

SUPPORT SYSTEM AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE SUCCESSFUL ADAPTATION OF NOVICE TEACHERS

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Abstract. *The process of adaptation of any person to the new place of work is an important stage that contributes to the further motivation both to stay in a particular place of work and to continue to be a representative of the chosen profession. Encouraging novice teachers to remain in their chosen profession is the actuality of the modern educational space. It is therefore important to evaluate all possible support tools and resources for the adaptation of novice teachers, as well as to identify opportunities for their useful, meaningful and targeted use. Thus, the questions become relevant: "What factors contribute to the adaptation of a novice teacher in a general education school?" and "What support system is needed for the successful adaptation of novice teachers in general education schools?".*

This article, without excluding other possibilities and probabilities, will examine the factors contributing to and hindering the successful adaptation process of novice teachers who started working in general education schools, the offer of support measures from both a historical and contemporary perspective, choosing the situation of the Latvian state as the basis for the study. The importance of the support system for the successful adaptation of novice teachers will also be highlighted. The research is based on the study of theoretical literature and the personal experience of the author of the publication (as a novice teacher).

The aim of the article is to study the offer of existing support systems for novice teachers, based on periodicals, various scientific publications, legislative regulations, OECD and other educational studies, as well as the content analysis of other historical sources, and to identify elements of the model of successful adaptation of novice teachers. This will become the basis for further empirical research, the result of which will be the development of an adaptation model for novice teachers. The research method: theoretical analysis of scientific literature and sources.

As a result of theoretical research, based on the content analysis of various historical sources and international research, the following elements of the support system have been identified as the most important: participation in mentoring introductory programmes, the attraction of a teacher-mentor from an educational institution, introductory training, opportunities for self-expression, the quality of mutual relations in the school team. More on these and other aspects of the adaptation of novice teachers in the main part of the article.

It should be noted that the study was conducted within the framework of the educational situation in Latvia, therefore, further research would be necessary to confirm the results in the international educational context.

Keywords: *adaptation, general education, Latvian case study, novice teacher, support system.*

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Introduction

The process of adaptation of any person to the new place of work is an important stage that contributes to the further motivation both to stay in a particular place of work and to continue to be a representative of the chosen profession. Once in the new work environment, a person gets acquainted not only with the basic responsibilities, but also with the culture of the organization of the workplace. It, in turn, includes values, vision, social relations, accepted phenomena of mutual communication, etc., with which it is necessary to interact on a daily basis. Of course, one of the primary factors of successful adaptation is the coherence of the internal values of the new employee with the values of the chosen workplace, which plays a kind of catalyst role in the inclusion process. However, there is also a set of certain theoretically recognized and justified aspects that contribute to the inclusion of new employees, incl. well-being, in a given workplace. For example, skilful determination of

adaptation needs from the workplace, relationships with management and colleagues, development of professional potential and self-confidence, etc.

One of the most pressing problems at the Latvian state level is the shortage of teachers. Comparing the articles of the last three years on the current affairs of education in the country before the start of the new school year, incl. for available teacher vacancies, it should be concluded that with each school year the shortage of teachers increases and, accordingly, the number of current vacancies increases (Šķietniece, 2021; Brinkmane, 2022; Daniela, 2023). The greatest shortage of teachers is in the large cities – Riga, Daugavpils and Jelgava, but the most demanded specialists are teachers of mathematics and of Latvian language and literature. In Latvian schools, at the beginning of the 2023/2024 school year, there was a shortage of 1013 teachers in total (Laganovskis, 2023). The most worrying thing is that the fast, instantaneous solution to address this problem has not been found yet at the national level (Metuzāls, 2024).

Analysing the data of the official statistics of the Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter referred to as the IZM) for the last 10 years on the number of teachers in the country at the beginning of school years, it should be said that every year the number of novice teachers starting work in general education schools does not exceed 300 people (IZM, 2023a). That is, the teaching profession is not the primary choice of many young people. It is even more difficult to motivate novice teachers to work in small rural schools, where, in addition to adaptation problems, the lowest salary (compared to urban schools) and the search for a place to live become obstacles, unless the novice teacher has returned to his hometown or village (Metuzāls, 2024).

