Attainment and the Development of the Teaching Competence of Newly Hired University Teachers

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Abstract

The study aims to determine ways of acquiring and improvement of teaching competences of novice teachers. I used a quantitative method for initial research as it concentrates on the numbers and statistics that sustain an opinion of social actuality. This small survey has been carried out among 16 full-time novice teachers of Amanzholov University, Kazakhstan, who have graduated from the university and have worked as university teachers for five months. The literature review focuses on defining the competencies required for teachers and on methods of acquiring them. The study builds on the theory of Donnay and Romainville (1996), who argue in their research of teaching in higher education that teachers learn to teach at university through experience. According to the results of the data, it was revealed that most of the novice teachers develop teaching competencies while teaching and solving situational problems. The level of preparation of new teachers depends on practical hours spent in the classrooms with students and in preparation for lectures and assessment work. In addition, it was found that the development of teaching competencies is facilitated by the mutual work of more experienced colleagues and novice teachers. Also, the exchange of experience and discussions between novice teachers contributes to the development of analytical skills in teaching and self-reflection.

Keywords: *Integration Of Higher Education, Pedagogical Competence, Novice Teacher, University, Professional Competence of a Teacher.*

Introduction

The activity of a university teacher is multifaceted, has a complex internal structure, requires a teacher to be not only a highly qualified specialist in a particular field of knowledge, but also to know the methods of organizing the educational process, methods and means of education, to conduct research work itself and involve students in it.

Modern life poses new challenges for university professors around the world. A post-industrial society is characterized by changes in social development within a knowledge-based framework. In a more narrow sense, these tasks are determined by the complex task of effectively integrating higher education into a restructured development paradigm. The factors that determine the requirements for the competencies of university teachers in a post-industrial, digital, and innovation-oriented society include new challenges and threats. The conventional method of producing and delivering knowledge of continental European universities ceased several years ago. Universities of many countries today have a greater social obligation to fulfill in terms of preparing students for the job market (Scott, 1995). For universities to meet the demands of a global economy characterized by fierce competition, they must carefully evaluate the quality of their teaching. Therefore, the need for pedagogical training for apprentice university instructors has grown significantly in importance. Endrizzi (2011) demonstrates that a substantial amount of the literature on the topic focuses on training and professional development for university lecturers. In reality, research focuses primarily on the experience that people gain during the time after they are appointed and take office. The study sheds light on the challenges that new university teachers have in their early careers. These challenges include stress, loneliness, a lack of support, overwork, and the inability to strike a balance between personal and professional commitments. Sadler (2008) underlines a lack of such research, which,

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in his opinion, reveals more about academic life in general than about teaching and the associated professional growth ("How they progress as university teachers"). The development of profession is just one component of competence. According to Langevin (2007), the competencies expected from new university instructors are being called into question more frequently. This approach is fundamental to the issue of creating competencies since it is crucial to the standard of training provided in academic institutions and, eventually, to the entry of graduates into the labor market.

As the subject of this study, I would like to explore the question: how is the teaching competence of novice teachers acquired and improved? This project includes a literature review on the teaching competences of novice university teachers. A quantitative approach is used for initial research. This is followed by the methods and discussion of findings. The final section is reserved for reviewing the results of the study and providing recommendations based on the findings.

Theoretical Approach to The Concept of Competence

The phrases "novice academic" and "competence" need to be defined. The literature describes novice university academics as a diverse group (Langevin, 2007). Both academics who have recently completed their doctorates and those who have prior professional experience can use this word. The words "junior faculty person," "early-career faculty member," "starting faculty member," and "novice faculty member," among others, are used in studies to emphasize the variety of circumstances. Yet Langevin (2007) asserts that the majority of research on this cohort focuses on those who have recently received their doctorates and are beginning their academic careers. In this chapter the more inclusive words "novice faculty member" and "novice academic" will be used (and are to be considered synonyms), as they encompass all categories of faculty members, including those with and without recently obtained doctorates. The meaning of the phrase "competent" can vary greatly depending on the author and discipline (Scott, 1995). There is no definition that is widely accepted (Tchiboz, 2010).

