



INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL ROLES OF TEACHERS

T. Ivanova*

Department of Pedagogik and Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences ,
University "Prof. d-r Assen Zlatarov", Burgas, Bulgaria

ABSTRACT

Innovations in education are the cross point of continuous training of teachers and improving teaching process. The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of innovations in education on the professional roles of teachers through the prism of current and future pedagogues. An inquiry is the primary method used. The obtained results show contradictory attitude of the respondents to the Innovator role. They understand its necessity, but relate it with a higher level of qualification and changes which put additional pressure on the learning process. The teacher feels safe in traditional roles, with their typical content. New roles will be closer to him, if they are with familiar names and content and are included in the system.

Key words: structure of the teaching profession, professional roles, innovator, teachers qualification, educational situation;

INTRODUCTION

The term "innovation" (from Latin innovation - update) means a novelty, a change, an improvement of a particular occurrence. In this sense, innovations in education are associated with achieving a new quality aiming to improve teaching practice and increase its efficacy. The announcement of 2009 for the European Year of Creativity and Innovation further raised awareness of this field. It is not an easy task for the teacher to preserve traditions within reasonable limits, to initiate change and innovations, to facilitate their consolidation into the practice and skillfully to combine them with the existing reality. In the contemporary school, the educational model that places emphasis on teacher and teaching gives way to educational technologies, centered on students and learning. The educated person actually became an active subject of the educational process and the teacher - in his partner. This affected the

professional roles of teachers. New roles were added to its traditional roles, like mediator, facilitator, supervisor, animator, leader, innovator. They demand from the teachers to be researchers and managers, rather than executors (1-2).

Professional role is a set of functions, performed by a person to enter into a particular working position. This requires specific rules and specific behavior is assumed. Teaching profession is characterized by a significant number of professional roles. According to researchers they exceed 40 (3). In theoretical aspect enrichment and dynamics of roles, update personal profile of professional teacher, reflects changes in the education situation. They interact, exist in a system combining individual and social. Every teacher exercises a number of roles, which correspond to their personal and professional philosophy, competency, character, work conditions. The teachers attitude to role versatility and "scenarios" shows their resilience and adaptability, effectiveness of training and qualification system. Professional roles are characteristics of a particular culture, situated in time and space.

*Correspondence to: *Tinka Ivanova, University "Prof. d-r Assen Zlatarov", Faculty of Social Sciences , Department of Pedagogik and Psychology, 8000 Burgas, Bulgaria, Prof. Yakim Yakimov bul. 1, e-mail: tinche_ivanova@abv.bg*

METHODS AND MATERIALS

From mentioned theoretical formulation the study is focusing on the following issues:

- To explore students-pedagogues' expectations for innovation in education.
- To present professional roles to teachers from the position of modern teachers.
- To delineate the location and content of the professional role in/novator in the minds of modern teachers.

The techniques used include the method of unfinished sentences and anonymous questionnaire with a total of 18 questions. Seven of the questions are for role identification and role attitudes of teachers. Ordinal scale and method of content analysis are used to analyze the results.

The students sample group is of 50 units, and teachers - 100.

RESULTS

Innovation in education requires pedagogues to be ready for changes, to seek and implement them in an optimal option. This starts even with the process of their vocational training. The method of unfinished sentences determines the content that students – pedagogues put into the concept of 'innovation' and in which areas are their expectations for

these novelties to develop. According to 35 of the respondents innovation is something new, a novelty. Its main features are unconventional, unknown and initial implementation of something new into practice. The remaining 15 students associated innovations with modifying of something that already exists. The survey revealed students' preferences regarding the introduction of innovations rather than improving something that already exists. The new triggers greater interest, it is filled with more expectations. Future teachers associated innovation in education with:

- new forms and methods of training which introduce diversity in the learning process, entertaining learning process, meeting students interests;
- adjustments and changes in the curriculum to match it with current trends in society, science and technology;
- creation of new textbooks to meet the ideas of the contemporary child for school book;
- comprehensive reforms to improve the effectiveness of the education system.

The students responses reveal not only areas, but also the different range of expected innovations, which ultimate goal is the improvement of pedagogical practice.

Table 1. Ranging professional roles of teachers

Role	Position	Weight
Authority	1	1
Educator	2	0,88
Leader	3	0,77
Advisor	4	0,76
Source of information	5	0,74
Friend	6	0,74
Innovator	7	0,73
Model	8	0,69
Consultant	9	0,68
Initiator	10	0,62
Collaborator	11	0,56
Expert	12	0,54
Proselyte	13	0,53
Executor	14	0,51
Coordinator	15	0,50
Mentor	16	0,49
Distributor	17	0,47
Moderator	18	0,46
Facilitator	19	0,45
Mediator	20	0,41
Competitor	21	0,37
Opponent	22	0,35

Through the survey, the researchers offered 22 professional roles to be ranked. They include both traditional and new roles of teacher and are among the most often discussed in theoretical and practical aspect. Ranging by group evaluation, by weight and by relative ratio ranking, professional roles were determined and sorted from 1 to 22 positions.

