



Novice Teachers Electronic Handbook

ČMOS PŠ, LESTU, LIZDA,
ZNP

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General Introduction

Project Background

According to the OECD report Education at a Glance 2020, in 2018 young teachers (below the age of 30) only accounted for a small proportion of the teaching population: 10% in lower secondary and 8% in upper secondary, on average across OECD countries. The pattern is particularly striking at the upper secondary level in Project countries – in Lithuania 3.03%, Czech Republic 4.06%, in Latvia 7.8%, and in lower secondary level only 3.66% in Lithuania, 7.71% in Latvia and 9.42% in the Czech Republic are young teachers (below the age of 30) which is below OECD averages. The ageing of the teaching force has a number of implications for countries' education systems. Competitive salaries, good working conditions, and career development opportunities may have attracted young people to teaching in some countries or helped to retain effective teachers in others. In addition to prompting recruitment and training efforts to replace retiring teachers, it may also affect budgetary decisions. Young professionals are entering general education institutions, but their number is insufficient. This is confirmed by the data on the total length of service of teachers in the school. The results of the TALIS study show that about 13% of teachers have less than 5 years of experience, but twice as many teachers have 6 to 10 years of service. This means that a relatively large number of young professionals start working at schools, but in the long run they do not continue to work as teachers. The problem has to be solved urgently and comprehensively, so that countries do not find themselves in a situation where there will not be enough teachers in educational institutions. A TALIS study in 2018 indicated that the reason for the drop-out of novice teachers is very likely due to insufficient support from the school administration and the municipality. In 2018, LIZDA did the research "Evaluation of the Teacher Professional Support System" (n= 1258), and 69.3% of the respondents agreed with the statement: "There is no unified and structured support system for novice teachers in Latvia". The urgent need for building support systems for novice teachers is proved by the fact that only 29.2% of novice teachers were satisfied with professional support in an educational institution. This need is emphasized in the Latvian education policy planning document "Education Development Guidelines 2021-2027" (in Latvian – Izglītības attīstības pamatnostādnes 2021.-2027.gadam) where attracting novice teachers, thus ensuring constant generating of teachers, is one of the three most important priorities in general education. This priority will be supported by strengthening a novice teacher preparation system (new program, introduction of the induction year) in 2021-2027. The same

problems are facing project partner countries. Attracting novice teachers and supporting those in the teaching process in first years by building support systems for novice teachers are the main motivation for all partner organizations to participate in the project. There is need for best practices, experience sharing, and knowledge transfer to all countries and organizations.

Main Objectives

Main objectives of the project are:

- 1) To develop a support system framework for novice teachers based on their needs and stakeholders' visions
- 2) To support education policy makers and implementers, and novice teachers with information, tools, and methods for improvement of the support system for novice teachers

About Project Partners

Latvijas Izglītības un zinātnes darbinieku arodbiedrība (LIZDA), Latvia
www.lizda.lv

LIZDA is an independent organisation founded on 19 May 1990 and at the moment is the largest trade union in Latvia. LIZDA unites 30,220 teachers, university employees, students and seniors working in education and science fields. They are joined in 1248 trade unions where their economic, social, and professional rights are protected. As many as 54% of education and science employees are LIZDA members and actively pursue their interests of improving working and living conditions, furthering education, and development of the science field. LIZDA is the social partner of the Latvian Government and works actively in the National Tripartite Collaboration Council. LIZDA is also a member of the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia. Mission: Represent, express, and protect economic, social, and legal rights of LIZDA members and make a social dialogue at all levels. Vision: The most powerful and largest trade union joined by active and well-informed members who are interested in education and science processes.

Českomoravský odborový svaz pracovníků školství (ČMOS PŠ), The Czech Republic
www.skolskeodbory.cz

The Czech and Moravian Trade Union of Workers in Education (ČMOS PŠ) is the Czech Republic's largest professional trade union representing workers in education, pensioners, and the unemployed who have worked in the educational sector. All these persons are organized

without any discrimination against political party, nationality, religion, race or gender. School graduates can apply for the membership in the trade union after finishing the obligatory school education period stipulated by the Czech law. The Czech and Moravian Trade Union of Workers in Education is a union whose scope of interest includes rights and status of workers, industrial and professional conditions of workers in education, dealing with public authorities and social partners in the educational sector. The main aims of ČMOS PŠ are: defending rights of its members and promoting and negotiating their economic, social, industrial, and professional needs and requirements; dealing in this respect with the government and other public authorities and associations of employers; improving working and life conditions of its members; providing its members with legal advice and legal protection; taking part in the legislative procedures and promoting proposals and bills aiming at achieving the goals and priorities of ČMOS PŠ; making analysis and prognosis regarding the educational system, its legislature and regulation; developing systems of information and coordination of trade union activities and trade union relations; undertaking control and supervision of the health and safety issues in the workplace.

Lietuvos švietimo ir mokslo profesinė sąjunga (LESTU), Lithuania
www.svietimoprofsajunga.lt

The Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Union – LESTU (Lietuvos švietimo ir mokslo profesinė sąjunga – LŠMPS) is the largest trade union umbrella organisation for education employees' trade unions in Lithuania, with about 10,000 members and with over 25% unionization rate. It has 11 people staff working in the central office and 40 coordinators at the regional level (municipalities). LESTU is the only education trade union organisation in Lithuania uniting workers in all fields of education, ranging from pre-primary teachers to lecturers and researchers in universities and vocational school teachers. The Union is actively engaged in promoting the overall professional and trade union interests of its members at all levels – national, regional, and institutional. The LESTU is politically independent and in dialogue with employers and is deeply committed to influencing the education policy formatted by the Government in Parliament. The Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Union is a member of the Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation (LPSK), also a member of Education International (EI) and the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE). Therefore, the union has big national and international networks to disseminate the project results and share the best experiences. At the state level, the LESTU, via the Parliamentary Education Council, gives the recommendations to the government in all fields of education

concerning design and implement the ECEC, general education, VET, HE and AL policies and initiatives. LESTU has strong cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Sports, and Science and with the Qualifications and VET Development Centre, striving to ensure the developments of the Lithuanian lifelong learning system correspond to the needs of the economy as well as society. Beneath this strong influence on the policy level, the LESTU also regulates the framework conditions of teachers and trainers – novice teachers training, working hours, training, remuneration, dismissal protection, health protection etc. – by collective bargaining.

Związek nauczycielstwa polskiego związek zawodowy (ZNP), Poland
www.znp.edu.pl

ZNP's history dates back to 1905, i.e. the period of the Partitions of Poland, when a group of Polish teachers under Russian occupation laid foundations for the existence of the institution defending the Polish language, teachers' rights and promoting quality education. The ZNP is the oldest and the biggest teachers' trade union in Poland. We are a uniform, voluntary, independent, and self-governing organisation of teaching and education staff employed in primary, secondary, higher education, and science. We represent about 200,000 teachers and education workers from all levels of education (pre-schools, primary, secondary, vocational schools, high school, research institutes, and educational support personal). The ZNP is affiliated to the All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ). The Teachers' Voice (Głos Nauczycielski) has been the ZNP's organ since 1917. As a trade union social and educational weekly magazine, it publishes materials on education, the teaching environment, and ZNP's activity. Głos Nauczycielski is the biggest magazine in the education sector and at the same time the oldest one in Poland. International cooperation: the ZNP is affiliated to Education International (EI) and is very active member of the regional structure of EI - the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE). Since 2011, Sławomir Broniarz, the ZNP president, had the honour to hold the Regional Seat in the Executive Board of the EI, so he is a member of the EI Executive World Board.

Goals we fight for:

- Equal chances in education for all children
- Free education at all levels
- Promotion of pre-school education

- A student friendly school that guarantees quality education and develops talents, skills, and interests
- Dignity and high status of the teaching profession
- Professional and social interests of all education and science workers
- Pensioners' right to dignity and decent life

Activities:

- We take part in creating legislation.
- We suggest and opt for solutions in favour of Education adjusted to society, its needs, and future challenges.
- We cooperate with national and local authorities, support decisions and actions serving teaching, educational and tutelary purposes of schools and educational institutions.
- We cooperate with institutions and organisations advocating for the rights and interests of children and youth.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Dear colleague,

The handbook you are now holding in your hands was drafted to help facilitate your beginnings as a teacher.

Even we, the authors, vividly remember being weak at the knees when we first entered the classroom alone and the joys and challenges experienced in the first years of working in the teaching profession. Not everything goes smoothly at first, and it may happen that you find yourself in situations for which you do not feel prepared or do not know how to handle.

The text resulted from joint efforts of a group of (more or less) novice teachers. It contains practical hints and tips based on theoretical frameworks with which you may or may not be familiar. Everything simply cannot be included in textbooks and preparatory teacher training courses. Hopefully, this handbook will serve as a source of further knowledge, advice, and links to other study materials. We tried to capture in it everything we ourselves perceived as important, everything we would have liked to know in our early days.

Please take our texts as well-intentioned advice from someone who has gone through a very similar experience as you and who wants to help you find a way to get through a difficult phase more easily, or at least get better prepared for it.

The handbook does not aim to cover the entire issue in an exhaustive manner, nor to propose one guaranteed and surely correct solution. On the contrary, perceive it as an open door to an imaginary, more experienced colleague and as a space for your further self-study, self-reflection, and stimulus for further thinking. We firmly believe that reading the handbook will help you better manage the first weeks and months at your new school and make your beginnings easier. We would very much like to have more motivated and perceptive colleagues in our ranks who, together with us, will influence the future of our country from schools.

Handbook User's Instructions

The topics of the handbook are divided into chapters, which are further divided into subsections according to the point of view from which they approach the given topic.

The individual chapters were drafted by the partners of this project, i.e., the Latvian trade union LIZDA, the Lithuanian trade union LESTU, the Polish trade union ZNP, and the Czech trade union ČMOS PŠ.

The handbook thus offers experiences of foreign colleagues and descriptions of the state of the educational systems in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and the Czech Republic.