The teaching role that is described in research publications is even questioned and believed excessive by certain authors (Blaskova, 2014). A pretty consistent definition of competence does, however, develop from the numerous writers' individual contributions as a result of the significant study on competences that has been done in the last twenty years. Competence, according to Blaskova (2014), involves "organizing" a group of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in order to address a group of issue circumstances. Problem situations can be categorized into families based on their similarity in terms of difficulty and competence required for resolution. The literature in the area of competency demonstrates the variety of resources that may be used. Tchibozo (2010) states that resources may come from outside or within the subject. Internal resources contain knowledge that has been codified and transmitted to the subject through formal teaching, whether it is informal or formal. The types of formal knowledge include declarative (concerning concepts), procedural (concerning methods, and procedures), and episodic/conditional knowledge (concerning the conditions under which to use this resource instead of that one). In addition to attitudes (ways of being), abilities (also known as "elemental competences" Blaskova (2014), schemata (groupings of knowledge, emotions, and essential physical positions that provide structure to the execution of actions), principles (preferences in terms of end purpose and behavior), as well as social norms already ingrained in the individual, are examples of internal resources. It's vital to remember that competences and resources shouldn't be equated.

Blaskova (2014) points out that competency is characterized by the variety of tasks it makes possible to complete, not by the resources it utilizes. Therefore, a competency is not a collection of resources, but rather the ability to mobilize resources. Westera (2001) states that it's important to understand how to wisely mobilize resources. According to Kiffer and Tchibozo (2013) mobilization should be internalized. According to Blaskova (2014), mobilization must be done appropriately, that is, in accordance with ethical principles. As Tardif (2006) argues, competency is a "complex capacity of action" (p. 22). In this context, Blaskova (2014) distinguishes between competence and skills (elemental competence), the latter of which involves "performing a specified set of operations in response to a known and recognizable signal or scenario without difficulty or uncertainty." Nevertheless, the scenario that must be understood also involves complexity: "a given task, the consequence of which is not immediately evident" (Kiffer &Tchibozo, 2013).

Thus, in contrast to skills, which are simply basic competences, competence in the full sense is identified by the combination of situation and processing complexity (ibid). The relationship between situation and competence is crucial. Competence may be defined in relation to the situation it enables the ability to master. Although it is theoretically possible for competence to be "transversal" (in that it makes it possible to master multiple situations), discussing competence without mentioning at least one situation that the said competence makes it possible to master would imply that the person who possesses the competence can master any situation.

Blaskova (2014) utilizes terms like "competence put into action" and "situational competence" in this context. With the ideas of "situated approach" and "enacted competence," Kiffer and Tchibozo (2013) have emphasized this idea more recently, meaning that they have formed during the activity in the original place. They differentiate accordingly between a competence-oriented strategy and an enacted-competence-oriented approach (Kiffer &Tchibozo, 2013). Wherever the situation is mastered, competence yields results. Mastery is not anticipated to be measured in absolute terms; rather, it must be evaluated considering the service recipient's requirements (Blaskova, 2014). For instance, a student's mathematical proficiency will be determined by the assessment standards established for the particular mathematical issue at hand. Some scholars state that a competent person performs "effectively" and "successfully,"(Blaskova, 2014). Finally, competency must be demonstrated, not inferred. Someone is considered competent in a given circumstance if they are able to control it, not if they have a degree. This means that competence is not only produced in situ but is also evaluated in situ (Kiffer &Tchibozo, 2013).

This aspect distinguishes between an approach that is competence-oriented and one that is enacted-competence-oriented. It takes a strong stance in the circumstance, particularly during evaluation, for a competence-centered strategy to be effective. Otherwise, assessment is carried out in an impersonal manner, as it sometimes is in other teaching strategies. Competency-centered approaches lose their distinctiveness and relevance without reference to an assessment in place. Therefore, if the idea of a competence-centered approach is to be meaningful, it must insist on evaluation in situ. This is the definition of competency in situ given in this article. Thus, the definition of competence in this context is "the ability to mobilize in a relevant manner a collection of appropriate resources in order to successfully cope with issue circumstances."

