



PROCEDURE OF ASSIGNING THE INTERNS AT WORK IN ISRAEL

ADMISIA PROFESORILOR DEBUTANȚI ÎN SISTEMUL EDUCAȚIONAL DIN ISRAEL

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***Rezumat:** Admisia profesorilor debutanți în sistemul educațional parcurge mai multe etape, stagiul pedagogic fiind etapa primară, care începe cu repartizarea tinerilor specialiști în instituții educaționale și atribuirea mentorilor pentru fiecare dintre ei. Articolul se axează pe componentele procesului de admisie, abordând tangențial problema evaluării tinerilor specialiști și unele aspecte ale mentoratului.*

***Cuvinte-cheie:** sistem educațional, stagiul, profesori debutanți, evaluare, mentor, mentorat.*

The year of internship begins with the process of assigning the novice teacher to work. This process has a great impact on the other aspects of internship. We can focus on four main components of the process of assigning to a job: the way assignment was achieved, timing and placement in which it was done, employment characteristics in the year of internship with full adequacy between employment and training.

Method of assignment. Finding work is the responsibility of the intern. Most of the interns are assigned to work following a direct application to the school or following a personal acquaintance, some of them are referred through the supervisor of education and others are assigned to work in other ways, such as responding to ads and the mediation of a trainer teacher, pedagogical instructor or an expertise workshop.

Timing of assignment. Most interns find work at the beginning of the school year. Others are assigned to work later (from October to December). One of the main reasons for the

delay in the assignment (which does not deviate from the instructions of the Ministry of Education) is the later organization of the educational system.

Characteristics of employment.

Employment characteristics of interns are very broad. In terms of position, more than half of the novice teachers are employed part-time. According to the ministry of education guidelines, an intern will be employed of at least a third of a position, and indeed most of the interns are employed as required. There are also differences between interns on the number of days they work in their school, most interns work three to five days a week, and only a few are employed one day a week or six days a week. The interns fill different roles in their school during their first year: most of them perform as professional teachers and only some serve as educators and professional teachers, other fill different roles in school such as social guides, Shelah teacher, library coordinator etc.

Adequacy between employment and training. Among most interns there is a correlation between training

and stage of education in which they are assigned to work. There should be a perfect correlation between training courses and teaching courses.

Personal mentoring. Mentoring by an experienced teacher is the most important element in internship programs [4], [6] and is considered a component of important contribution to the success of the new teacher entering the school. Even in the program tested here; mentoring was a key means of reaching the goals and distensions of successes. Mentors should play a central role both in providing support, assistance and advice to interns on a regular base during the internship year, and then assess to grant a teaching license when the process is complete. Interns, graduates of the program, and mentors recognize the contribution of the mentoring process and its importance in entering into the teaching profession, and a quarter of them support extending the mentoring program in an extra year. Such support does not extend the period of residency in general and extending the workshop particularly.

Choosing mentors and the timing of mentoring. Two factors are involved in choosing a mentor the intern himself and the headmaster of the school. Rarely a mentor is chosen by the inspector of the ministry of education or by the center of institution training. In most cases mentoring begins in August, September and October, and 23% – interns will start meeting with mentors later. Most interns stay with the same mentor all through the year of internship, and only in a few cases the mentors are changed during internship. In most cases there were objective reasons like birth, illness and almost never misunderstandings between interns and mentors.

Internship workshop. The internship workshop is a unique component that distinguishes this Israeli internship program from other programs. The uniqueness is that it operates in the training institution (college or university), and it is led by the staff, not like other programs in the world, which have few connections or no connections between them and their training institution. The purpose of the workshop is to accompany the work of the intern in the theoretical and practical aspect as one and to help him process and conceptualize the events that occur in his work and to make these events meaningful for his professional development. The workshop is intended as a framework for peer learning to help each other and share thoughts and reflections, and to create a dialogue about the dilemmas and difficulties that emerge from their work. Lessons derived from the topics discussed at the workshop also may provide training institution improvements form rethinking subjects in the training program.

Most instructors in both types of training institutions (colleges and universities) have a master's degree, and the instructors in the universities more than a third of them with a third degree (compared to a quarter of college instructors), most of them being women. Most advisors are very experienced in teaching or with pedagogical training as well, and their seniority in the job is equal to the age of the internship program itself which is five years.

In the findings of study conducted by Gavish [3], it is apparent that most interns, indeed accept the responsibility of locating the teaching positions by themselves. Placing the responsibility of finding the training institute on

interns is a positive and productive aspect, which of course doesn't exclude the negative potential. The interns are given the opportunity of locating the proper institution and they are free to approach any district or institution they like. However since the number of available positions is limited and receiving the teacher's certification depends on completion of one single year of internship, this may cause certain setbacks during the year, which are the direct result of the compromise the intern should make in choosing certain institution over other potentially more suitable places.

Regarding the terms of employment, in exchange for promise of internship, the intern may find himself teaching subjects, he was not trained or qualified to do. This comes as an addition to many days the interns may spend in a work place, even though they are employed only a part time position. Furthermore, this condition only adds stress and difficulties to a new teacher, entering the educational system.