You don't have to read the handbook cover to cover like a book. The individual topics are not related to each other in any way. Just pick a topic that interests you the most or that you need help with. When reading the text, bear in mind that it's not just about reading the text, but that you should think about how the given information is relevant to you and how you can use it to your benefit. More heads are better than one, so we strongly recommend that you take notes while reading and then find someone to talk to about the text and your notes on it. Whether you turn to an older colleague or other novice teacher is entirely up to you. Any discussion about the topic helps you refine your thoughts and move forward.

We hope the handbook helps you and inspires you to study the topics further and expand your horizons.

Chapter 2 - Rights and Duties of Novice Teachers

The Czech Republic

Introduction

The rights and obligations of teachers, including novice teachers, are stipulated in legislation. Since the work of a teacher in the Czech Republic can only be done under an employment relationship, the following laws are particularly decisive for defining teachers' rights and obligations:

- **Act No. 89/2012 Coll., Civil Code, as amended**
- **Act No. 262/2006 Coll., Labor Code, as amended**
- **Act No. 561/2004 Coll., Education Act, as amended**
- **Act No. 563/2004 Coll., Act on Pedagogical Staff, as amended**

The Labor Code is the general legal regulation for employment relations. The Civil Code is used as a support in situations where the Labor Code does not regulate a certain area of law (e.g., calculation of set periods of time, legal proceedings, etc.). The specific laws that apply to teachers are the Education Act and the Act on Pedagogical Staff. The amendment contained therein takes precedence over any amendments of the Labor Code and/or the Civil Code.

At the same time, the rights and obligations of pedagogical workers are regulated by other statutory norms, such as, for example:

Government Regulation No. 341/2017 Coll., on salary ratios of employees in public services and administration, as amended.

Decree No. 263/2007 Coll., which establishes the work rules for employees of schools and school facilities established by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, a region, a municipality, or a voluntary association of municipalities, as amended.

Obligations of Teachers and Other Employees

In general, employees in an employment relationship may be subject to obligations arising from legal regulations and resulting from the agreed type of work. The employer may only further

detail or specify these obligations unilaterally through the workplace regulations, which may establish new obligations, subject to contractual agreement with the employee.

For the above reason, various codes of ethics are problematic. In the Czech Republic, there is no uniform code of ethics for teachers which would be defined and encoded in law. Several associations, interest groups, and important personalities tried to create one. Their efforts resulted in Ten Principles, which can be found online. In the absence of legal regulation in this area, the vast majority of obligations regulated in the code of ethics are not binding or enforceable on the part of the teacher.

The only way to make the code of ethics for teachers binding under the existing legislation is to negotiate the obligations contained therein and confirm their acceptance contractually. Otherwise, only obligations that de facto copy legal norms will be binding.

Obligations Arising from Employment Relationships

The employer's obligation is to assign work to the employee according to the employment agreement, to pay the employee a wage/salary for the work performed, to create conditions for the performance of work duties and to comply with legal regulations.

The employee's obligation is to carry out the work in accordance with the employment agreement in person during the scheduled weekly working hours and to comply with the obligations arising from the employment relationship.

Rights Arising from Employment Relationships

The obligation of one party of the employment relationship usually means the right of the other party. A teacher has the right to a wage and salary for the work performed, satisfactory working conditions, health and safety protection in the workplace, and equal treatment.

In addition to the general rights and obligations arising from the Labor Code, the specific rights and obligations of teachers are regulated in Sections 22a and 22b of Act No. 561/2004 Coll., the Education Act, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the Education Act). In addition to teachers, this regulation also applies to all pedagogical staff.

Rights of Pedagogical Staff

Section 22a

Members of the pedagogical staff have the right to perform their pedagogical activities:

- a) In the conditions necessary for the performance of their pedagogical activities, in particular to be protected against physical violence or psychological pressure from children, pupils, students, and legal representatives of children and pupils and other persons who are in direct contact with the pedagogical staff at the school*
- b) In a way which ensures their direct pedagogical activity is not interfered with in violation of legal regulations*
- c) Using methods, forms, and means at their own discretion in accordance with the educational principles and goals during teaching, as well as educational, special pedagogical, and pedagogical-psychological activities*
- d) With the right to vote and be elected to the school board*
- e) With the right for an objective evaluation of their teaching activities*

Obligations of Pedagogical Staff

Section 22b

The pedagogical staff member is obliged to:

- a) Perform teaching activities in accordance with the educational principles and goals*
- b) Protect and respect the rights of children, pupils, and students*
- c) Protect the health and safety children, pupils and students, and prevent all forms of risky behaviour in schools and school facilities*
- d) Promote a positive and safe climate in the school environment and support its development through their approach to education and training*
- e) Maintain confidentiality of and protect against the misuse of personal data, information on the health status of children, pupils and students, and the results of counselling assistance by the school counselling facility and the school counselling office with which they are familiarised*
- f) Provide children, pupils, students, and legal representatives of minors with information related to education and training*

Novice Teacher Definition

According to professional literature, a novice teacher is a teacher who has the relevant university education and pedagogical competence. However, they lack teaching experience, as they are at the beginning of their professional career.¹

There is no legislative definition of a novice teacher. However, it can be derived from the provisions of Section 24a of Act No. 563/2004 Coll., on Pedagogical Staff, as amended (hereinafter as the Act on Pedagogical Staff).² The *adaptation period* is defined in this provision as *the period from the establishment of the first employment relationship to the end of the 2-year employment relationship term with the legal entity performing the school's activities*.

Based on the above, it can be said that a novice teacher is any teacher who is performing their work within the adaptation period.

Novice Teacher Rights

Provisions of Section 24b of the Act on Pedagogical Staff assume that each novice teacher is assigned *a mentor teacher, who predominantly methodically guides the novice teacher during their adaptation period, continuously and regularly evaluates with them their teaching activities, and familiarises them with the school's operating conditions and related documentation*.³ The mentor is to primarily provide the novice teacher with the necessary support. The style and method of cooperation between the mentor teacher and the novice teacher is determined by each school.

¹ PRŮCHA, Jan; WALTEROVÁ, Eliška and MAREŠ, Jiří. Pedagogický slovník. 7., [in Czech *Pedagogical Dictionary vol. 7, updated and extended version*]. Prague: Portál, 2013. 395 p. ISBN 978-80-262-0403-9.

² To come into effect as of 1 January 2024.

³ To come into effect as of 1 January 2024.

Latvia

Introduction

The rights and obligations of teachers, including beginning teachers (novice teachers), arise from legal provisions of the Republic of Latvia. Teachers, including novice teachers, regarding their rights and obligations, are directly subjected to the conditions prescribed in the Labor Law. The laws and regulations (the Education Law, Cabinet of Ministers regulations) are particularly relevant for defining the following rights and obligations:

1. The right to work as a teacher – required education and qualification
2. Education and professional qualification of teachers and improvement of professional competence on a regular basis
3. Evaluating the quality of teachers' professional activity on a regular basis
4. Rights and obligations of teachers

General Responsibilities of Teachers Stipulated by the Education Law in Latvia

- Creatively and responsibly participate in the implementation of educational programs
- Develop responsible attitude of the learner towards himself, others, work, culture, nature, etc.
- Raise decent, honest, responsible people - patriots of Latvia, strengthening belonging to the Republic of Latvia
- Comply with the pedagogue's professional ethics norms
- Improve professional competence on a regular basis
- Respect the learner's rights
- Cooperate with learner's family members in educational matters
- Participate in the improvement of educational processes when possible

Rights of Teachers Stipulated by the Education Law in Latvia

- Participate in the board of the educational institution
- Receive a state-guaranteed paid annual leave of 8 weeks

- Based on the contract for the development of teaching aids, to receive a paid creative work leave of up to 3 months or an unpaid leave of up to 6 months in accordance with the procedures established by the Cabinet of Ministers
- While maintaining the basic salary in the educational institution where the teacher works in the basic job, use 30 calendar days within three years to improve educational and professional skills
- Receive and use informational and material provision necessary for the implementation of the education programs
- Receive allowance from financial resources of the founder of the educational institution due to the death of a family member (spouse, child, parent, grandparent, adopter or adoptee, brother or sister) or dependent in the amount of no more than one minimum monthly salary
- In case of violence, receive the support of the head and founder of the educational institution
- When cooperating with students and parents, act in accordance with the procedure established by the educational institution
- Municipal and state educational institutions, unless otherwise stipulated in other external regulatory acts, may set the following additional remuneration for teachers from the financial resources of the founder of the educational institution
- Allowance of up to 50 percent of the monthly salary once per calendar year for each dependent disabled child up to the age of 18
- Health insurance: The health insurance premium must not exceed the amount specified in the regulations on personal income tax. If the insurance premium exceeds the mentioned amount, the teacher covers the premium difference

Who is considered to be a Novice Teachers in Latvia?

A novice teacher is a teacher who has a relevant university degree and teaching qualification – usually a pedagogical student who has graduated and started to work at the educational institution, or still studies at the university and partly works as a teacher already.

Adaptation period – the induction year has been defined in normative regulation in 2023. The introduction year is the period from the start (1 year) of the first employment relationship at the

education institution. On this basis, it can therefore be defined that a beginning teacher (novice teacher) is any teacher undergoing an adaptation period – induction year.

What is a Novice Teacher entitled to?

Cabinet of Ministers regulations No 403, issued under the European Union Funds 2021-2027 annual planning period – implementation rules of the activity “Introduction year in teacher preparation study programs”: The following activities are supported within the framework of this program:

- Support for graduates of teacher preparation study programs in the first year after obtaining a teacher’s qualification
- Target scholarship for participants of the induction year - up to 200 euros per month
- Recruitment and selection of induction year participants
- Individual support in professional development groups
- Observing lessons
- Development and implementation of professional competence development programs
- Targeted scholarships for induction year participants

The support for the above-mentioned activities for the beginning (novice) teachers is limited in terms of funding (EU funds), time, and number of the beginning teachers (selection process, not all teachers will have availability, the project promoter (receiver of funds) is only one higher education institution - University of Latvia. There are 5 more higher education institutions preparing the novice teachers). Within the project, the University of Latvia develops the “Educational Sciences” master’s study program with the specialization “Teacher Mentor”.