Methodology and Sample

The aim of this study is to find the answer to the question: 'how is the teaching competence of novice teachers acquired and improved?' Gratitude was offered to the newly hired teachers for their participation in the small survey. The research entails participants of both sexes (see Figure 1): 9 were female and 7 male. The participants were informed about the small project and were guaranteed of their anonymity that their names would not be exposed.
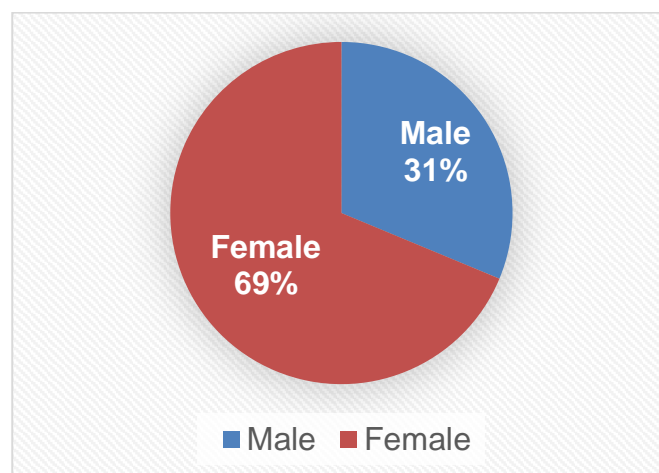
Figure 1, Percentage of males and females who participated in the survey.

The Questionnaire

All participants replied to the multiple questions by choosing one option from three. The following question was posed first: 'How did you learn to teach? And the four response options were provided to choose: *1 By teaching. 2 Through teaching experience while studying 3 Discussions with others at workshops. 4 All of the above* (See Figure 2). There were also interesting results to be found when it came to another question on the questionnaire regarding the attitude of the participants to the distribution of their time at university in accordance to their working schedules. This question was designed so that participants could reflect on how they allocated their time during the first semester (See Figure 3). Accordingly, the questions were designed to assess how much time new teachers spend on teaching and on various aspects of university activities. There was a need for this so that it could be determined what the ratio was between activities and time. In addition, it could be determined what teachers believe helps them in their professional development.
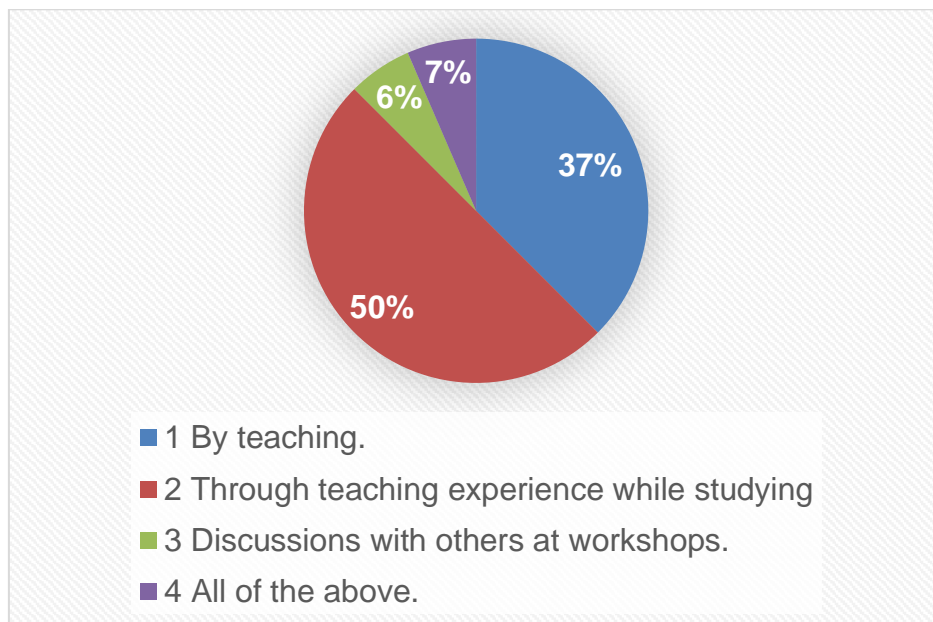

