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THE NEW ROLE OF VET TEACHERS AND CONCEPT OF TEACHER TRAINING IN MACEDONIA

Introduction

This text is related to the concept of teacher training for the VET teachers. Teacher training is one of the main priorities in our country in the last decade. While the elementary education develops basic values and skills, vocational education has to prepare young people for social inclusion and for the world of labour. Because of these, among all levels and types of education, vocational education is segment where changes should happen most urgent and fast.

In the "learning society" that we have to create, vocational teachers have new tasks: to activate the students and to make them capable to manage the process of learning by themselves. Instead of teaching, teacher slowly move to the position of tutoring, who helps the student to create learning environment in which, beside classic learning tools, interactive multimedia technologies are included.

These objectives imply changes in curriculum in decreasing of contents, and decreasing of number of students in the classes. Active methods of learning can not be implemented if other conditions are not fulfilled.

New role of teacher in the classroom means new competencies for teachers. Teacher training programs have to be based upon these competencies.

TEACHER TRAINING IN VET - LEGISLATIVE

Qualification of teachers in Macedonia is regulated with law documents. According to this, teachers in the secondary education may be persons who have graduated in the appropriate studies at a faculty and have passed the professional examination. Teachers in the secondary education may be also persons who have graduated at some other faculties, but have acquired pedagogical, didactical and psychological training at the corresponding faculties and have passed the professional examination.²

¹ Article is published in: Terzis, N. (ed.)(2006), *Lifelong Learning in the Balkans*. Balkan Society for Pedagogy and Education. Publishing House Kyriakidis Brothers S.A.

² *Law Amending the Law on Secondary Education, Article 32, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* No. 67/04

Professional development of teachers is regulated specially with the amendments in Law on secondary education, which was made in October 2004. While the pre-service teacher training is mainly situated at the Universities, the in-service teacher training is under responsibility of the Bureau for Development of Education that is a part of the Ministry of Education and Science of RM.

REFORM ACTIVITIES IN VET TT

Since 1998 there is huge range of activities for reforming VET system in Macedonia. These activities are mainly funded by donors, such as EU, GTZ, WB, USAID and the Governments of the foreign countries. We will refer briefly to those who are related to the teacher training in VET:

One of the biggest project which was beginning of the VET reform started in early 1998 with the Phare Program for vocational education and training. Now the third phase called **VET 3** is implemented. Main goal of this program is: Preparation of teachers for implementation of new curricula and application of active methods, techniques and strategies.

One large project is the Education Modernisation Project - **EMP** with joint budget of 20 million dollars financed by the World Bank, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. Main goal is to establish accreditation system to ensure that services for teacher training during the work are provided by more training providers, and they accomplish the appropriate quality criteria.

Secondary Education Activity-**SEA** project funded by USAID support 50 project schools in professional development of teachers for applying interactive educational strategies with use of theoretical knowledge in the practical learning

Activities of the project e-school.mk also funded by USAID is focused on training of teachers for introduction, connection and integration of project learning, informational and communicational technology in the community

There is also three-year **GTZ** program for secondary vocational education funded by the German Government.

All these reform activities are related to the new demands of the modern society which requires trained teachers whose role is changed and new competencies are needed. Main weakness in these reforming processes is that they are with short-time effects, they did not affect bigger changes in the system and the link with the higher education institutions responsible for TT is very loose.

FUTURE STEPS IN REFORMING VET TT

One very important document was prepared recently is the "*National strategy for development of education in RM for the period 2005-2015*". In this document is stated that there is an urgent need for improving the system of pre-service and in-service training of the teaching and managing staff for schools. Therefore a number of further activities are foreseen. The first step is, Ministry of Education to make standards for teacher training and to define the list of professional and vocational competencies that each teacher should have. Teacher who possesses these competencies will get "license" to work as a teacher. Special institutions will be established, responsible for giving teacher licenses. Further, there will be list of indicators upon which, the teacher work will be assessed. According to these indicators, teacher will get points and make career development.

Competencies are basis on which teacher training programs should be designed. Till now, the teacher training in Macedonia like in other Balkan countries was mainly curriculum-based. Now, within the process of reforming VET TT, we are moving toward competence-based or skilled-based teacher training. According to the new legislative, Board of Accreditation will approve the institutions which will be authorised to provide teacher training. Accreditation of these institutions will depend on their capacities and quality of teacher training that they offered. Establishing of free market of accredited teacher training providers in the country has already begun and it is supported by the Education Modernisation Project.

All this should be included in the new Law on Vocational Education which is in preparation and it should be in the procedure of adoption in autumn 2005.

NEW CONCEPT FOR TEACHER TRAINING

From 1999 to 2002, European Commission financed a Tempus project for restructuring of TT-VET system in Macedonia. Main partners of this project were the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje and the Fontys University from the Netherlands, together with other relevant partners (Bureau for Development of Education in RM, VET schools, Klagenfurt University from Austria and IGIP association). Objective of this project was to develop new curriculums for initial training and retraining of teachers and trainers in VET in harmony with:

- the integrated PHARE VET program.
- improved methods of teaching and learning
- developments in EU countries

- reformed vocational didactics

First the analyses report was made in which the weak spots were point out:

- Undeveloped system of in-service TT and absence of national curriculum
- Insufficient cooperation between BDE responsible for TT and TT Faculties
- Lack of resources and support
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of standards and criteria for career development of teachers.

