without any previous knowledge and planning. One teacher complained: 'Every night I go to sleep at 2 am after preparing all the lesson plans. I took care of all the learning aids... I have my doubts... I have not spent time with my children and my husband... I feel frustrated'.

Personal empowerment was an essential issue for the new teachers and they ranked it in the second place (28%). They wished to receive tools for personal and occupational empowerment. The new teachers perceived the term empowerment as a meaningful process in their personal development and wanted to identify and be familiar with their personal strengths. One of the teachers expressed herself: 'I sometimes feel I am being led by the principal. I froze and didn't have the power to confront her... but I know that I have it, the ability'.

The new teachers wanted to improve their self-confidence and ranked this issue as third (16%). One teacher pointed out that during a meeting with a pupil's father he found himself apologizing all the time: 'For a moment I forgot that I was the teacher, the professional, and eventually I lacked the confidence to say what I should have said mainly regarding the behavior of his child at school'. Anger release was the fourth issue (14%). According to the new teachers, the interaction with the pupils, teachers and parents evoked anger and personal tension. They felt such a situation was energy- and time-consuming and prevented them from functioning properly. Some of the teachers indicated that anger had caused a physiological injury to their body. 'I was angry at one of the pupils, I raised my voice and my whole body shook, I lost control over myself'. Another teacher argued: 'I want to learn how to release the anger out of me, get rid of the negative energies and channel them to positive thinking'.

Positive thinking was another issue which the teachers were interested to study in addition to the issues mentioned above. It was ranked in the fifth place (12%). One teacher told: 'I studied the subject of "Learning from successes" in a workshop at the college and felt that I wanted to enhance the learning in this field'.

**Scope of studies – between theory and practice**

**Between theory and practice from the professional perspective**

The new teachers wanted to study more practice than theory in a relation of 75% to 25% on average. The six studied issues preferred from the practical aspect were: getting acquainted with teachers' rights and duties which was ranked first (90%). The issues of conducting a dialogue, class management and teaching methods improvement were ranked second, third and fourth respectively (80%). Coping with problems of discipline was ranked fifth (70%) and the school organizational structure was ranked sixth (60%). As one teacher claimed: 'The parents are my main problem. I would like to acquire a kit with tools which would help me in my talks with parents. I can't implement by myself the theories studied in this field'.

**Between theory and practice from the personal perspective**

The new teachers wished to study more the practical aspects also from the personal perspective: anger release (90%), self-confidence improvement (85%), personal empowerment (80%), positive thinking (70%) and time management (60%). One of the
teachers described: 'When I am angry, I am like "boiling water" and it takes me a long time to cool down'. Another teacher expressed himself with the following words: 'It is as if I am going to war, I can't control myself in class and the pupils see me in my state of anger... I shout and the pupils' reaction puts me in an inferior position'.

Place of studies – college or school

Preferred place of studies from the professional perspective

The new teachers preferred studying in the college four issues: coping with problems of discipline (90%), school organizational structure (90%), dialogue with school-related population (85%) and class management (70%). They preferred studying the other two issues at school: teaching method improvement (90%) and getting acquainted with teachers' rights and duties (80%). One teacher pointed out: 'At college I am among my peer group and at school I am not! Some of the teachers are condescending, waiting for me to fall or make a mistake. Learning at the college is better for me'. Another teacher commented: 'It's fun coming to the college even if I have to come in the evening... I study new things and feel that I benefit, mainly in issues such as conducting a better dialogue or coping with dilemmas and problems of discipline'. Conversely, at school they would like to get assistance in teaching methods improvement (90%) and in getting acquainted with teachers' rights and duties (80%).

Preferred place of studies from the personal perspective

Also from the personal perspective the new teachers wished to study mainly in the college: positive thinking (95%), personal empowerment (90%), time management (80%), anger release (65%) and self-confidence improvement (60%). One teacher indicated: 'I find that coming to the college is good for me. I cannot speak openly about my problems and frustrations at school'.

