

## Career Development of Teachers: Importance and Benefits

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**Abstract:** Teachers have always been at the core of education and their career development has always been the primary issue of education system. It is important to note that in order to make differences in students' achievement, teachers should constantly develop their field knowledge and teaching skills. For that reason, career development is an important part of teaching profession. This paper defines what is meant by career development in teaching profession and explains the benefits of it to both teachers and students.

**Keywords:** Teaching, Career, Skills, Knowledge

### 1. Teaching Profession and Career

The basic purpose of the education systems is educating the qualified labor force of a country and giving information about citizenship to its citizens. In order to realize this, each education system regulates its educational activities by determining educational philosophy and man power policy. Education is one of the main social institutions which is at the forefront of the main problems of all societies. The main subject of this basic problem is undoubtedly teachers (Çelikten et al., 2005).

The purpose of education is to make people a harmonious member of the contemporary world and equip them with knowledge and skills they need. Individuals should be raised in a way that can keep pace with changes and developments in society and the world, and contribute to them. This can be provided by a qualified teaching staff as well as a good education system. No matter how important and necessary are qualified teachers, it is not enough. It is also important that these teachers are employed at a national level in a balanced, effective and productive manner and their working and living conditions should be improved (Çelikten et al., 2005).

People as they grow up observe closely their biological, cultural, psychological and physical development. It is not possible to think of the existence of a profession that will give more pleasure and excitement than a teaching profession. Individuals think teaching as a career because of working with children and adults, making a social contribution, making a difference, job security, benefits of job and teacher's satisfaction (OECD, 2005). Researches in Canada, France, Australia, Netherlands and the UK show that working with children and adults, expanding the potential information and making a social contribution are significant outcomes in the teaching profession (Watt et al., 2012). On the other hand,

Yong (1995) expresses external motivations to choose a teaching profession are; salary, job security and career status. Watt and other scholars (2012) also list the general reasons to choose teaching profession as a career:

- Possibility to work with children and adults.
- Allow more time with family
- Ability of teaching
- Social factors
- Job security
- Possible to strengthen social equality
- Social contribution

Guskey (1985) has found that teachers are more likely to love teaching, more effective and more confident in their difficult situations through career advancement. According to Guskey, new methods from career development and applying them enhance the satisfaction and commitment of teachers. In the research conducted by Garet and colleagues (2001), the factors which contribute to career development are listed as teacher's field knowledge, effective learning opportunities and other development activities.

In career development, the target always should be oriented to solve the barriers of student's success. For example, it is useless to make a career development in biology for a student who is good at biology. This is why it is more beneficial for the teacher to make career development in another area if knowledge is needed in that field. Teacher career development should be centered on measuring student achievement with field knowledge and solve the pedagogical problems which arise from organizational or educational methods. It is more important to examine the methods that will contribute positively to student success especially in career development.

Marzano, Pickering and Pollack (2001) claim that nine practices will affect the achievement of students. These practices can be applied to the development of teacher's teaching abilities during career development.

Table 1: Teaching strategies which affect student success

Specify the similarities and differences	Easy expression and definitions
Summarize and take a note	Learning together
Encourage to make more effort and praise	Set a goal and feedback
Homework and practice	Hypothesize and test
Questions and exercises	

The characteristics of an effective teacher career development and the factors that make it successful are briefly as follows (Harwell, 2003):

- The point of career development
- The content of career development
- The method of career development

Anthony and Ord (2008) studied the relationship between factors affecting the choice of teaching profession, satisfaction with occupational choice and perceptions of the teaching profession as a career field and they determined that there are three perceptions of the teaching profession as a career field. First is “the cluster of good looks” (people who prefer the teaching profession because of pragmatic reasons such as job security and more time for family), secondly “the cluster of right time” (people who has strong level of willingness towards the teaching profession) and finally “teaching is meant for me” (the cluster is formed by those who prefer teaching profession with influence of previous positive experiences). It was also found that the satisfaction of individuals who in the cluster of “teaching is meant for me” are significantly higher than those in other clusters.