There is no specified, targeted government financial support for mentors during the induction year for the beginning (novice) teachers. It is up to every school to develop their internal regulations – if the novice teacher receives practical support from a qualified mentor at the school, do schools have funding for this purpose?

Amendments for the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No 740 "Rules on Scholarships" – Financial Support for Students of Pedagogy

The institution of higher education awards a scholarship in the amount of 300 euros on a competitive basis to students of pedagogy:

- If the student studies full-time in a first-cycle higher education study program
- In the first year of study, the student does not work for a salary, starting from the second year of study - works as a teacher or teacher's assistant in an educational institution, not exceeding half of the workload
- Starting from the third semester - a written agreement has been concluded with an educational institution or municipality on employment in an educational institution, where it is planned to work for at least 3 years after obtaining the teacher's professional qualification
- After the first year of study, the student has completed an internship at an educational institution and the university has received positive feedback from the internship manager and the institution regarding the student's professional suitability for the teaching profession

Recommendations at the Country Level to Support Novice Teachers – Results of LIZDA Survey

In accordance with the LIZDA survey carried out in 2017, part of recommendations for teachers, including novice teachers, are addressed to national level policy makers to make sure that teachers' rights correspond with the EU Social Charter.

The Ministry of Welfare in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science has to identify inconsistencies in the context of labour rights of teachers and their prevention solutions related to the following ratified articles of the European Social Charter:

- Article 2, Rights to fair working conditions

- Clauses 2-5, Article 4, Rights to fair remuneration
- Article 5, Rights to associate, cooperate in unions
- Article 6, Rights to enter into collective agreements
- Article 21, Rights to information and consultations
- Article 22, Rights to participate in determining and improving working conditions and environment
- Article 26, Rights to dignity at work
- Article 28, Rights of workers' representatives to protect working obligations
- Article 29, Rights to receive timely information and consultations on case of staff reductions at institutions

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Lithuania

According to the LAW ON EDUCATION of the Republic of Lithuania, teachers have the following responsibilities (Article 49, part 2):

Teachers must:

- 1) Ensure their learners' safety and high-quality education*
- 2) Cultivate learners' firm moral, civic, ethnic, and patriotic positions, the respect for the parents, development of learners' personal abilities in order to guarantee own cultural identity, deliver the education content in a comprehensible and explicit manner in the correct Lithuanian language where it is defined by legal acts that the appropriate education content is delivered in the Lithuanian language*
- 3) Observe the norms of ethics as approved by educational institutions and the requirements of documents establishing the educational institution's rules of procedure*
- 4) Upgrade their qualifications as well as social and economic competences*
- 5) Provide education based on learners' abilities and vocations, strengthen the motivation to learn and confidence in one's abilities, render help to learners having educational/ learning difficulties and with special educational needs, adapt the subject programme, content, and methods to the said learners*
- 6) Impartially evaluate learners' learning achievements and constantly inform them about learning progress*
- 7) In accordance with the procedure laid down by the school, inform the parents (guardians, curators) about the status of the child, educational and learning needs, progress, school attendance and conduct as well as report an observed case of violence to the head of that educational institution*
- 8) Cooperate with other teachers in order to achieve educational objectives*
- 9) Respect a learner as a person, and not violate their rights and legitimate interests*
- 10) Fulfil other obligations established in the Law on Vocational Education and Training and the Law on Non-formal Adult Education*
- 11) Representatives of trade unions presenting pedagogues shall be entitled to represent pedagogues' interests and defend their rights in accordance with the procedure laid down by the law.*

The following rights of the teacher are enshrined in the Article 49, part 1 of the LAW ON EDUCATION of the Republic of Lithuania:

A teacher shall have the right:

- 1) To offer their individual programmes; to choose methods and forms of pedagogical activity*
- 2) To attend in-service training events at least 5 days per year*
- 3) To be attested and obtain a qualification category in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Minister of Education and Science*
- 4) To work in a psychologically, emotionally, and physically safe environment based on mutual respect, to be protected from any violence, to have a properly equipped workplace conforming to hygiene requirements, to receive information, expert, consultative, and psychological help at the pedagogical psychological service or from the provider of psychological help with whom the executive body of the municipality has concluded the contract of psychological help provision*
- 5) To participate in the school's self-governance*
- 6) To propose to the school principal to address the director of the municipal administration for the provision of a minimum or moderate supervision measure to a child as well as to propose to the school principal to impose on a child disciplinary reformatory sanctions for violations of the educational institution's rules of procedure and the learner's conduct norms, as specified in the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (hereinafter: the 'Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child')*
- 7) To exercise other rights established in the Law on Vocational Education and Training, the Law on Non-formal Adult Education as well as in other laws*

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Poland

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF TEACHERS IN POLAND

Since 1927, the working conditions of teachers have been described in detail in a separate law called the "Teachers' Charter". This is due to the fact that teaching is a regulated profession. According to the legislation, a profession is regulated if there is a legal requirement to have certain qualifications or experience in order to carry out certain professional activities or to use a protected title. This type of legislation regulates the competences, the rules of professional hierarchy and the rights and obligations of certain groups of workers. These include, among others, persons employed in public administration, e.g. in courts and public prosecutor's offices, local government officials, doctors, nurses, midwives or professional soldiers, i.e. persons employed in socially important professions. Professional regulation sometimes excludes the application of the relevant provisions of the Labour Code and sometimes complements them.

The Teachers' Charter in a sense replaces existing collective agreements in other countries, as it contains all the provisions that are sometimes subject to negotiation. Within the framework of the existing law, representative trade unions, including the ZNP, negotiate with the Ministry of Education the amount of the so-called basic salary on which remuneration is calculated. This is usually done every two years. The remuneration of teachers at the various levels of professional advancement is a percentage derived from the basic salary, which is defined in the Teachers' Charter.

Working hours

The Teachers' Charter sets out working hours. A teacher is obliged to work 40 hours a week, five days a week. The working day includes compulsory teaching hours (hours of work directly in the classroom, also known as 'contact hours'), and it can be said that the work of the teaching hours is recorded, as the teacher carries it out at school and certifies it in the school documentation (class diaries). Beyond the compulsory teaching hours, the working time is not recorded and the work can be done outside the place of work.

The number of teaching hours varies and is:

- for nursery (kindergarten) school teachers 22 and 25 hours, which is full-time

- 18 hours per week for school teachers (primary, secondary and each of the disciplines), which is full-time;
- 22 and 25 hours, i.e. full-time, for specialist teachers, e.g. school pedagogues or speech therapists.

The number of teaching hours may be reduced or even waived if the teacher has a managerial function, e.g. headteacher or deputy headteacher, methodological adviser or examiner. Such a reduction in or exemption from teaching hours does not affect the basic salary and is still full-time.

Like all employees, a teacher has two statutory days off - Saturday and Sunday.

Salaries

The statutory rates of average remuneration are set by law, i.e. they are regulated by law:

- the basic salary - by a decree of the Ministry of Education,
- other components - by local government resolution.

The following are also regulated by law: separate remuneration for overtime and shifts, e.g. for absent teachers, a function-related allowance, e.g. for kindergarten teachers, an incentive allowance, an allowance for difficult working conditions, a supplementary allowance (compensation for remuneration) if the average remuneration is not reached, a length-of-service allowance, a rural allowance and a holiday allowance for teachers - independent of the holiday allowance from the Social Fund. The law also provides for a special allowance for work on EU projects.

The above-mentioned salary increase is related to professional promotion (there are three career levels for Polish teachers: beginner, appointed, chartered). There is also an increase related to obtaining a higher level of education (qualification, e.g. doctorate). Teachers automatically receive a basic salary increase if the rate set by the salary regulation is changed.

Teachers are also entitled to an additional annual payment, the so-called thirteenth salary, a jubilee bonus (up to 250% of salary for 40 years of service) and a starting allowance for new teachers. A retiring teacher receives a pension of up to 3 months' salary.

Holidays and other benefits

Teachers are entitled to

1. increased annual leave:
 - 35 days in schools or educational institutions that do not have a summer break but are open all year round, e.g. kindergartens;
 - during winter and summer holidays in schools - 2 weeks in winter + about 9 weeks in summer
2. additional leave in schools - up to 8 weeks
3. leave for health reasons. This paid benefit may be used three times during the years of service by a teacher employed half-time or more than half time. The first time is after seven years of service. Health leave may be taken on presentation of appropriate medical documents.
4. in public schools, as local government budgetary units, there is an obligation to set up a social fund - teachers are guaranteed access to social benefits, e.g. a holiday allowance, which depends on the income per family member.
5. a higher social fund allowance of 110% of the basic amount, which allows for higher social benefits
6. flexible forms of employment without dismissal (increase, reduction, transfer).

Teachers' autonomy

Another important aspect is the freedom guaranteed by the law to use the methods of teaching and education that the teacher considers most appropriate from among those recognised by modern pedagogy. The teacher has the right to choose textbooks, other teaching materials and aids from among those approved by the Ministry of Education for use in schools (textbooks).

What are the responsibilities of the teacher?

These duties are also set out in Article 6 of the Teacher's Charter Act.

A teacher is obliged to

1. carry out in a reliable manner the tasks related to the position entrusted to him/her and to the basic functions of the school: didactic, educational and caring, including the tasks related to ensuring the safety of the pupils during the lessons organised by the school;
2. to support each student in his/her development
3. to strive for full personal development;
 - 3a. to develop professionally according to the needs of the school;
4. to educate and train young people in love for their country, in respect for the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, in an atmosphere of freedom of conscience and respect for every human being;
5. to take care of the formation of moral and civic attitudes of pupils in accordance with the idea of democracy, peace and friendship between people of different nations, races and ideologies.