As well as taking into account the average age of teachers in the country (more than half of teachers are over 50 years old (OECD, 2023) and the number of teachers who have reached retirement age (over the past 10 years, the share is in the range of 20-22 thousand people (IZM, 2023a), which significantly exceeds the number of novice teachers, it can be said that the situation in the country is quite critical. In October 2023, in a discussion organized by the University of Latvia and the Ministry of Education and Science, it was mentioned that many novice teachers make a decision to stop working at the school in the first five years since the start of employment relations (University of Latvia, 2023). Similar statistics appear in the results of the 2018 International Teaching and Learning Survey (TALIS) – in Latvia there are about 13% of teachers with a length of service of 1–5 years, while teachers with a length of service of 6–10 years are twice as many or 6.5% (OECD, 2020). This means that it is novice teachers with little pedagogical experience who choose to end their teaching careers. Therefore, it is now important to identify and classify possible solutions to improve the situation, or to identify and summarize the factors of the support system that will contribute to the successful adaptation of novice teachers in the workplace.

The aim of the research: to analyse the offer of the existing support system for novice teachers and to explore the factors that facilitate the adaptation of novice teachers in educational institutions. Research method: theoretical analysis of scientific literature and sources.

Characteristics and essence of the concepts of “novice teacher” and “adaptation”

In order to achieve a common understanding and interpretation of the concepts used in the work, the most important concepts – **adaptation** and the **novice teacher** – will be defined first. In the glossary of pedagogical terms, the concept of **adaptation** is explained as the ability to adapt to a new situation, constantly changing conditions and requirements, overcoming adverse factors and adapting to the environment (Beļickis et al., 2000). In the

context of the educational environment, adaptation is the professional growth of the teacher, integration into the teaching staff at school.

A **novice teacher** is a teacher who has received higher pedagogical education and started working according to the obtained qualification, or started his/her studies at a higher educational institution and parallelly works at the school, acquiring higher pedagogical education. The teacher is considered to be a novice due to his/her work experience (the view of the authors of the publication), although various sources show a different understanding of the limits of the length of service for a new teacher (see Table 1).

Table 1 Explanation of the concept of “Novice Teacher” in the understanding of various authors

Author	Explanation of the concept of "Novice Teacher"
K. Kim and G. L. Roth; OECD	New teacher or novice teacher is a teacher with a pedagogical length of service from 1 to 5 years (Kim & Roth, 2011; OECD, 2019).
K. Pildiņa and D. Bondareva	Experience of novice teacher is less than 3 years (Bondareva & Pildiņa, 2019).
Ministry of Education and Science (IZM)	According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education and Science, a specialist is considered a novice teacher on the first year of service (IZM, 2023a). Already in the next school year, this teacher will no longer be considered as a novice.
Washoe County School District	A teacher can be called a novice teacher with little or no previous experience in pedagogical work in his/her first year of work (Washoe County School District, n.d.).
Research team – J. Barrett, G. Jones, E. Mooney, C. Thornton, J. Cady, P. Guinee & J. Olson; Arkansas State Mentorship Programme	A novice teacher: work experience in the field of pedagogy (or the total length of service working with pupils) does not exceed 3 years (Barrett et.al., 2002; Arkansas Novice Teacher Mentoring Program Manual, 2023).
Scientists from Louisiana State University – J. R. Curry, A. W. Webb, S. J. Latham	Some scientists deliberately determine the limits of the existence of a novice teacher in this status, which is probably necessary within the framework of a particular study for the reliability and accuracy of the results. In a study conducted by American scientists, a teacher is considered a novice teacher during the first semester of work (Curry et.al., 2016).
Professor E. A. Balezina of the University of Perm.	In some sources, the novice teacher is considered not in the context of existing work experience, but in the context of age. For example, such teachers who have just graduated from a university, having obtained the appropriate qualifications, up to the age of 35 can be considered as novices (Balezina, 2017).
Authors of this publication	It is also possible to consider a novice teacher as a teacher who has returned to his/her profession after a long break, for example, after 10 years; or a teacher who has changed the work place from a small rural school to a large urban school. In this context, the size of the school depends on the number of students in it.