Discussion

New teachers are interested in studying and becoming professionalized. The new teachers participating in this study underscored that they dedicated a considerable part of the lesson trying to solve problems of discipline and create an optimal class climate. According to them, the lack of practical knowledge and class management competences renders their teaching as new teachers more difficult. Shimoni, Gonen and Yaakobi (2006) argue that new teachers encounter problems associated with class management and discipline. As for conducting a dialogue, Nasser, Reichenberg and Fresko (2009) claim that teachers have difficulties conducting a positive and promoting dialogue with the parents. Hence, knowledge and experience in conversing and establishing good relations with the parents can assist teachers' practice. Reingold (2009) as well as Gilad and Alkalay (2014) maintain that class management is a central issue and teachers who are apprehensive of the class would never be able to manage and lead it. The new teachers indicated that 'they felt lost' among the complex school rules and regulations and therefore being familiar with school as an educational organization with all its strata might help them to function better. Moreover, teachers' efficient and effective conduct at school as an educational organization is a function of comprehending its covert and overt forces, authorities and positions, politics and hierarchy (Gilad, 2014b; Samuel, 1996; Senge, 1997).

From the personal perspective, the new teachers wanted to study two major issues: time management and personal empowerment. The teachers explained that they failed to organize their personal and professional day. Most of the teachers are at the beginning of their career and at the same time they build their family and have children. These two circles require a
great investment and they use up a considerable time of their functioning at school and at home. Furthermore, the gender aspect of the new teachers should also be mentioned. Since this mainly concerns new and young female-teachers, they feel guilty of being unable to properly achieve what is expected from them both at work and at home (Gilad, 2014a, Pearson, 2007).

From the theory to practice aspect, most teachers preferred studying the practical aspects of teaching. They maintained that the theories studied in teacher education programs did not provide a solution to problems emerging in class. The teachers understand that experience in teaching is more important than the studied theories. They would like to receive more specific and focused tools for each and every problem. Most of the new teachers perceived that practice and experience lead to success. The Mckinsey Report (2007) indicates three meaningful processes which are supposed to transpire among teachers so that they promote the pupils and lead them to better attainments: personal awareness of teaching practices, comprehension of the good teaching practices and application of good practices of improvement and growth. A study conducted by Avdor (2009) shows that professional teachers are teachers who can connect and integrate the theoretical-scientific knowledge and the true reality in the field. A combination of the two allows teachers to examine in a mindful way their educational practice and perform reflection practices. Theory and practice provide answers to practical and focused questions arising from the educational discourse. Zilberstein (1998) specifies practical-pedagogical knowledge which orients teachers how to act in a purposeful and effective manner for the purpose of accomplishing their goal.

The new teachers preferred studying some of the issues at college and others at school. The four issues from the professional perspective teachers preferred to study at college were: problems of discipline, conducting a dialogue and class management. The teachers maintained that these issues required academic learning based on theory and practice. New teachers who have been exposed to lecturers at the college as part of their teacher education program continue trusting those lecturers who have specialized in these areas. The sense of success which the new teachers experienced with those lecturers during their education and internship period encourages them to continue studying with the same lecturers (Avdor, 2006; Rosenfeld, 1997). The new teachers still perceive the college as a 'hothouse', a supporting and facilitating place. They do not consider college as a framework which assesses the quality of their teaching as opposed to the school which measures them day-by-day. According to the new teachers, school requires them to succeed already from the first day. The in-service training course at the college constitutes the peer group, allowing the teachers to be feel free to talk about dilemmas and problems they encounter at school. Moreover, at school there is a hierarchy of seniority, position and status. The new teachers feel 'last' in this hierarchy and hence they are reluctant to express their 'voice'. In the context of the two other issues, teaching methods and teachers' rights and duties, the teachers maintained they should be taught by experienced teachers at school. Questions related to teachers' rights and duties were perceived by the new teachers as informative questions which did not indicate their lack of professional knowledge.

Conclusion
The discourse about the professional and personal development of teachers in general and of new teachers in particular has recently gained momentum and renewed thinking. The reforms and changes transpiring in the education system set many challenges to teachers' professional development policy makers. Moreover, in the postmodern, era teachers have to cope with
complex tasks which oblige them to become professionalized constantly and throughout their professional life. Out of an entirety of issues dealing with teachers' lifelong learning, this study explores the issues which new teachers prefer studying within the framework of in-service training courses, after having completed their practicum. The research findings open a window for education policy makers when planning continued learning frameworks. This is done through attention and learning of the individual and group 'voices' of teachers in general and new teachers in particular upon their induction into the education system. The study recommends researching this topic every couple of years in order to investigate what are the issues which new teachers prefer studying as well as develop relevant and professional in-service training courses.

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