Chapter 3 – Future of the Teacher Profession – Competences and Skills

Introduction

Learning is more important than teaching. A teacher's role is no longer just to convey information. Findings show that 80% of the lesson time is led by the teacher and only 20% by students; it should be the other way around - students are active doers. The change asks for highly qualified teachers globally. At the same time, information and knowledge is available everywhere – at schools, universities, from the internet, from colleagues and professionals. The question is – what is the right information and knowledge, by which means and methodology I, as a novice teacher, acquire new skills and competences which are needed for me as a future professional teacher?

OECD reports indicate that despite rapid growth in the demand for artificial intelligence skills, related online vacancies comprise less than 1% of all job postings and are predominantly found in sectors such as ICT and professional services (*Emerging trends*, 2023). It is emphasized that the higher demand for artificial intelligence professionals combining technical expertise with leadership, innovation, and problem-solving skills, underscores the importance of these

competencies. Overall, top artificial intelligence employers tend to more frequently demand leadership, management, innovation, and problem-solving skills. This may reflect the importance on employees, including teachers, having a broad skill mix.

Labour Market Changes

Technology adoption will remain a key driver of business transformation in the next five years, which also refers to the teaching profession. Over 85% of organizations surveyed identify increased adoption of new technologies and broadening digital access. Employers anticipate a structural labour market change of 23% of jobs in the next five years. Jobs in the education industry are expected to grow by about 10%, leading to 3 million additional jobs for vocational education teachers and university and higher education teachers (*World Economic Forum, 2023*).

The research of organizations by the World Economic Forum has indicated the top 10 most needed skills for workers, including teachers, in 2023-2027.

Most Needed Skills for Workers 2023-2027

No	Skills in priority order	Type of skills
1.	Analytical thinking	Cognitive
2.	Creative thinking	Cognitive
3.	Resilience and flexibility	Self-efficiency
4.	Motivation and self-awareness	Self-efficiency
5.	Curiosity and lifelong learning	Self-efficiency
6.	Technological literacy	Technology

7.	Dependability and attention to detail	Self-efficiency
8.	Empathy and active listening	Working with others
9.	Leadership and social influence	Working with others
10.	Quality control	Management

Source: *Future of jobs survey, WEF, 2023*

Analytical and creative thinking remain the most important skills in 2023. Companies consider them the most important core skills more than any other skill and they constitute, on average, 9% of the core skills reported. The other skills reported were creative thinking, resilience, flexibility and agility, motivation and self-awareness, curiosity, and lifelong learning. Other skills under 10 top skills include such abilities as systematic thinking, talent management, service and customer orientation, resource management and operations, multi-lingualism, teaching and mentoring, networking, marketing, and media. Besides cognitive, management and working with others skill types – engagement, ethical and psychological skill types are emphasized.

The survey also indicates that six from ten employees will require intensive training before 2027, but only half of specialists (including teachers) are seen to have access to adequate training opportunities today. Teachers get older, and one of the most important tasks is to increase the number of novice teachers by offering them quality higher pedagogical education and regular training courses that increase their knowledge and skills in areas relevant to working with students.

The following is a description of eight randomly selected skills which are in a differently prioritized system and are mentioned in the World Economic Forum survey described above.

1. Digital Skills – eTeacher

One of the major tasks in pedagogy will become helping teachers enhance their digital skills and knowledge - the stepping stones to success in the teaching profession. The goal of the digital

skill adoption is to work with digital educational technologies in order to use them effectively in the learning process. That will include such tasks as the following: creating online assessments, quizzes, worksheets, and other technological apps and tools. For traditional teachers it's important to first learn the basics of technology:

- How do most apps work?
- What do I do with that link?
- How can I get something to my students?
- How can I get my screen displayed on the wall?

Once you know the basics, it's easier to understand more advanced features, apps and tools. While these developments may be hard to keep up with, it is something that all modern teachers need to do. Not only do you need to understand the latest in technology, but you must also know which digital tools are right for your students. It's a process that may take time but will be greatly influential in the success of your students (*Professional development skills, 2023*). This 21st century, the modern teaching skill is definitely a new one. In this digital age, most, if not all, teachers are online, which means that social networks influence everybody, and teachers have a created "online reputation". Modern teachers need to know how to manage their online reputation, and which social networks are okay for them to use. LinkedIn is a professional social network to connect with colleagues, but other social networking site profiles, such as Instagram or Facebook, should remain private and separate from students (*Professional development skills, 2023*).

2. Teaching Methodology

A teaching methodology is a set of principles and methods used by teachers to enable student learning. These strategies are determined partly on subject matter to be taught and partly by the nature of the learner. For a particular teaching method to be appropriate and efficient it has to consider the learner, the nature of the subject matter, and the type of learning it is supposed to bring about. The approaches for teaching can be broadly classified into teacher-centred and student-centred. In a teacher-centred (authoritarian) approach to learning, teachers are the main authority figure in this model. Students are viewed as "empty vessels" whose primary role is to passively receive information (via lectures and direct instruction) with an end goal of testing and assessment. It is the primary role of teachers to pass knowledge and information onto their

students. In this model, teaching and assessment are viewed as two separate entities. Student learning is measured through objectively scored tests and assessments. In student-centred approach to learning, while teachers are the authority figure in this model, teachers and students play an equally active role in the learning process. This approach is also called authoritative. The teacher's primary role is to coach and facilitate student learning and overall comprehension of material. Student learning is measured through both formal and informal forms of assessment, including group projects, student portfolios, and class participation (*Teaching methodology, 2023*).

Teaching at a university is subject to continuous methodological change, which poses a significant challenge when assessing teaching methodologies (*Pilar M., 2022*).

Alongside extreme global changes and new tendencies in the motivation of young people, learning must become more interactive and engaging for students; it has to be fun for them to get interested.

Efficient learning methods: To provide the best education to students, not just information - classroom projector, smart boards, and interactive whiteboards to make the class more engaging. Teaching methodologies include continuous professional development and tracking of innovations – it is important to use the latest teaching methods and strategies. All the global social and perceptual changes lead teachers to adaptability with professional training: teachers must be ready to adapt to the changing conditions of the educational environment and methodology, including adapting teaching plans to meet individual needs and technological innovations.

3. Communication and Cooperation

For a teacher, communication and cooperation are essential for all target groups - students, parents and colleagues. Teachers must be able to express themselves clearly, be well understood, and convey information effectively:

- Work in teams, both with other teachers and professionals - lower the workload by working together

- Share your practical experience, ideas and resources - do you know how your colleagues teach, what materials they use and how they interact with their students?

A huge part of teaching is communicating information. It might be verbal, written, or via any other route from practical demonstrations to artistic interpretation – whatever gets your point across. Here is some recommended advice on how to develop it:

- Telephone jobs, such as calling alumni for donations or volunteering for a peer support line, develop your verbal communication skills and build your confidence
- Join a debating society, a student council
- Join a student magazine or take responsibility for a society website (How to develop, 2023).

Findings show that both cooperative learning and the implementation of investigative activities lead to better teaching practices. It has been confirmed that students of the education degree – novice teachers, value active learning methods and are aware that knowing about them favours their training as teachers. The use of active methodologies represents an advance in the curricular training of the participants. The research also showed that pedagogical students are interested in improving their critical thinking, creativity, self-learning, and collaboration. It can be concluded that the university environment is a suitable space to implement project-based learning for the novice teachers (*Pilar M., 2022*).

4. Continuous Professional Qualification

School's efforts – how to motivate teachers for continuous professional development. In some countries, every year, 6-8 million euros are spent from state funds for teachers of different ages for professional qualifications (*Nilivaara P., 2023*). Courses are usually organized by universities or private organizations. The problem is that there are some teachers who want to participate in such courses regularly, and there are educators who do not want to attend them.

Teaching is a lifelong learning process. The world is always changing, along with the curriculum and educational technology, so it's up to you, the teacher, to keep up with it. A teacher who is always willing to go that extra mile to learn will always be an effective, successful teacher (*Professional development skills, 2023*).

Participating in teacher training programmes provides teachers with a multifaceted opportunity for professional growth, personal development, international collaboration, and enhancement of teaching practices. It aligns with the global shift towards a more interconnected, multicultural, and digital world, preparing teachers for the future challenges and opportunities in education. Courses and training programs both international and local try to recognize the challenges faced by teachers and provide an extensive selection of courses and programs to address their needs. Courses nowadays accentuate such important topics as STEAM studies, meaningful utilization of digital tools, future skills, sustainable development, and supporting students' well-being and mental health. Teachers are always looking for new ways to improve their teaching, and concrete methods and tools instead of theory have to be provided. Just some examples from global teachers' training programmes show that all courses include at least one visit to an education institute to observe teaching in practice. Depending on the program and learning objectives, practical and experience sharing visits can range from kindergartens to universities. During these visits, participants can observe teachers in action, learn how they apply the curriculum, and witness innovative methods firsthand (*Teaching training, 2023*).

The above described emphasises that practice is more efficient than theory. Practice consists of observation, participation and applying the best, most appropriate actions to a teacher's work. Of course, there will be differences both in national aspects and in availability of resources. However, the basic values in the practical work of a teacher are globally united.

5. Ability to Provide Feedback

The future teacher won't value benchmarks and grades anymore. The real value of a student is the progress. It doesn't matter from where he started. Growing is the real accomplishment.

Components of feedback:

- Develop clear, precise mechanism of feedback - digital tools and platforms, keep track of your students' progress and improvement
- Positive and encouraging feedback during class is the best thing a teacher can give to students

Helping students to find their own way to solve various problems we present them with leads to how we choose the subject content we teach in class. Not only the teacher, but also students should set their own individual learning goals. To do this, they need to know the purpose of the lesson. The main task of a teacher is to make sure that students understand what is expected of them.

6. Leadership

Engagement and motivation – the ability to engage students and create interest in learning is essential to being a successful leadership teacher. Leadership - a practical skill, encompasses the ability of an individual, group, or organization to "lead", influence, or guide other individuals and teams.

An effective teacher is a mentor and knows how to guide their students in the right direction. They lead by example and are a good role model. They encourage students and lead them to a place of success (*Professional development skills, 2023*).