Keeping in mind different interpretations, one cannot gain unequivocal certainty about the needed work experience or pedagogical seniority, which turns a novice teacher into an experienced one. Therefore, it probably depends not only on work experience, but also on personal character traits, variety of job responsibilities, etc.

Peculiarities of the adaptation of novice teachers in general education schools from a historical point of view (example of Latvia)

The period of the first free state of the Republic of Latvia (1918 – 1940) or the time of the creation of the new national state can be considered as a stage of change in education, since the system of an independent state and the foundations of the educational system were established (Jurs & Pelnēna, 2023). One of the tasks of this period was to educate novice teachers corresponding to the spirit of a free state. However, when entering an educational institution, novice teachers faced various problems, such as a relatively low and unsettled social position of the teacher (Pētersons, 1928) or relatively low salary (Ozoliņš, 1920), which was lower if compared to experienced teachers (Pētersons, 1928). Among the possible factors contributing to adaptation and further "stay" in the chosen profession the following were mentioned: raising teachers' salaries and paying them on time; the possibility of receiving renovations to the apartment and workplace; the possibility of getting food with the landless; getting to the railway station at the expense of the parish (at least 4 times a year), and other benefits (Ozoliņš, 1920).

The Latvian educational system, while Latvian state was part of the USSR (1940 – 1990), was the subject to the views, ideology, strict control of the Communist Party of Latvia and other educational development trends of that time (Andersone, 2023). Consequently, the challenges of the adaptation period of the novice teacher were also subject to the peculiarities of the beliefs of the existing historical period.

One of the possible problems of the adaptation of novice teachers in the historical context was the inability to choose their first workplace, because immediately after the graduation, a former student – current novice teacher had to work for the first three years in the school that was assigned by educational institution (Prikaz Minvuza SSSR, 1968), following requests of educational institutions for specific specialists. Namely, the young specialist was "sent" where he/she was needed as a professional in the particular field. Not always there was an opportunity to work in the chosen specialty. This is also due to the fact that some schools had a small number of class groups, so it was not possible to provide a full workload for a teacher in one subject (Ronis, 1956). This problem case was also reinforced by the requirements of the particular educational institution and other peculiarities related to the work. For example, in young specialists, doubts were caused by the high workload, the amount of duties, lack of time for self-education, poor living conditions and other aspects (Zīda, 1984).

The process of adaptation of novice teachers in general education school – hindering and contributing factors

Novice teachers are the developers of innovative ideas and energy in the school environment. Although they may lack experience in various aspects related to classroom management and teaching at the beginning of their careers, it is the new teachers who can have a significant impact on the learning environment. As in any profession, novice teachers need adaptation time, support from experienced colleagues and motivational feedback. In order to enrich the existing theoretical knowledge and competences with practical experience and skilfully perform their job duties, appropriate support is needed at the initial stage of work (OECD, 2019).

