

## **Initial Teacher Training – the Cyprus case**

Initial teacher education is a four year undergraduate course offered at a university level (at least 240 ECTS). School experience (29 ECTS) is organised and offered by the University, in collaboration with the schools and is obligatory for all student teachers. School experience is

### **1. Framework and nature of mentoring and coaching student teachers in the context of initial teacher education**

**Aim:** Field experience aims at familiarising students with what takes place in a school setting, with planning for instruction and with the various roles undertaken by teachers in school settings. Within the school experience, student teachers have the opportunity to work with experienced mentors at the school. Academic staff visits the school and supervises the students' work at school.

Field experience involves active participation of the student in the school life, lesson observation within the classroom, preparation and presentation of lessons, self evaluation of the work done and the role of the student teacher and discussions with both the mentor and the academic staff. The whole experience is evaluated by the University through questionnaires to teachers at school and student teachers.

Mentors are usually experienced teachers who volunteer, if specific criteria are met, to act as mentors. They receive certain in service training by the University concerning their role and provide support to the student teacher.

### **2. Partnership agreements between teacher education institutions and schools: the different roles played by each partner**

The following are some examples of partnerships between Teacher Education Institutions (TEI) and schools:

2.1 The TEI (Teacher Education Institutions) send student teachers at the schools for their teaching experience, after communicating with the ministry department responsible for the schools.

2.2 Experienced teachers act as mentors for student teachers. In this case, the TEI provide training for the mentors

2.2 TEI cooperate with teachers for carrying out research activities within the school (surveys, action research, intervention programmes, etc). In this way, schools (both teachers and students) get engaged into research either actively (action research) or not.

2.3 Academic staff usually has the role of the 'expert' or the 'critical friend' and teachers and students have the role of the practitioner. In some cases, where action research projects are undertaken, teachers and students are the researchers and the academics act as 'critical friends'.

2.4 School based in service training takes place after needs assessment by the school

**3. Which is the requires scholl teacher’s profile to be a mentor and a coach for student teachers in the school context and how are they prepared to organise effective mentoring and coaching schemes?**

Basic criteria for being a mentor at the school are the evaluation from the inspector, educational qualifications and postgraduate qualifications (in pedagogy preferably), communicative skills (as identified by the school head and/or the inspector, and years of service.

**4. The relationships between teacher education institutions and schools regarding the professional development of their teachers and the organisational development of schools**

Organisational development of the school is usually organised on a system level and in a central way and carried out by the ministry. There is a move towards decentralising the mechanism and giving more autonomy to schools to identify their needs and apply action plans for improvement.

Regarding teachers’ professional development this is regarded as a ‘personal’ need and there are different ways to fulfil it:

4.1 TEI offer postgraduate studies to teachers

4.2 TEI offer in service training seminars to teachers

4.3 Schools identify their training needs and engage academic staff (and Pedagogical Institute staff) to act as facilitators for them

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