Bruinsma and Jansen (2010) studied the relationship between factors that affect the choice of teacher candidates for teaching profession and the relationship between their decisions to pursue their careers as teachers. They concluded that the desire for career development of teacher candidates who are described by external and incompatible factors (eg. teaching as a background profession) with motivation for the teaching profession is lower than that of teacher candidates who are described as internal cohesion (eg. internal career value) and external cohesion factors (eg. a safe and continuous job).

The middle class origin of teaching profession is one of the important factors of determining the status of this profession. In addition, the gender of teacher, the qualifications of teacher’s school and faculties, the fields of their specialization, the official and private formation of the schools, the presence of urban and rural places in these schools and the wages that they receive affect the occupation status (Tezcan, 1991).

It is not right to look at the members of this profession only as knowledge transmitters. At the same time, they should be philosophers, sociologist, pedagogues, psychologist and good technocrat. These expectations from the teachers enhance the importance of their choice, training, professional development and accurate employment. Continuous improvement in educational programs and the flexibility of their implementation require that teachers should be equipped with basic knowledge of program development. Teachers should have access to varied educational instruments, the innovations day by day and the ability to use them (Saçlı, 1996). The primary duty of an idealistic teacher is to help young people develop their minds. Idealist teachers should use the theory of education and find the way from their continuous research. This is because the teacher is the most important person who applies the education policy and develops theory on the basis of results (Özkan, 2005).

Nowadays, the society lives huge and important changes that history does not record. The most important task of the teacher is to be aware of these changes, understand the meaning of these changes as well as transfer them to students. For this reason, a teacher-based academic and professional formation is required. Academic preparation consists of general knowledge of the discovery of various scientific disciplines. This academic preparation should be completed with a professional preparation. Vocational

preparation is obligatory to learn various sub disciplines of pedagogy for a predetermined time. Special attention should be given to education of teacher in academic and professional aspects (Hesapçioğlu, 1992).

The concept of professional development which can be defined as knowledge, skills, ability and conditions for learning about profession has been the most important factor in recent years. The role of teaching profession in the development of a country is known by all societies so there are various regulations regarding this. Research in the field of the development of teaching profession shows that professional development is a necessity in order to raise the quality of education in schools. Therefore, opportunities should be provided for teachers in order to improve the quality of education (Seferoğlu, 2001).

The most common criterion is seniority-based in teaching career. As in all professions, the old generation defends length of service and new generation defends sufficiency. The choice of seniority rises in the difficulty of evaluating the teacher. As an assessment measure, the benefits of seniority includes the social justice sentiment, it prevents the personal effects and is the sign of loyalty, measures easily the ability, prevents the destructive competition and reduces management pressure. Inability to achieve competence, increased conflict between generations, inadequate staffing, disruption of authority, competence balance and insignificance of profession are the damages of this measure (Bursalioğlu, 2005).

## **2. The Importance and Benefits of Career in Teaching Profession**

Education is a chain of organized activities to the way of democratic rules in contemporary society. Providing harmony between the rings of this chain is a great way for the teacher to become a well-trained professional. It goes without saying that the knowledge level of teacher is influential on student achievement. The widespread assumption is that teachers who do not have enough knowledge on the field or teaching techniques cannot offer good opportunities for students. In that case, the key factor is the skills of teacher in student development. The points are below that teachers need to consider in career development:

- A good field information and the most effective way to present it to students
- The teacher should follow the curriculum in his field, see how the concepts are coherent with each other
- To emphasize the importance of learning
- Combine the theory and practice
- Have a good relationship with the school
- The teacher should be involved in concrete tasks for student development such as teaching, evaluation and observation.
- Encouraging experimentation and research.
- Ensure the cooperation with other teachers.

In teacher career development, the major issues are the improvement of skills, knowledge and teaching methods to help students achieve better.

### Conclusion

Teachers have vital roles in students' achievement. It is important to stress that teachers' skills, field knowledge and teaching abilities are decisive factors in the development of students. For that reason, teachers should give utmost attention to their career development in order to help their students achieve better. Furthermore, education system should provide teachers opportunities for career development.

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