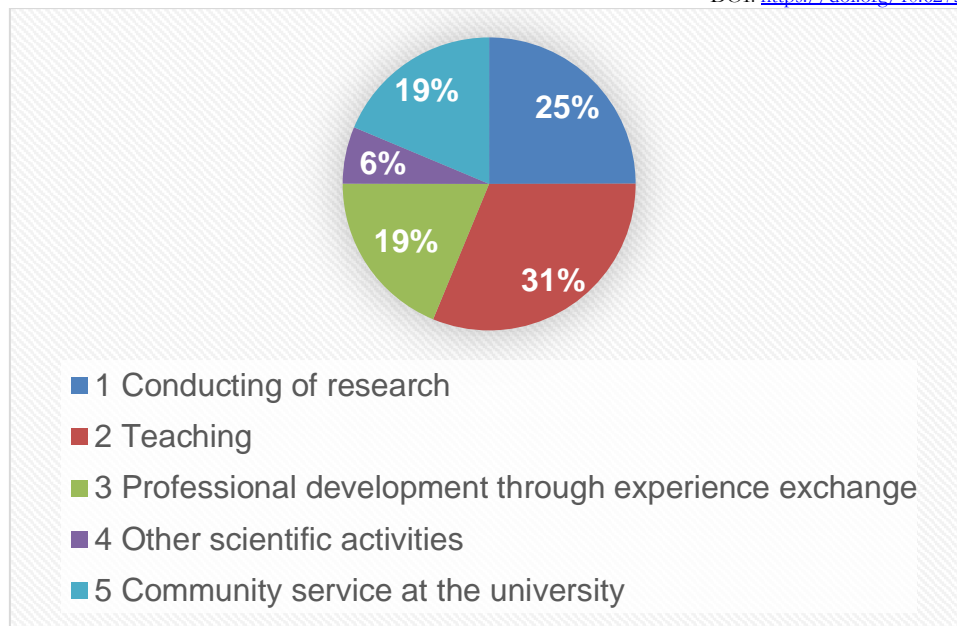**Figure 2, Results of the answers to the question about learning to teach**

Figure 3, The results of answers to the question about the distribution of working time during the first semester of teaching at the university.

Discussion Of Findings

Although this topic covers a wide range of competencies, it does have the advantage of offering details on the procedures that undertake as part of their jobs. The objective of this project was to identify how the teaching competence is acquired and improved of the newly hired faculty teachers. As a result of the responses given to the questionnaire, 50% of the participants reported that the conditions created at the university are conducive for them to be able to teach effectively. The first response came up more than twice as often as the other two. In other words, from the perspective of the faculty teachers, learning about the teaching profession is acquired "through performing the job," which in this context refers to learning by doing. This experience corresponds with the theory of Kolb (1984) and Schon's (1983) "reflexive practice" which means by delivering the lecture or by exchange of education the lecturer acquire the teaching competence. The lecture that is transmitted to students gives confidence to the lecturer and deep comprehension of the teaching. This is supported by the Donnay and Romainville (1996) who stated in the research of higher education teaching that university teachers are 'self-educated" in their profession. This indicates that acquiring the profession of university academic is an apparent learning process. However, it was anticipated that participants would choose the option two that is by teaching while doing PhD that is when studying. This is because most universityteachers in Kazakhstan, whilst doing their PhDs, are asked by their supervisor to hold seminars in place of their supervisors. Despite this only 4 participants selected the option 2 (see Figure 4) that is to attain the teaching competence while studying. It seems that novice faculty while studying cannot master or acquire fully the teaching competence as they do not deliver lectures due to the restrictions on the role in Universities of Kazakhstan. In other words, novice faculty are prevented from delivering lectures until they have a PhD diploma. Only one participant selected the last option that is *discussions with peers at the workshops*. It can be concluded that acquiring teaching competence is unlikely to be realized at the workshops with discussions.
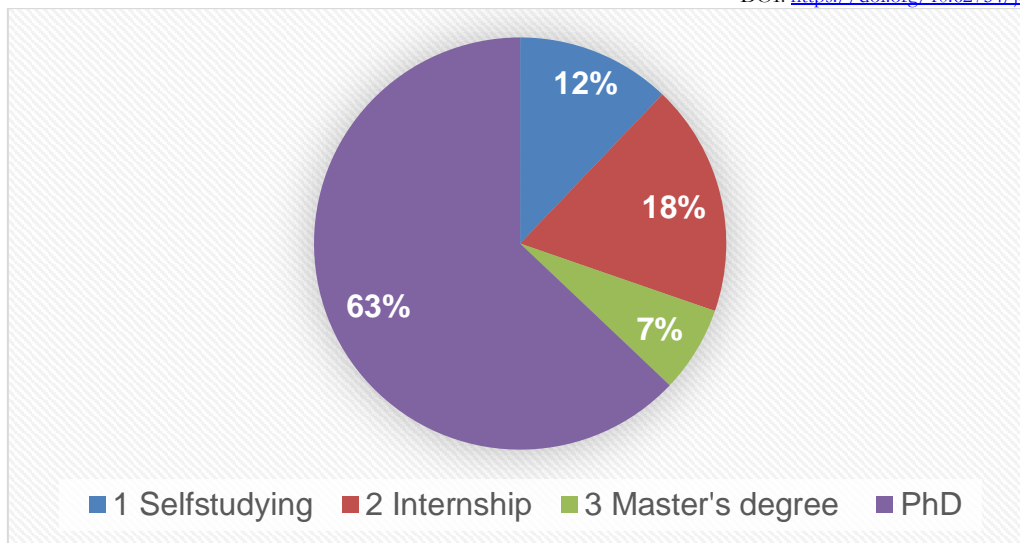
Figure 4, The benefits of education resources for educators