Teacher leaders often play the mentor and role model for first-year and early career teachers, providing much-needed support, guidance, and advice. In this role, they gain the trust of and develop empathy for others, creating safe, welcoming learning environments for other teachers and students.

There are several key traits and skill sets that teachers in leadership positions should have. Effective communication, empathy, compassion, and motivation to learn and provide counsel can all encompass the different skills teacher leaders possess. Here are several more essential skills that make effective teachers in leadership roles: listening skills, critical thinking skills, emotional intelligence, problem-solving skills, technical skills, teamwork skills, and organizational skills. There are several methods you can use to help improve your teacher leadership skills. Consider the following tips to help you develop various skill sets and improve your overall leadership skills: offer opportunities for feedback, develop your active listening skills, learn to adjust approaches as needed, offer to mentor novice teachers, improve the way you organize, perform evaluations and use them for growth, and set goals for your teams (*Teacher leadership, 2023*).

7. Emotional Intelligence, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving

Emotional intelligence helps novice teachers to understand and support students emotionally, especially in difficult moments. Empathy helps to build good relationships and a positive learning environment.

Cultural sensitivity and multicultural competence: teachers should be prepared to work with students from different cultures and adapt teaching materials and approaches to the needs of different cultures.

Critical thinking is a mode of thinking, compared to problem-solving, which is a set of solution-oriented strategies. Since critical thinking strengthens your reasoning, it makes it easier to learn new skills, including problem-solving. Working on your critical thinking can also help you understand yourself better, including your value system, learning style, and strongest skills. Critical thinking comprises five steps, which are: 1. Identify; 2. Investigate; 3. Analyse; 4. Reflect; 5. Decide (*Critical thinking, 2023*).

Critical thinking and problem solving - teachers should encourage students' critical thinking by providing opportunities to analyse information, develop arguments, and solve problems. Think critically, communicate clearly, collaborate effectively, and be creative in what you teach. Problem solving and critical thinking refers to the ability to use knowledge, facts, and data to effectively solve problems.

Critical thinking is a habit where you observe your own thought process and find ways to improve it. By analysing your thoughts, you can improve how efficiently you think, how intuitively you organize your thoughts, and how often you recognize your biases.

When you think critically, you can study arguments, analyse what evidence supports them, and make a reasoned decision about whether the arguments are correct. Adopting critical thinking as a long-term practice can help you consider the perspectives of peers more often, become more honest about your mistakes, and commit to the process of lifelong learning (*Critical thinking, 2023*).

Problem solving is a skill you can use to find solutions to challenges. You can use problem-solving when you want to understand the cause of issues in your personal and work life and organize a plan of action (*Critical thinking, 2023*).

Problem-solving is a set of techniques you specifically use to find effective solutions, as opposed to critical thinking, which is a lifelong practice you use to improve your thinking process. You can use it to resolve challenges as they happen or prepare pre-emptive solutions when you predict a challenge might happen. Working on your problem-solving skills can improve your creative and analytical thinking, and also make you a more effective team member. Problem-solving comprises four steps: 1. Define your problem; 2. Generate ideas; 3. Test your ideas; 4. Take action (*Creative thinking, 2023*).

Since you might use problem-solving when unexpected events happen, it often requires the ability to identify factors that influence these problems and the ability to improvise effective strategies that resolve them. By strengthening this skill, you might be able to find creative solutions more quickly, visualize problems more accurately, and conduct research more effectively.

8. Speed – But Don't Make It Stressful

The average attention span of a person has shrunk from 12 sec in 2000 to 8 sec nowadays! That's one second less than that of a goldfish! To respond to that phenomenon, interactive lessons can help to keep your student's attention a bit longer.

Teachers must be ready to adapt to the changing conditions of the educational environment and methodology, including adapting teaching plans to meet individual needs and technological innovations.

Modern teachers know how to find engaging resources. Nowadays, it is essential to find materials and resources for students that will keep them interested. This means keeping up to date on new learning technologies and apps and browsing the web and connecting to fellow teachers. Anyway, that you can engage students and keep things interesting is a must (*Professional development skills, 2023*).

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Chapter 4 - Soft Skills

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the skills which, in our opinion, are key for teachers and which are sometimes also referred to as soft skills in common parlance.

It might appear that the most important part is “what teachers pass on”, i.e., the specialisation they teach. However, the days of frontal instruction are the thing of the past, and nowadays professional knowledge and a natural talent for speaking in public are simply not enough. Which is also good news for you if you feel like “you know you don’t know anything” and worry you aren’t gifted. Don’t worry, you can learn everything gradually and it’s okay to not be perfect. In this chapter, you will find the basics that can help you in everyday situations. So, what is it you can learn here?

- Communication is the core, and we have tips for you on how to communicate effectively, in a non-hurtful way, and avoid teacher clichés.
- The principles of formative assessment will surely help you in lesson planning – whether in setting goals, as effective tools used directly during lessons, or as the direction you can take when providing feedback to students.
- The points already mentioned above will definitely help you to improve the atmosphere in the classroom. However, we have more points for you, explaining why it is so essential for teaching to build good relationships with students and how to do this.
- The teacher is not a solo player. That’s why you are to learn why it is good to cooperate with colleagues. We will also give you the chance to think about how you are doing in relation to the rest of the teaching staff.
- Finally, we have several situations and areas for you which may surprise you at the beginning of your career. But if you go through them carefully, you will know what to ask about at your school or of what to be aware.

At the beginning, you may feel that there is a lot you still need to learn and be trained in. Don’t let that put you off and don’t have unrealistic expectations of yourself. You’re going to make

mistakes and that's okay – we're all in the learning process. But as long as you have enough self-reflection and the desire to keep improving, you are in the right place.

Communication

Fear, stress, and mockery have no place in the classroom. A child's brain learns much better if it doesn't feel threatened and the whole organism doesn't have to waste energy on defensive reactions. One of the most important roles of a teacher is to provide an **environment conducive to learning**, which is a must for the success and satisfaction of students. How to do this?

First and foremost, leading by example, Focus on making your basic teaching attitude **helpful, responsive, and positive**. Try to leave any worries in the hallway and enter the classroom with a smile and enthusiasm for work. Make eye contact with students, which will show that you know they are there. A frowning and bored teacher is unlikely to get someone excited about learning and acquiring knowledge.

This obviously doesn't mean that we should become robots. We just should be able, as adults, to **consciously work with emotions**, or to experience them in a controlled manner. And if it gets too much at one point, we should simply step out of the situation, e.g., saying: *"This and that happened, I'll still want to come back to it, but now I need to ..."* Playing with open cards is a powerful tool of authenticity that should not be foreign to our communication repertoire, alongside the ability to use **objective (descriptive) language**. Compare and judge which teacher uses objective language in the model situation frequently used as an illustrative example.

T1: "Do you consider it normal to be rocking on a chair like this all the time? Do you also rock like that at home during dinner? Stop at once!"

vs

T2: "You're rocking on the chair, and I'm worried you're going to fall and hurt yourself."

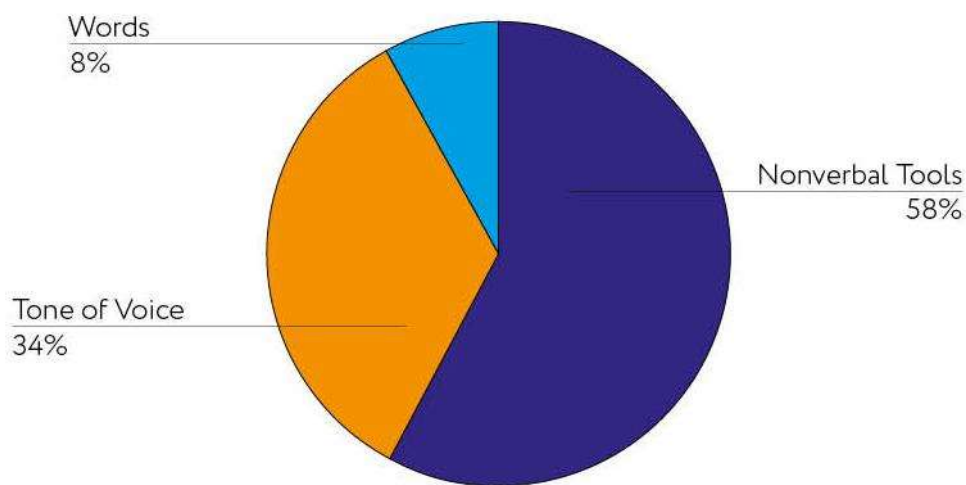
Unlike subjective language (T1), which generalises, is based on personal values, beliefs or preferences, and often carries (negative) emotion, objective language (T2) is relationally neutral, describes the situation through the eyes of the speaker, evaluates only the behaviour, not the actor, thereby reducing the risk of conflict.

Form vs Content

The words, data, and facts forming the content of the message take up only a small part of the recipient's capacity during the transmission of the message.

Aspects of the relational level, i.e., non-verbal communication tools and the tone of voice play a much more important role.

The form therefore has the power to change or completely overshadow the content of the message.



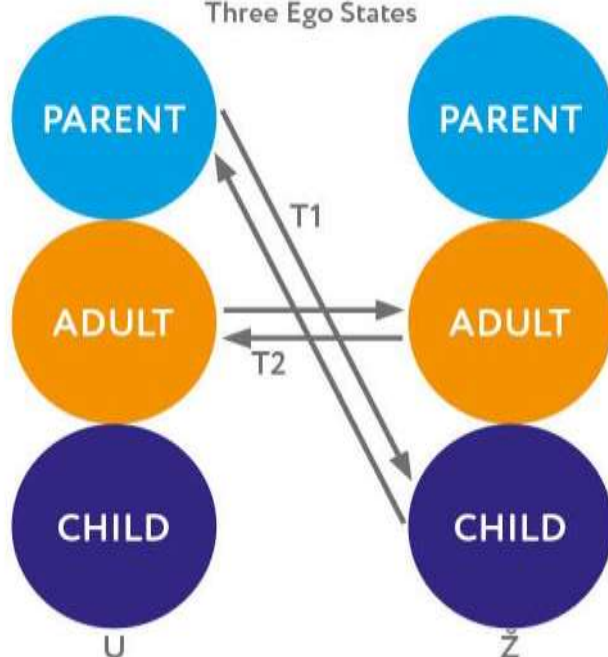
Both teachers are trying to change the student's behaviour. In the first case, through relational aggression – a false question with only one correct answer (its goal is not to learn something), which is quite likely uttered in a snide tone. In its essence, it suggests the student is “not normal” and attacks their loved ones as well. The student's “content” ear closes, they most likely shut down, or get aggressive by claiming: “Yes! [for us, it's normal]” which ends the interaction – unsuccessfully.