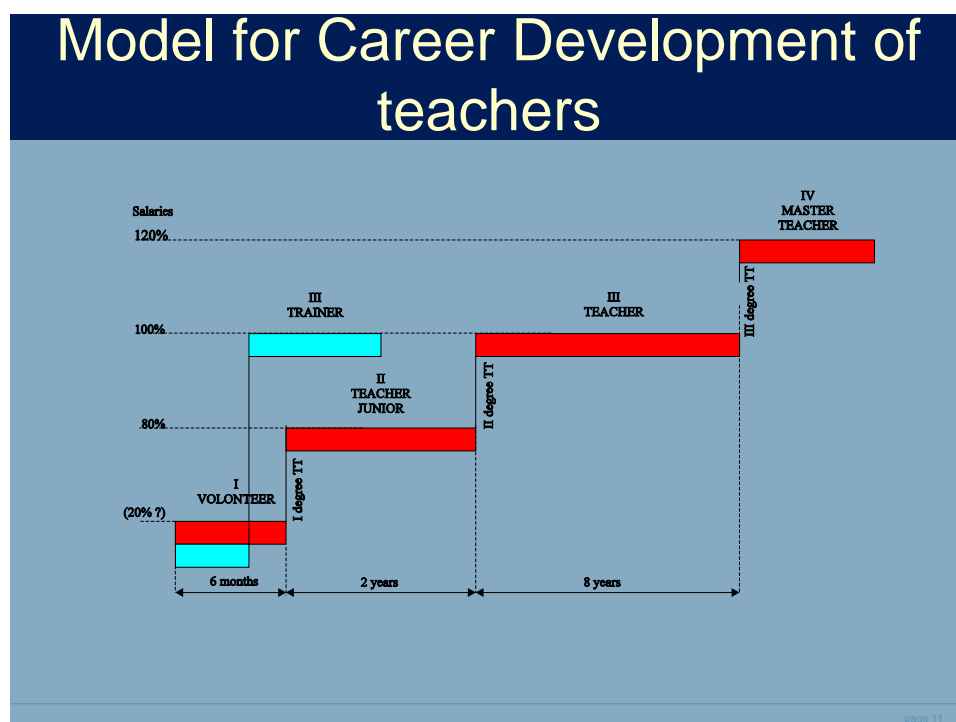
With support of the project we established multi media center for teacher training at the Institute of Pedagogy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje, the institution with the longest tradition in TT. Beside that, three didactical centers for vocational training in three vocational schools were established.

Till year 2002 working teams which, for the first time, were consisted of the representatives from the University, Ministry and the VET schools created new concept for teacher training and model for career development of teachers. This concept includes pre-service and in-service training for VET teachers of general and vocational subjects and training of trainers as well. Modules for TT were designed according to the results of the TT needs analyses and the list of competencies that were made. Modules were revised by the international experts and pilot training seminars were organised.

MODULES FOR TT&R IN VET

NAME OF THE MODULE	ASSISTANT TEACHER	TEACHER	MASTER TEACHER
1. Basic of professional education	Needed: 40 hours	Needed: 20 hours	
2. Learning process	Needed: 20 hours	Needed: 20 hours	Needed: 20 hours
3. Classroom management	Needed: 20 hours	Needed: 40 hours	
4. Communication	Needed: 20 hours	Needed: 20 hours	
5. Educational technologies	Needed: 20 hours	Needed: 20 hours	
6. Adult education		Needed: 40 hours	Needed: 40 hours
7. Labour market		Needed: 20 hours	Needed: 20 hours
8. Curriculum development	Needed: 20 hours		Needed: 40 hours
9. Pedagogical documentation	Needed: 20 hours		
10. Evaluation	Needed: 20 hours	Needed: 20 hours	Needed: 20 hours
11. Environmental protection		Needed: 40 hours	Needed: 40 hours
12. Vocational didactics		Needed: 40 hours	Needed: 40 hours
▪ Educational experience	6 months	+2 years	+8 years
▪ Vocational up-grade	180 hours	240 hours	340 hours

Following scheme presents the Career Development Model that was designed for the in-service training needs of the secondary school teachers, with four steps of career: volunteer, assistant teacher, teacher and the master teacher.



For each step of the career, criteria for promotion were defined. The list of activities is based on points that teacher collect as a precondition for promotion, together with other preconditions such as: the working experience, level of education, certificates, etc.

The new concept has the following advantages:

- It is practically oriented and compensates the deficiency of pedagogical, didactical and vocational training
- It is defined on the basis of the competencies that each VET teacher should possess
- Flexible ways of learning are offered
- It is based on the credit point system (Bologna process) and the National strategy for Education
- It enables firmer link between university, secondary schools, advisers and labor market

- Career model ensures better status and mobility of the teachers

Conclusion

There is a long way one good idea to be realised in the practice. It is the third year since the concept was developed and it is still not implemented. The new concept has financial and legislative consequences and it has to pass a long way of legislation. In this period some changes were made for improvement of the original model. Within the new legislative, finally, system for promotion of the teaching staff is established in four categories: teacher-beginner, teacher, teacher-mentor and teacher-educator. One of the criteria for promotion of the teacher will be their professional development which will be enabled through continuous training. Wages of the teacher will no more depend only on the length of service but on their competencies as well. With this concept, motivation of teacher will be generated which is the key condition for successful reform in education.

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