In other words, teaching competence is acquired through teaching experience. According to Rege Colet and Berthiaume (2009) the profession of a faculty member is "acquired on the job, through discussions with coworkers and potentially by attending a workshop or seminar on university teaching". This again indicates that the process of acquiring teaching competence is a subjective experience. In other words, while some novice teachers learn teaching at the classroom by delivering lecture, some teachers acquire teaching competence through discussions. In the practice of educational activity of a higher education institution there should be created conditions that contribute to the improvement of pedagogical training of future teachers by providing a high level of pedagogical knowledge and skills and exploringtheir interrelation with discipline-specific knowledge. The criteria for the development of a teacher's professional competence in the process of adaptation to pedagogical activity are the amount of theoretical and methodological knowledge, ability to act in conditions of free choice of content and methods of activity, ability to self-development, skills to solve pedagogical tasks of different level of complexity, and ability to set realistic goals. Adaptation to teaching activity for the majority of young teachers occurs at the expense of fundamental training in the basic specialty, which involves further self-education. Continuous training of university teachers will reduce the period of adaptation and ensure the formation and development of professional competence via a Master's degree, doctoral studies, professional development and retraining of teachers through various work experiences. Teaching requires university graduates who are capable of becoming carriers of innovation and who have professionally important qualities. The personal intellectual potential of a teacher is of the utmost importance in solving educational problems. Formation of research abilities as a special form of knowledge, together with their skills and education in general provides a teacher of higher education with mastery of general scientific methods of knowledge and possession of a high level of thinking, which will allow them to transfer the principles of the research approach to different areas of professional activity and apply them in different situations of teaching activities.