In contrast, the second reaction carries relevant information and, if uttered in a form that appropriately complements the content, it reaches the student's objective ear. It consciously transfers the responsibility for the situation on the child by leaving it up to them to evaluate the appropriate course of action (stop rocking on the chair).

According to **transactional analysis**⁴, adult ego states, which even children have from about one year of age, communicate with each other in this partnership way, learning about the world, collecting and processing information, and sorting it based on previous experience. If you want to teach your students autonomy and transfer responsibility for their learning and behaviour to them, it is necessary to stay in the ego state of an adult as often as possible. Only from this state do you enable the student's mature reaction (which is by no means guaranteed).

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

Each One of Us Has These
Three Ego States



If you immediately put yourself in the role of a chastising parent who sets the rules of the game and punishes, the student has no other option but to resort to the child's ego state – to get overwhelmed by emotions (shame, fear, anger), or to revolt against the manifestation of power.

⁴ Napper, Rosemary; Newton, Trudy. Tactics: Transactional Analysis Concepts for All Trainers, Teachers, and Tutors and Insight into Collaborative Learning Strategies [in Czech translation as *Taktika transakční analýzy*]. Prague: Grada, 2010. 978-80-247-2915-2.

A pupil disrupts the class.

Interaction 1

T: "If I were you, I'd be paying attention right now as all this is going to be part of the test."

P: "Pffff..." [= I don't give a damn about the test.]

Interaction 2

T: "Your talking is disturbing me."

P: "I am sorry."

A pupil doesn't bring their notebook.

Interaction 1

T: "You failed to bring your notebook again? This is never the case with your classmate Caroline. It is no longer acceptable. You are getting an "F" for classroom work."

P: "Hmmm!" [= That's not fair!]

Interaction 2

T: "I can see you failed to bring your notebook. How do you propose to solve this?"

P: "I'll take notes on a piece of paper which I'll then glue to the notebook.?"

In the first scenario, I1 involves an unsolicited piece of advice together with a threat, to which the pupil reacts with an internal revolt ("*Now, there's no way I'm going to pay attention!*") and in this mood, they will probably disturb the class again. The teacher's respectful response in I2 offers more space for the pupil's self-reflection. Undoubtedly, there are situations when the pupil repeatedly disturbs the class. In such a case, the teacher could, for example, mention that this is the second warning (write the pupil's name on the board) with a comment that the third warning will include some sanction (moving the pupil to a different seat in the class or to another room).

In the second scenario, the teacher in I1 commits relational aggression by generalisation ("*again*"), comparison with the other student, and finally by a punishment that is really not fair (grades are meant to be used for evaluation of work). The exchange ends in frustration on the part of the pupil. The search for temporary relief from the injustice caused in this way may take different forms. In I2, the teacher uses descriptive language and asks the pupil an open-ended

question, transferring the responsibility for solving the problem to them. This call to action is successful and the exchange ends with no losers.

If the goal of the interaction between you and the pupil is to change their undesirable behaviour, the message should contain the following:

1. A description of the behaviour the pupil should stop
2. A clear identification of the emotions such behaviour evokes in you or a reference to a specific previously agreed rule

Pupil Management (Parent Ego State)	Pupil Guidance (Adult Ego State)
Doesn't provide pupils with space to be active and think for themselves	Provides pupils with space to be active and think for themselves
Responsibility is on the teacher	Responsibility is on the pupil
Is fast, often unaware, automatic, unequivocal, and does not require too much contemplating	Requires time, self-control, and thorough thinking on the part of the teacher. Sometimes, it takes time for pupils to get used to it.
The behavioural changes achieved are only temporary	The behavioural changes achieved are usually permanent
Involves: all relational aggression, orders, irony and sarcasm, generalizations, comparisons, unsolicited pieces of advice, descriptions of consequences, punishments	Involves: descriptive language, feedback, open-ended questions, guidance to agreements, references to agreed rules
Pupils often react to it with defence, counter-aggression, or resignation	Does not cause pupils to feel threatened

Pupil Management (from the Parent Ego State) is the basic setting of many teachers, which may be appropriate and effective in a crisis situation (*“There’s a car coming. Everyone, move aside!”*). In the long term, however, it requires increased pressure, as by using it, the boundaries of accepted behaviour are adjusted.

Pupil Guidance is more challenging primarily at the beginning, especially if they are not used to taking responsibility for their own actions, solving problems, and making independent decisions based on available information. However, once they start mastering these **key competencies**, the teacher’s job will become much easier (and more fun). It is important to know why, when, and with what goal in mind a given communication tool may be used.

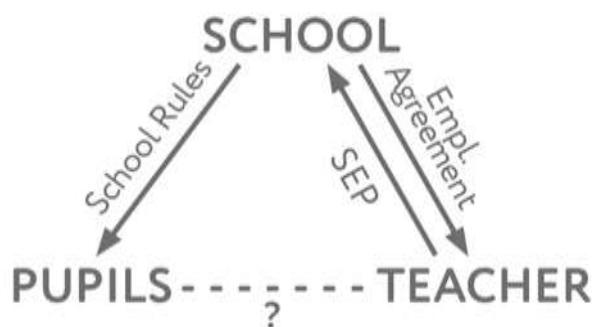
Building Relationships

Respectful communication is a prerequisite for building relationships and a safe environment of trust, i.e., one where pupils (and teachers!) are not afraid to express their opinion, identify their needs, make mistakes, use them for further learning, and ask for help at any time. Like any other relationship, the one between pupils and teachers stems from getting to know each other and shared principles are needed for its smooth functioning. Below is a brief outline of what the beginning of such a journey might look like.

We meet with pupils in the classroom with a shared interest – to learn / teach them something. To achieve this goal, it is important to set it together and establish the rules, the observance of which will help us reach it.

Don’t hesitate to spend time introducing and consolidating rules at the beginning of the school year (or during it). Consider it an investment in a relationship that will pay off many times over in the future and could also save time.

A suitable tool is the conclusion of a **contract with the pupils**, which complements the written formalized relationship of the three direct participants in the educational process:



On the one hand, as a teacher, you have an employment agreement concluded with the school, the fulfilment of which is governed by the SEP; on the other hand, pupils are bound by the school rules in their relationship with the school. However, the third line completing the triangle is missing here – an agreement or contract between pupils and teachers. It should include both rules open to discussion (to find a compromise) and those that are fixed, including the consequences of any violation of the rules.

Here is an example of a Classroom Contract:

Contract Subject Matter: English Language Teaching

Reasons to Learn English: In pairs, pupils suggest 5 benefits of speaking English

What do I, as your teacher, need in order to ensure suitable conditions for your learning:

- For you to be present (body and mind) → mobile telephones tucked away
- For us to be within reach → for English lessons, desks will be moved to form a semi-circle

What do pupils need in order to ensure efficient learning (from their teacher, themselves, others):

- Mutual respect → only one person speaks at the time, we don't laugh at the mistakes of others, we don't judge the opinions of others
- To ensure the learning process is fun and it is interconnected with the real world
- Lots of opportunities to practice → we only use the English language in the classroom

The contract is done in writing (e.g., on flipchart paper) and everyone signs it at the end of the class. It can be referred to throughout the year, and at the ends of terms (e.g., mid-term, at the

end of the year, etc.) reviewed and evaluated how both parties have been fulfilling their obligations, what works well, or what can be done to make things work better.

In order for the acknowledgement to transfer into trust, we must consciously focus on our relationship with pupils as well as evaluate our strengths and weaknesses and the resulting opportunities and threats. We are all undoubtedly different, but as teachers we should above all be authentically human. In relation to pupils, it is important to be able to admit one's own mistakes, keep one's word, and not prepare unpleasant surprises. To do a **SWOT analysis**⁵ of your teacher self, see appendix No. 3; this will look beautiful on the first page of the new (reflective) teacher's notebook. An example is to be found [here](#). There you can then mark the seating/name orders in individual classes until you learn the children's first names by heart.

It is a good idea to note at least one personal detail about each pupil. Then, include the knowledge about children and their interests in your teaching practice with the aim of increasing the degree of individualization – they will appreciate it.

Primarily, let's build on the assumption that the pupils **want to like us**. Liking stems from knowing, which we have the opportunity to initiate by showing interest (however, remember that you are not a bar of chocolate – you will never please everyone). A wide range of opportunities to get to know each other is available within the classroom:

- The teaching itself: design the activities in a way which allows the pupils to express their own opinion or preference (e.g., human Bingo⁶, group work, guided debates)
- Class gatherings (e.g., komunitní kruh⁷ [*community circle*])
- Outside of class (having lunch together, taking a walk during the main break)
- At school events (sports competitions, adaptation courses, school trips, and excursions)

⁵ Kašparová Eva: SWOT analýza jako nástroj kvalifikované sebereflexe učitele, 2007. Quoted 8/10/2023. <https://clanky.rvp.cz> [*SWOT Analysis as a tool of qualified teacher self-reflection – Czech online source*].

⁶ Pavlína Hublová: 6 tipů na ledolamky, 2018. <https://clanky.rvp.cz> [*Six Ice Breaker Tips – Czech online source*].