The process of adaptation of novice teachers can be influenced by various factors and, unfortunately, some of them are inhibiting or disparaging to the work of teachers. The difficulties that a novice teacher may encounter when starting work may be:

- 1) inadequate and unsupportive work environment, or underestimation of the work done by colleagues or parents of pupils (Halicioglu, 2015; OECD, 2019), incl. feedback with critical remarks and emphasis on shortcomings in the work;
- 2) too high expectations of a teacher in the first year of work (Sözen, 2018), incl. increased workload for the first years (Öztürk & Yildirim, 2013) and lack of time to perform basic duties (Paula & Greenfeld, 2018);
- 3) the absence of mentor (Athanasas & Achinstein 2003; OECD, 2019); on average in OECD countries, only 22% of novice teachers officially receive mentor support (OECD, 2019);
- 4) non-compliance of the subject taught with the specialty (Siliņa, 1983);
- 5) insufficient professional competence in some matters, such as lack of practical experience in classroom management issues or difficulties in implementing the content of the subject according to the plan provided in the training standard (Öztürk & Yildirim, 2013; Amin & Rahimi, 2018; Paula & Grünfelde, 2018), or the skilful implementation of the inclusive education approach (Many et al., 2023). It should be noted that, on average, in OECD countries, novice teachers are less confident in their teaching skills in comparison to experienced colleagues. This is evidenced by the following data – only 78% of novice teachers believe that they are able to connect the upbringing and teaching process skilfully, while the share of experienced teachers is 87% (OECD, 2019);
- 6) challenges of personal and professional life (Halicioglu, 2015; Sözen, 2018);
- 7) peculiarities of building relationships at school – with pupils, with colleagues, with the management of an educational institution (Öztürk & Yildirim, 2013; Amin & Rahimi, 2018; Paula & Greenfeld, 2018);
- 8) low salary that is out of proportion to the effort invested compared to other professions (LIZDA, 2022a; OECD, 2023), and other factors.

Next, let's look at the factors contributing to the adaptation of novice teachers. By analysing various sources, the following elements were identified that contribute to the integration of novice teachers into the working environment:

- 1) taking care of the teacher's well-being, such as the provision of social guarantees (apartment, place for children in a pre-school, etc. bonuses) or additional material support – scholarships (LIZDA, 2022a);
- 2) meaningful development of the plan for testing and analysing their work (Silina, 1983);
- 3) the participation and involvement of the entire school teaching staff in the support of novice teachers (Ngang, 2013; Sözen, 2018), incl. the promotion of professional socialization (Paula & Grünfelde, 2018);
- 4) the involvement of the novice teacher in all areas of school activities and collective work, support for self-expression and self-affirmation at work, the opportunity to generate creative innovative ideas and solutions, express initiative (Ngang, 2013; Garipov, 2019);
- 5) the formation of an emotionally and physically safe environment and a stable psychological microclimate for the teaching staff (Sözen, 2018; LIZDA, 2022a), the level of organizational culture for the teaching staff at school;
- 6) finding an experienced and professional teacher-mentor (in an educational institution) who recommends, directs, answers all ambiguous questions, observes lessons, provides methodological support in the organization and management of the teaching process, and also other types of practical and emotional support (Paula & Greenfeld, 2018; LIZDA, 2022a);

- 7) the organization of an "acquaintance" meeting (Sözen, 2018) to inform the novice teacher about the traditions of the school, internal rules of procedure, agenda, the peculiarities of the classes and the desired emphasis at work, and other current problems in school life (Paula & Grīnfelde, 2018);
- 8) participation in mentoring introductory programmes outside the educational institution (Paula & Grīnfelde, 2018; LIZDA, 2022a; Many et al., 2023), which provides mentor advisory support on work-related issues, participation in professional development programmes, and analysis of lessons observed;
- 9) positive feedback on the work (Paula & Grīnfelde, 2018; LIZDA, 2022a) or emphasis on strengths and development needs and discussions on current teaching and upbringing issues, teacher's work ethics;
- 10) educational (incl. exchange of experience) seminars, conferences, courses, workshops, professional development classes, schools of pedagogical experience, etc. organisation of support activities involving both novice and experienced teachers (Paula & Greenfeld, 2018; LIZDA, 2022a);
- 11) reduced workload during the adaptation period of the first three years of work, for example, no more than 80% of the full-time contact lessons, so that it is possible to perform work duties directly during working hours (LIZDA, 2022a);
- 12) additional support measures, such as the opportunity to participate in supervisions or receive the support of a psychologist and the provision of all the necessary educational materials, etc. (LIZDA, 2022a);
- 13) the involvement of novice teachers in extracurricular organisations (OECD, 2023), for example, in the Council of Novice Educators of the Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees (LIZDA) (Latvia);
- 14) promoting the novice teacher's skills to build relationships with other people – colleagues, students and their parents, incl. willingness and ability to accept support and engage in adaptation activities (LIZDA, 2022a);
- 15) the identification of adaptation needs of novice teachers (Garipov, 2019), for example, by conducting questionnaires in order to find out what is satisfying/dissatisfying at school (lesson layout, working conditions, workload); what issues need help, etc.