Table 1 illustrates the preferences of the respondents to traditional roles, despite the implementation of educational technology in practice, suggesting new professional roles. Five most important professional roles teachers associate with:

- education and training - the transmission of knowledge and experience; source of information, formation of moral values, indicating the relationships between people, personality development, a positive attitude towards nature and society, stimulating curiosity, teaching children how to learn;
- leading - coordinating the overall activities of the class, creating a relaxed working atmosphere, developing qualities such as initiative, ability to solve problems,

stimulate creativity of students, developing the potential of every child;

- communicating - gaining children trust, supporting children with special educational needs, motivating students to learn;
- consulting - advising the child during its adaptation to the environment, giving friendly guidance and guiding students' choice, advising on student behavior in class and in school and on parents – children relationship;
- mediation - mediation between students – parents-school management.

In their answers teachers adhere to roles, which content they invariably associated with the process of teaching and class lessons - for example "preparation, organization, execution, discipline, findings", "100% expert in the field of education", "knowledge, ability, providing information", "manager, but as an organizer of various learning activities".

Of a particular interest is the teachers perception of new roles as mentor, moderator, facilitator, mediator. They definitely are not among the preferred roles.

Table 2. Innovator role positions

Roles	1	2	3	4	5
Need of qualification	In/novator	Moderator	Expert Facilitator	Source of information	Consulting
Skills required by school management	Educator	In/novator	Executor	Leader	Authority

According to respondents the reason for this is the fact that these roles require more effort, money and resources which both the teacher and the school do not have, the names of the roles are not used in the process of communication with both students and colleagues, teachers are not sure of their content and importance. Teachers included in the survey defined them as difficult, they feel unprepared for these roles and require qualification.

In/novator role is a role to which teachers have a contradictory opinion. It significantly stressed them because innovation makes

changes and requires additional efforts. In this regard, respondents raised the question of teachers' creative leave, conditions and time for testing of innovation models, regulation of copyright. For its realization, they seek support from the school management. The content of the professional role the respondents associated with the introduction of computer technology in schools, with English language, i.e. their acceptance of innovator role is extremely limited. Teachers see mainly the resources needed for its implementation, rather than its essence, principles, areas of innovation. 90% of them find it necessary, especially for the modern teacher. 5% fully

deny it, because “nothing can surprise young people and motivate them to learn”. The quoted response set the problem of the meaning of innovation in education and not only teachers’ attitude but also of the students.

The study found that in/novator is neither among the top five most unusual and most difficult roles, nor it is among the top five roles for which teachers feel most prepared and most qualified or most unprepared. This role found a place among the roles for which teachers consider that they need skills and also among roles required by the school management (4). For this ranking is used the number of selections (**Table 2**).

For a qualification on the role of In/novative teachers prefer regular courses and meetings with dominating practical performances and demonstrations. They are well aware that novelties are continuing to enter the educational field and they do not have the time keep track on them. Despite the apparent contradiction, respondents do not see their involvement in various social networks and sharing experience in cyberspace as an opportunity to obtain "hot information" to innovation in education. Higher qualification in this field raises other issues for teachers. For example, his professional career may be seen as a "threat" by the principal and may create an unjustified negative attitude towards innovation and the teacher himself. In practice, there is another excess – teachers concentrate effort only on innovation and underestimate the routine activities, transferring them to other teachers.

CONCLUSIONS

Results received from the survey are the basis of the following conclusions:

- The term "innovation" is associated mainly with novelty, innovations in teaching practice, rather than the modification and improvement of existing reality. This creates some risks for the succession and risks of improper use of the novelty.

Curricula and teaching methods are specified as range of innovations. Their ultimate goal is the recognition of the student as an active entity in the educational process.

- Professional roles, preferred by teachers, are related to their fundamental functions in the learning process. They have a specific content and teachers feel prepared for them. The role of the innovator requires more time and effort than traditional roles, but is seen as a necessity by modern teachers. This can create different kinds of problems, if the teacher himself has a positive attitude and feel ready for innovatine activities.
- Innovations in education are a challenge for specialists from different professions, but the teacher turn them into reality for students. This is a great responsibility because what the school is today, the life will be tomorrow.

* The research is conducted with the support of the "Bulgarian Teachers Trade Union"

REFERENCES

1. Merdjanov, Y. Rasheva, Radical structural reform of teachers’ training in Bulgaria for the rescue of the profession. - Education, 2008, kn.11.
2. Ranev, A. Personal-professional profile of the teacher as a manager of innovation activities. - Education, 2008, 4.
3. Jekova, St. and others. Problems of professional work and personality of teachers. Burgas, 1992
4. Kaloyanova, N. Management of teachers activities and the teacher activity as a management - the Bulgarian model. National Scientific and Practical Conference "Dialogue between generations and social structures through the institution of the school. S., 2010.