While the university supports new teachers, they still face many stressors that hinder their professional development (see Figure 5). Anxiety is high among junior faculty. Rather than worrying about finding a job, this is about surviving at work. They are also under tremendous pressure from other obligations. Their teaching demands often override important professional and personal pursuits, whilst often requiring them to sacrifice time they can ill afford. There is a sense of loneliness among junior faculty, as they find fewer connections with colleagues than expected and desired. The stress from work flows into non-work areas, creating tension in families, as suggested in figure 5 below.
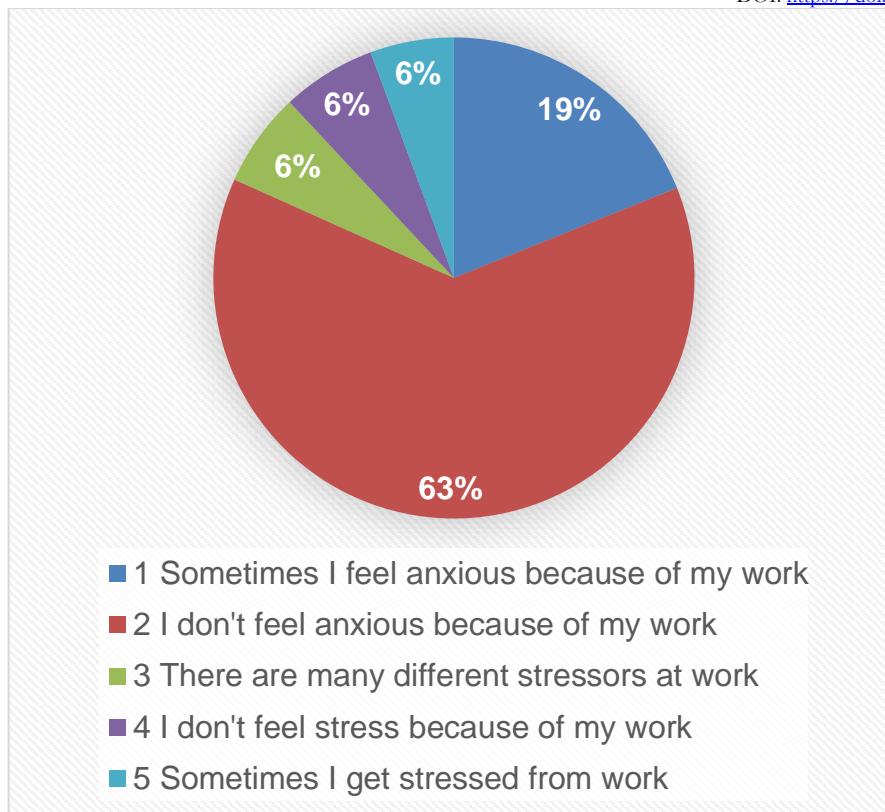
Figure 5, Feelings of new teachers about work

Based on the data shown in Figure 5, we can conclude that about 37% of new teachers experience depressing emotions regarding their work. Thus, this may be a factor that hinders their personal and professional development and may also adversely affect the performance of their professional duties.

I would recommend that faculty development offices begin gathering local data concerning these topics in order to improve their effectiveness. When new faculty are brought together with senior faculty and administrators, it is very productive to have a discussion about the data with them, as well as to develop policies and practices that are supportive of the needs of junior faculty.

Conclusion

This chapter has made an effort to address the following question: 'how are the teaching competence of newly hired teachers acquired and developed?' This work has examined the teaching competence of novice faculty members theoretically by undertaking aliterature review on this topic. A small-scale survey among full-time newly hired teachers who have already had five months' experience of teaching at the university was conducted in order to further address the question. After review of literature and empirical study, this chapter has concluded by claiming that the teaching competence of the novice faculty teachers are acquired and developed by teaching in the classroom. In other words, in the classroom when he or she feels their responsibility towards the students. Unfortunately, there is a lack of scientific research on this topic in the Kazakh language which points to the need for conducting further research on this topic.

Professional competence and mastery of pedagogical skill depends in full measure on how in solving the emerging educational problems the teacher is able to make generalizations and transfer knowledge, to analyze the nature and quality of their own decisions. The awareness of one's own belonging to a certain professional group is formed only in the process of professional activity. For the formation of a teacher's professional identity it is necessary to create certain conditions in higher education institutions. These include: ensuring a high information saturation (library fund, Internet); the possibility of continuous

education, development of professional competence (holding scientific and practical conferences, seminars); the socio-psychological climate of the team; support for teachers in their professional activities (scientific school, teaching staff of departments); the organizational culture of the university; the opportunity to enter into administrative interaction and participate in the life of the university. A novice teacher, a teacher with little experience enters a certain professional field where established norms, attitudes, and values are already in place.

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