It should be noted that the factors discouraging and facilitating the adaptation of novice teachers considered do not exclude the probability and possibilities of the existence of other factors, since the selection of theoretical sources chosen for review is only part of the set of possible sources. As confirmed by the results of the theoretical research results, further empirical study is required.

Characteristics of the current situation in the field of education – possible solutions

The first year of a novice teacher's work at school is of great importance, because the choice of staying in the profession or changing an occupation will depend on it (Sözen, 2018).

The problem of the teacher shortage of and the decision of several novice teachers to stop working at school in the first years or employment was also addressed by the Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees (hereinafter referred to as LIZDA), which, based on a study conducted in November 2021 on current vacancies and shortage of teachers, determined that the crisis caused by the shortage of teachers in the middle of the school year may also lead to a critical situation in the educational sector (LIZDA, 2022b). Therefore, LIZDA has taken consistent steps to solve this problem by implementing various measures to support novice teachers within the framework of the Erasmus+ project "Development of a Support System for Novice Educators" (LIZDA, 2023a). For example, in the seminar "A

Professionally Supported Novice Teacher" organized by the trade union, novice teachers from different cities of Latvia participated together with mentors, experienced educators and other educational sector representatives in order to look for the answers to topical questions – challenges of the teaching profession and search for solutions, support opportunities at different levels, boundaries in working life, updating of good practice examples in teacher practice, etc. (LIZDA, 2023b). As a result of the project, collecting the experience of both local and other European countries to support novice teachers, a special handbook for novice teachers is planned to be developed, which will bring together the experience of each country – common and distinctive features, strategy to support young educators, good practices and innovative solutions (LIZDA, 2024a).

Speaking about the current situation in Latvia, it should be highlighted that until 2023 there was no support programme for novice teachers at the state level after obtaining the teacher's qualification. Only on July 13, 2023, the government made a decision on the induction year project "Introduction of the Year of Induction in Teacher Preparation Study Programmes" (Ministru kabinets, 2023) or a support programme for graduates of pedagogical study programmes, which includes material support (scholarships) and practical support for professional development (improvement group classes), according to the work needs of novice teachers (IZM, 2023b).

In addition to the induction year project, some of the support achieved at the national level for novice educators are increased municipal scholarships and repayment of student loans (LIZDA, 2024b). Also, a significant contribution of the state to the support system for novice teachers are the amendments adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers in February 2024 on the financing of part-time studies for students of study programmes of the thematic group "Education starting with the spring semester of 2024 (LIZDA, 2022a; IZM, 2024). Until now, only full-time face-to-face study programmes were financed from the state budget, the choice of which was not popular among future teachers, since this type of training is difficult to connect with work. Part-time budget places were introduced in the spring semester of 2024. For extramural students, this type of support has not been available for several decades (LIZDA, 2024b).

Another example of good practice for supporting novice educators and immediate involvement outside of teaching work locally is the initiative of entrepreneurs from Mārupe district to present the annual award in education specifically to novice educators. The purpose of the award "New Start in Mārupe County" is to recognize the teachers who choose one of the educational institutions of Mārupe municipality for its place of work, thus strengthening the prestige and recognition of the teaching profession in society (Mārupes novada pašvaldība, 2023). These types of events promote self-expression and self-affirmation of novice teachers, providing an opportunity to express creative, innovative ideas and solutions, to show initiative from the very beginning of their careers.