⁷ NPI, autorský tým APIV B: Manuál: Jak pracovat s dětmi v komunitním kruhu, 2020. Quoted 8/10/2023. <https://zapojmevsechny.cz> [*Working with Children in Community Circles – Czech online source*].

Among other things, group work, or methods of **dividing into groups**, is a tool for controlled meeting of pupils. What do the children gain from the specific division and what does it provide for me as a teacher? It is ideal to alternate the methods: everyone needs something different at different times, so each time someone will find it beneficial, and the group work will be fair. Some pupils prefer to work alone – this should also be allowed occasionally.



It is also advisable to combine different methods of **calling on** pupils. The easiest and fairest way is using wooden sticks (available at pharmacies or gardening supplies), ideally with pupils' names, or numbers if you teach many classes. One or more are drawn at random (which will give other pupils a chance to prepare an answer to the given question). All in all, they clearly save time and mental capacity, because thanks to them there is no need to keep track of who has already spoken and who hasn't. Children can also call on each other – whether with the help of the sticks or simply by passing on the floor.

Theory of Affirmation

According to E. Berne⁸, the most important psychological need of a person is **recognition** of existence, which is manifested through attention from others. In the history of human society, ignoring, ostracising, and excommunicating an individual was and always remains to be the greatest punishment. Therefore, even negative attention associated with punishments or offensive language is better than none. Especially for some children who do not know another

⁸ Berne, Erik. Games People Play [in Czech translation as *Jak si lidé hraji*]. Prague: Portál, 2011. ISBN: 978-80-7367-992-7.

type of attention. They are ready to receive it and behave accordingly. Berne called these manifestations of attention **caresses**, which can be positive vs negative, conditional vs unconditional, physical, but also (non)verbal:

Type	Conditional Caresses / Strokes	Unconditional Caresses / Strokes
 Posit.	<i>"You're a good girl for..."</i>	<i>"You belong here." "You're really cool."</i>
	When you do what I want, I like you.	We like you no matter what - unconditionally.
 Neg.	<i>"I don't like you because you disturb the other pupils."</i>	<i>"Nothing will ever become of you."</i>
	When you misbehave, you've got my attention.	I don't like no matter how hard you try.

The specific form of the necessary unconditional caresses – those which affirm to us that we are worthy of existence through the recognition of others – varies according to the current stage of psychological development. Pamela Levin⁹ recognises six stages of development, which can be applied both to the child's life itself and to the many significant changes brought about by life (e.g., starting school, new relationship, new job, career change):

1. **Being** (Existence; 0-6 months): learning to exist, building connections and relationships, gaining trust
2. **Doing** (Activity; 6-18 months): looking for stimuli, exploring the surroundings, requiring safety and security
3. **Thinking** (18 months-3years): testing boundaries, showing signs of increased self-confidence
4. **Identity** (and Power; 3-6 years): building self-esteem, acquiring social skills
5. **Structure** (and Skills; 6-12 years): restlessness, enhancing social space orientation

⁹ Levin, Pamela. Cycles of Power: A User's Guide to the Seven Seasons of Life [in Czech translation as *Úvod do cyklů života*]. Deerfield Beach, Fla: Hci, 1988. Quoted 8/10/2023
http://moodle.fhs.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/17040/mod_data/content/256567/Pamela_Levin.docx.

6. **Regeneration** (Fixation; 12-19 years): increased urge for independence and growth, sexual needs; the individual enters the next phase (adulthood) and the cycle repeats at shortened intervals



Novice teachers will also find themselves a part of this development cycle. They, too, have the right to grow at their own pace, to discover and learn, to remain true to themselves, to think and feel, i.e., to benefit from the caresses¹⁰ they need.

Additional materials on development cycles and caresses based on the Theory of Affirmation are available, for example, on the website of the Učitel naživo [*Live Teacher*]¹¹ organisation.

Cooperation with Colleagues at School

Cooperation with colleagues may prove especially useful during your beginnings as a teacher, when you need to get oriented at the new workplace and grasp the demands placed on us. Your colleagues are also often the first people you can confide in when you've had a tough class or need quick help with something.

¹⁰ Levin, Pamela. Affirmations. <https://www.ucitelnazivo.cz/afirmace>. Quoted 8/10/2023.

¹¹ <https://www.ucitelnazivo.cz/afirmace> [*Czech online source*]. Quoted 8/10/2023.

The possibility of establishing cooperation and positive relationships at the workplace are often one of the most important factors that influence our workplace appeal.

Why actually cooperate when, theoretically, as teachers, we could get by with just ourselves in the classroom? Cooperation at the teaching workplace is necessary, for example, in the preparation of various projects, trips, and tandem teaching. For such cooperation to go well, good relationships are needed, and that is why it is useful to be on good terms with colleagues and to know how each of them works in this collaborative environment.

Four reasons to join forces with your colleagues:

1. Two heads are better than one
2. Teaching work will not feel so lonely (you are most often the only adult in the classroom)
3. You may share materials and lesson plans with your colleagues, helping each become the best pedagogues possible
4. Cooperation among teachers results in better student results¹²

There are situations when cooperation with a colleague may not only help you but also save you some time. You may share materials and drafted worksheets or get inspired by methods and activities that work for one or the other in their class. And that can come in handy, especially during your early days as a teacher!

What is important to bear in mind? Although a good atmosphere among the teaching staff is important for job satisfaction, there is no need to moan if the team at your school is not exactly to your liking. To a certain extent, you can find and create your ideal teacher's office in the online teacher community. Mutual support, supervision, and advice are offered, for example, by the Učitelská platforma [*Teachers Platform*] or Začni učit [*Start Teaching*] organizations. The latter even primarily focuses directly on the support of novice teachers like you. Don't be afraid to write to them for help, they are here for you and will gladly give you a helping hand. As for colleagues at your school, sharing can happen unplanned before class, during breaks, or you can set a fixed time in your timetable for sharing and mutual help, for example, during free hours. However, sharing, inspiration, and support often occur spontaneously even during the lunch break in the cafeteria or during supervision in the corridor.

¹² Teacher Collaboration Guide: Strategies, Statistics & Benefits. <https://research.com/education/teacher-collaboration-guide#3>. Quoted 28 July 2023.

Me in the School Team

Take a break, get a cup of coffee, and think about the following questions regarding your school's teaching staff.

- On a scale from 1 to 10, how many points would you give to the teaching staff at your school (10 being the best rating)? Do you feel happy in this team? Do you feel you are an integral part of it?
- Is there someone at your school whom you are not afraid to ask if you are unsure of something regarding teaching? Do you have someone you can confide in after a failed class? If so, who is it? If not, isn't there someone in the staff who could become such a close person for you in the future?

Classroom Management

Promoting a positive and well-managed classroom environment is essential for novice teachers, but it often represents their greatest challenge. Without a good atmosphere in the classroom, however, no cognitive learning can take place. If you are a little confused about where to start and what to focus on, read these few tips and tricks. Above all, don't forget that you are definitely not the only one struggling with this problem. Every novice teacher has to deal with this to some extent.

In the classroom, preferably together with the pupils, establish clear mutual expectations.

From the start, clearly agree with the class on the expectations and rules of conduct in the classroom. Make sure pupils understand what is expected of them, whether it's respect, participation in activities, or cooperation. Then insist these rules are observed. Tell the pupils what they can expect from you so that respect and expectations are mutual.

Use your energy for building positive relationships.

Spend time building relationships with your students. You can start, for example, by showing your genuine interest in their lives and experiences, and you can, for example, follow up on their experiences directly in class during the lesson. When students feel valued and understood, they are more likely to engage and cooperate with the rest of the class and teachers.

Establish a classroom routine.

Establishing consistent rules and routines will help students understand what is expected of them during your lessons. Such routines work well, for example, at the beginning of the lesson (How do you greet each other as a class? What is the very first thing you do?), in the middle of the lesson (How do you let the students know that they should change the activity?), but also at the very end (How do you end the lesson? How do you say goodbyes?). You will see that the class will be significantly calmer, because everyone knows what is expected of them and what is likely to follow.

Ensure pupil's active involvement in class.

Some pupils are disruptive in class simply because they have a lot of unused energy. Therefore, try to come up with activities that use their energy within the class. Alternate individual, group, or pair work, on paper, with tablets, with an interactive whiteboard, so that the teaching is sufficiently varied and interesting.

Address inappropriate behaviour as calmly as possible.

When someone is behaving inappropriately, it is sometimes difficult to remain calm, but it is important. The student should know from your reaction that their behaviour has already crossed the imaginary line, but try to handle the situation calmly, objectively, and constructively. In this case, we recommend studying the basics of nonviolent communication.¹³ Nonviolent communication is a method of communication that aims to create understanding between people and find solutions which work for everyone.

Foster a safe and inclusive environment.

Purposefully foster a safe and inclusive environment in the classroom so that every student feels respected. Address cases of bullying or discrimination as soon as possible. Don't be afraid to turn to one of your colleagues, an educational counsellor, or a school psychologist for help at such times.

Reflect and adjust.

¹³ [Marshall Rosenberg](#): Nonviolent Communication, 1999, nakl. Portál Marshall Rosenberg: [in Czech as *Nenásilná komunikace*], 2016, ISBN: 978-80-262-1079-5.

Regularly reflect on your classroom management practices and adjust them as needed. You can expand your knowledge in this field at many seminars (many are also available for free) and reflect on your experience with your mentor teacher or other colleagues. We were all novice teachers and most likely faced very similar challenges. There are many seminars focused on further education regarding the topic.

Topic to Consider

Based on your own observation or thanks to suggestions from colleagues who visited your class, which parts of classroom management do you think you should continue to work on? In what situations or parts of the lesson does the behaviour in your class deteriorate and the students do not behave as you think they should?

Evaluation / Grades

Evaluation is an inherent part of the traditional school system. In recent years, however, there has been a trend where teachers are trying to find and include methods that would be the least harmful to students and at the same time more beneficial than the traditional grading system, resulting in cooperating instead of competing with classmates, and helping students to learn to receive and give feedback to others.