Gavish [3] states that according to the Ministry of Education the final date entering the internship is December 20. As it rises from findings, the majority of interns begin the internship in the beginning of the school year, and 33% of them start only after 1-4 months of beginning of school year. Thus, the situation is not in violation of the Ministry regulations but there are unwanted repercussions to the delay in starting the internship:

1. Internship and school. Interns who start working after a school year began, miss the opportunity to prepare properly to the beginning of school year. In addition, the new interns don't have the oppor-

tunity to meet parents of pupils they are going to teach.

2. The intern and master-teacher. The delay in appointment reduces greatly the probability of finding the suitable candidate to the position of experienced teacher who can serve as a mentor to the intern. Thus, the chance of mismatch between intern and mentor is very high which in turn may damage the whole year of internship.
3. The intern's assessment. The delay in intern's work placement may cause certain difficulties in proper assessment of the intern's progress and development which are the result of lack of the ability to perform the necessary observation that lay in a base of assessment and feedback which, according to the regulations of the Ministry of Education, must be submitted by mid- January [2].

The placement always takes into consideration the level of suitability between discipline training and employment and also the level of match between courses of internship to educational phase in which the intern is employed. Regarding the degree of compatibility between training and a work place, it was found that majority of interns worked in the school which were suited to their training (65%), 80% reported that they were teaching the subjects they were trained in. On the one hand, the findings are plausible, on the other hand, it means that significant number of interns filled teaching positions they were not trained and supposed to fill. This unfortunate situation is a cause of difficulties both to new teachers and their students. The breach of regulation can be explained by the necessity which forces schools

and educational system to assign interns to where they needed the most.

According to the Ministry of Education regulations the interns must be employed at least 33% of the full-time position. Many times the system necessities request bigger amount of hours given to an intern. Although the Ministry's regulations do not clearly specify the limit of hours of which the intern can be employed, the position that goes beyond 50% of full time position may harm the entire process of internship, especially since the interns continue to study in their educational institutes. Thus, on one side, the overload in studies and work is in direct contradiction to the ideas and principles of the program, which in turn may cripple the absorption of interns in the educational system and harm the attachment between position in school and students in the university. On the other side, the interns who are employed in the reduced teaching position are not fully involved in the school's life and their teaching experience is limited, which in turn may damage their professional development.

The Ministry's regulations do not relate to the choice of a mentor, but do specify that he must be chosen by a principle of a school. It turns out that nearly a half of the mentors are chosen by the interns themselves and the other by the principals. Another difficulty that exists on the ground in reality is that many of the mentors lack formal training for the job itself. This is due to the fact that the internship program started even before the teachers were trained to perform the job of the mentors. As a result, the educational system must use untrained teachers as mentors, otherwise it won't be able to support the program with

the growing number of interns every year.

The issue of professional training is widely discussed in literature. There is an agreement that there is an urgent need to train mentors-in the frame of special programs or partnership between teachers' preparing institutions and schools, but there is no agreement and enough knowledge regarding the necessary approach and content in this type of partnership [5], [7].

Findings in Gavish's study [3] point out the difficulties many mentors experience in fulfilling their responsibilities (many of them claimed that the schedule in their schools did not allow them to observe the interns lessons, others noted the work overload that made difficult on them to see how the interns teach and the way the communication between mentor and intern was established.

Ingredients of evaluation in internship. The process of evaluation, in many cases, is based on observation of interns in the process of teaching and on a feedback of his performance as a teacher in a school. The evaluations of the year have enormous importance to the professional development of the new teacher and it should be done properly because of that. The conflict that arises from final evaluation, lays in contradiction between the roles of the mentor as a sponsor and as someone who needs to give final assessment. The mentor as a sponsor must support emotionally the intern in the beginning of his way. He also must help him with problems and difficulties the intern may encounter during his year of internship. This often collides with the other aspect of being a mentor as someone who must evaluate without any preju-

dice the whole performance of the intern. In addition to these difficulties there is another aspect which makes the job of a mentor not easy at all. The educational policy in Israel has trouble to define clear targets. To bridge the gap between school and society and to adopt strategies for solution of educational dilemmas. On top of it, teachers are exhausted from the impossible agenda and are excluded from any influence on the educational policy.

The researchers [1] point out the problems teachers face in the educational system, multiple objectives which contradict the guiding lines of the system both overtly and covertly, such as: education of values versus educational of accomplishment. Moreover, in modern schools as it was formed in the late nineteen century, the roles of the teacher and learning process were very clear. The teachers were supposed to teach basic knowledge and a value required by society. Since then our society has

experienced many structural changes, almost in every aspects of life: industry, economy, technology etc. As opposed to other aspects of modern society, the school system virtually has remained the same. This situation is the main cause to the lack of clarity regarding the position of teachers in modern society, starting from the guiding lines which supposed to shape the professional identity of the teachers, their training, source of authority and variety of problems and dilemmas the teachers need to face.

Considering the teacher's role in the society, in order to promote good teachers, school system should assist new teachers to deal with arising difficulties on their way to become valuable members of the educational system. It should help new teachers to learn from the experience of other teachers, thus developing their skills in variety of areas, related to the teaching process which, in turn, will make their work more productive.

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