The importance of the established support system for the successful adaptation of novice teachers

A system is a concept that denotes the interrelation of the elements of a certain set in a certain order. It determines the interaction of different elements with each other as a result of combining. Therefore, in order to achieve really excellent results or mastery in any activity, it is not enough just to have separate, unevenly implemented measures. A system is needed.

In each educational institution (in this case - general educational schools) there are mostly separate measures for the adaptation and support of novice teachers, only rarely a system and requirements have been established that can be used as a basis for providing

support. However, high-quality and effective support for novice teachers requires a unified approach in all municipalities of Latvia (LIZDA, 2022a).

LIZDA highlights the lack of professional, systemic support for new teachers. The study "Evaluation of the professional support system for teacher" (2018, n=1258) found that about 69% of Latvian teachers surveyed fully or partially agree with the statement that a unified and structured support system for novice teachers has not been developed in Latvia. Also, out of the novice teachers surveyed, only 29% are satisfied with professional support in their educational institutions (LIZDA, 2022a). The importance of systematic support is also highlighted in international research (OECD, 2020). OECD study "Supporting and guiding novice teachers" (2019) highlights the need for a mechanism developed at the educational institution level to support novice teachers or a system to support and motivate novice teachers (OECD, 2019). In turn, the lack of a systemic approach is often cited as one of the factors influencing the professional future of novice teachers (Paula & Grīnfelde, 2018). Next, let's look at the most important elements of the support system for novice teachers, which crystallized after studying the theoretical literature.

It is important for novice teachers to provide **mentoring introduction programmes** (outside the educational institution) that will help them adapt to work (Paula & Grīnfelde 2018; OECD, 2019; Many et al., 2023). Mentoring is a set of measures aimed at analysing the daily work and teaching situations of teachers with the aim of preventively identifying possible obstacles, eliminating the isolation of teachers among them and supporting professional development (Paula & Grīnfelde, 2018). The appropriate components of the mentoring programme could be: (1) additional training of novice teachers tailored to the job needs; (2) watching and analysing lessons with a professional mentor; it is important that the mentor who is attached to the novice teacher is from the same field of study as the novice teacher; (3) joint meetings of novice teachers to share experiences, discuss current events, etc.; (4) joint cohesion activities that encourage the participation of novice teachers in interscholastic projects and other activities; (5) a meeting between the novice teacher and his or her mentor with the aim of reflecting on their experience and studying the practice of experienced teachers, etc. The elements of the mentoring programme are summarized according to the personal experience of the author of the publication when participating in the project "Introduction of the Year of Induction into Teacher Preparation Study Programmes". The duration of the programme would depend on the individual adaptation period of specific teachers and state resources (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). In Latvia, the duration of the induction year project, which has been implemented since the 2023/2024 school year, is 10 months.

It is also important to attract an **experienced teacher-mentor** from the educational institution where the novice teacher starts working. The mentor should be not only a support person, but also a provider of monitoring and professional socialization of the work of the novice teacher (Paula & Grīnfelde, 2018). The promotion of professional socialization is a versatile and complex process during which novice teachers adopt the values and behavioural patterns of a certain profession (Vaisburg, 2015) from experienced colleagues and the organizational culture of the educational institution. Also, a mentor is the "best friend" of a novice teacher, to whom he can always come not only with practical work issues, but also simply to talk or for advice.

The results of international studies show that sometimes the theoretical knowledge base acquired at the university is not enough to fit immediately successfully into the provision of the learning process (OECD, 2019). Often, novice teachers find out only "on the spot" what exactly needs to be known, linking theory with practice. Therefore, an important element in supporting novice teachers is **introductory training**, which can be both as the part of a mentoring programme and as separate professional development courses/activities that provide "missing" knowledge. For example, introductory classes before the beginning of the

school year about the order of organization of the work of the educational institution, culture and general current events.

