

The Teacher's Entering the Professional Career – What Can Teachers' Autobiographies Reveal (to us)

Abstract

The present article focuses on the period of the teacher's embarking on his/her professional route and on the teacher's professional development. The professional biographies of twelve teachers will reveal the significance of first experiences with independent teaching and their (i.e., the teacher's) feelings during the process. They will also draw attention to important factors which can either assist or impede the teacher at the beginning of his/her professional career. The existing professional literature on the topic has found the initial period of one's professional career to be an extremely sensitive and difficult one.

Key words: *professional autobiography, entering a profession, professional development.*

1. Introduction

In the process of his/her professional development each teacher goes through certain periods which have their own characteristic features, roles and consequences. Numerous attempts have been made to illuminate these periods from different conceptual standpoints (cf., e.g., Zuzovsky 1990, Veenman 1984, Sheckey, Allen 1991, Kagan 1992, Huberman 1993, 1995, Eraut 1997). Despite this fact, the present paper bases its assumptions (as many authors have done) on Jaatinen (1994, quote from Niemi Kohonen, 1995), who claims that the teacher results from his/her 'cumulative autobiography,' which functions on the basis of his/her constructs, convictions and understandings of man, learning, growth and comprehension.