The opportunity to realize one's potential or **the possibility of self-expression** is considered one of the elements of a supportive environment. Novice teachers tend to have the strongest desire to try new teaching approaches and to be open to innovation compared to their experienced colleagues (OECD, 2019).

The quality of mutual relations with colleagues and the management of the educational institution are important aspects of support, which are also catalysts for the formation of a stable psychological microclimate in a teaching staff (Ngang, 2013; Sözen, 2018). For novice teachers, positive feedback on their work is important (Paula & Grünfede, 2018; LIZDA, 2022a) or emphasis on strengths and development needs. It increases the motivation of work, inspires to overcome challenges and discover and realize your inner potential.

All of the above elements affect greatly the professional well-being of the novice teacher. It also increases work motivation and self-confidence, and reinforces the desire to improve constantly in the chosen field of work. It must be said that the mentioned elements of the support system, do not exclude the possibility of the existence and effectiveness of other elements.

Conclusions

1. In scientific sources, there is a different understanding of the limits of the length of service of a novice teacher varying from a teacher from the beginning of the employment up to 5 years of service. Therefore, with different interpretations, one cannot gain unequivocal certainty with what work experience or pedagogical seniority the novice teacher will turn into an experienced one. Therefore, it probably depends not only on such a factor as work experience, but also on personal character traits, variety of job responsibilities, and others.
2. The first year of novice teacher's work at school is of great importance, because the future choice of staying in the profession or changing profession will depend on it. However, often the novice teachers (with up to 5 years of service) choose to end their teaching careers, as evidenced by the statistics of the 2018 International Teaching and Learning Survey (TALIS).
3. In each educational institution, individual measures are implemented to adapt and support novice teachers, but rarely there is a single system and requirements that has been established and used as a basis for providing support.
4. As a result of the theoretical research study, the following were identified as **hindering factors** for the adaptation process of young teachers: (1) inappropriate and unsupportive work environment; (2) excessive expectations of the teacher in the first year of work; (3) absence of a mentor; insufficient professional competence in some matters; (4) personal and professional life challenges; (5) the peculiarities of relationship-building between teaching staff; (6) low pay that is out of proportion to the effort invested if compared to other professions.
5. As a result of the theoretical study, based on the content analysis of various historical sources and international studies, the following **elements of the support system** have been identified: (1) concern for the well-being of the teacher; (2) a supportive relationship with the management of the educational institution; (3) the participation of the entire school teaching staff in the support of novice teachers; (4) attracting an experienced teacher-mentor; (5) the organisation of a "familiarisation" meeting; (6) positive feedback at work; (7) the organisation of educational events (incl. exchange of experience); (8) taking into account the opinion of the novice teacher on various issues. As most effective

tools mentioned in the research are the following: participation in introductory mentoring programmes, the attraction of a teacher-mentor from educational institutions, introductory training, opportunities for self-expression, the quality of interpersonal relationships in the school team.

6. Despite the fact that in the European education space the issue of the support system for novice teachers became topical already around 2018, in Latvia the issue has received a proper attention only after 2022. The Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees (LIZDA) is seriously engaged in the development of the novice teacher support system, implementing various measures to support them, for example, the Erasmus+ project "Development of a support system for novice educators", a series of seminars "Professionally supported novice teacher", or the creation of a special handbook for novice teachers. On the state level there are scholarships for novice educators, assistance with the study loans, participation in the annual project of induction, the financing of part-time study places, and distribution of special awards to novice educators.

The purpose of this article was to explore the offer of an existing support system for novice teachers and to identify the most appropriate elements that could be included in the model of successful adaptation of novice teachers. However, with different interpretations, one cannot be certain which factors contributing to the adaptation of novice teachers would be the most effective and appropriate, therefore, perhaps, the choice of appropriate factors depends on the particular educational institution, its values and organizational culture.

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