Summative Grading

Each school has a set of rules for grading, sometimes called a grading policy. This is a document in which you will find all the materials for a clear assessment of pupils. As a rule, it deals with the following areas in several chapters:

- Principles of evaluation of the course and results of education and behaviour at school and at events organised by the school, principles and rules for self-evaluation of pupils
- Disciplinary measures according to Section 17 of Act No. 48/2005 Coll., on basic education and some requirements for the fulfilment of compulsory school attendance, as amended
- Rules for student self-evaluation

- Grades for the assessment of achievements and behaviour in the case of the use of regular classification, or the principles for the use of verbal assessment
- Details on examinations of educational results and evaluations in the alternative term
- Classification of a pupil who completed compulsory school attendance abroad
- Methods of obtaining assessment materials, principles for determining the student's overall assessment on the report card in the case of using verbal assessment or a combination of verbal assessment and classification
- Methods of assessments of pupils with special educational needs
- Evaluation of gifted students
- Evaluation of written works and evaluation of graduate, end of term, and end of studies theses
- Awarding praise and disciplinary measures

The rules for determining the weight of grades in the electronic student book and the rules for verbal assessment are also an important part.

Even if the school you work at uses grades on the end of term reports (i.e., the summative method of grades or another scaling system only), you can include formative assessment techniques in your classes.

The formative assessment methods, which differ from summative assessments as shown below, help us to do this:

1. They focus on the course of education, not on the result
2. They serve primarily the pupils to direct them to further growth
3. They identify the student's educational needs, not only evaluate whether the students know and understand the subject matter¹⁴

Below, you will find briefly described several formative assessment techniques that you can use in your classes starting tomorrow. But definitely don't put pressure on yourself and include them only when they make sense to you. Plan their implementation and introduce them

¹⁴ STARÝ, Karel a Veronika LAUFKOVÁ. Formativní hodnocení ve výuce [in Czech as *Formative Assessment in Education*]. Prague: Portál, 2016. ISBN 978-80-262-1001-6.

gradually. It is also important to create a safe environment in which students will not be afraid, for example, to evaluate each other or self-evaluate in front of others.

Class Pass

As the name suggests, a class pass is something that “releases” a student from the class. This is a reflective technique, i.e., one that gives you feedback on what the students remember from the lesson or how they evaluate it. It can be a piece of paper where you write questions which the students have to answer (see template worksheets) either verbally, using a numerical or emoticon scale.

Self-evaluation Sheets

Similarly to the Class Pass work **Self-evaluation sheets**, which you can include for example after a certain period, e.g., a month, quarter, half a year, at the end of the year, work in the same way. The questions may concern the students themselves, their attitude to your subject, the student’s self-evaluation, how successful they are in the subject, etc.

Worksheet Template

Self-reflection

I AM...

Describe yourself in three words:

What’s your strongest feature?

On which characteristics of yours do you plan to work?

What’s your relationship to school?

What’s your biggest dream?

What do you want to focus on during your adult life?

When do you feel truly happy?

Do you want me to know something? / Do you want to tell me something else?

Worksheet Template

Circle the words that best describe how you feel in your class:

satisfied pushed aside respected accepted safe neutral
unhappy as a leader

Why do you feel that way? What is, in your opinion, the reason behind your status?
If negative emotions prevail, what should change to make you feel good in the class?
And what will you do to improve the situation?

Traffic Light

The teacher brings a traffic light model to the class, or just draws three circles on the blackboard. The students one by one write their name in one of the circles or attach them to the light on the traffic light model. Red means that they absolutely do not understand the subject matter; yellow / orange that they understand something, but not everything; green, that they understand everything perfectly.

If you include this technique at the beginning or during the course of the lesson, it is a great tool to divide the pupils into groups. You will mix students from different colours of the traffic light. The task is for those who were in the green colour to help others and thus become assistant teachers. You may be surprised with what mnemonic aids they come up and how much it will help make the learning process more efficient. At the end of the lesson, you can invite the students to change the placement of their name on the traffic light base on how they feel after the group work.

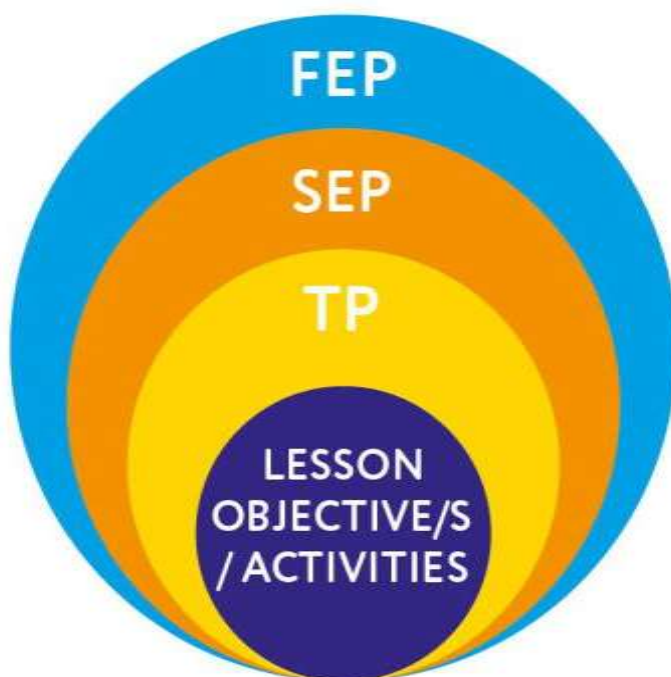
If you include it at the end of the lesson only, you will get quick, valuable feedback as to whether you should continue with the curriculum during the next lesson and practice more, or you can move on. This can also be ensured by, for example, a technique where students show on their fingers from **1 to 5** how much they have understood the subject matter, or they can work out a **scale using their thumb**, where a thumb up means that they have mastered everything perfectly and a thumb down means that they haven't got the slightest clue about the subject matter.

If you want to learn about other techniques, we highly recommend checking the aforementioned publications, or typing “formative assessment” into your search engine to find a lot of inspiring resources.

Goals

Learning Objectives

When working with objectives, you need to be aware of the entire hierarchy as shown in the diagram. You may have already become familiar with the part of the **FEP (Framework Educational Programme)** focused on the subject of your qualification during your studies. Before joining the school where you will be teaching, it is a good idea to request their **SEP (School Educational Programme)**, based on which you will be able to prepare a thematic plan for the coming period (e.g., half-year or the whole year) - these are long-term goals. Some schools require a **TP (Thematic Plan)**, others do not. However, for a novice teacher, such a plan can be a welcome crutch, representing an itinerary of the material covered and related objectives.



If one of the English language topics is, for example, *work and working life*, **carefully worded objectives** should be a part of the medium-term plan or lesson sequence:

- *Pupils master the vocabulary of professions (at least 30)*
- *They know how to draft a job application cover letter*
- *Using modal verbs, they can describe the basic job requirements of various professions*

Examples of Outlining Objectives are available [here](#).

Many textbooks contain medium-term and partial objectives, so it is possible to adopt or modify them according to the needs of the teacher and pupils.

Evidence of Learning	are the pupil's interactions or the products of their work that demonstrate their progress in learning (e.g., spontaneous expressions, group interactions, worksheets, written or oral answers, etc.)
Teaching Objective	is related to a given educational unit (e.g., a lesson) and defines, in the words of the pupil, what knowledge, skills, and competences they should have mastered at the end of it. It is a short-term goal.
Expected Outcomes	are described in the FEP and define the expected ability of pupils to use the educational content in practical situations, the mastering of which should be the long-term aim. They work as a kind of guidelines or recommendations both for the teaching itself and for the creation of SEP.

Specific and **verifiable** goals should be a part of each lesson plan, which represents a piece of a larger unit. The structure and content of the lesson depend on the objective (what steps will I take to reach it?) – that's why it's good to plan it from the end going backwards. Each lesson should feature one key activity linked to the main objective of the lesson, and then ways to verify that the objective has been achieved (evidence of learning).

Bloom's taxonomy¹⁵ is a good guide for the correct formulation of verifiable learning objectives.

Benefits of Working with Learning Objectives

FOR TEACHERS	FOR PUPILS
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¹⁵ Benjamin Bloom: Bloom's Taxonomy, 1956. Quoted 8/10/2023. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloom%27s_taxonomy.

Benefits of Working with Learning Objectives

- provision of structure to our work - interconnection of the higher levels of the objective hierarchy with everyday life - a clear direction which I follow to allow the pupils to reach the objective (no side-tracking) - determines the review framework to ensure the objective was reached - objectives may also be used in reflection (personal or with pupils) as well as feedback sessions	- strengthening of their trust in the teacher (they know what they do and why); making the meaning of learning visible - if communicated beforehand: they get a better idea of their educational process, they are better oriented - if communicated after the fact: a part of the reflection process (<i>Why do you think we did this? What have you learnt this way?</i>) - systematic development of their knowledge and skills
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What else is to be factored in while forming the objectives:

- The taught subject / curriculum
- Additional skills / abilities I want the pupils to acquire together with the subject (e.g., cooperation, work under pressure due to timeframe)
- Time allowance (number of lessons)
- Teaching method (technique)
- Schedule, Thematic Plan, School Educational Programme
- Relation to pressing issues / relevant real-time topics
- Inter-curricular relations, context of other subjects
- Pupils' current knowledge (alongside different levels among pupils in the class)
- What are they like and what are they currently involved in (their interests and motivations)
- Classroom climate

During your lesson planning, always keep the ERR rule in mind:

Evocation (relevance, reminder, introduction, everyone is involved – we are all together)

Realisation (the learning process, methods, and content)

Reflection (sharing, summary, class pass)

It often happens that the objectives of the lesson are not fulfilled. There can be many reasons for this, such as the students did not get enough sleep, the teacher did not use the approach to the explanation, or an unexpected event occurred. But that just means that you either need to

do things differently next time or try to cope with the situation as best as you can. One of the beautiful things about teaching is that, in the vast majority of cases, we get “a second chance” or an opportunity to improve. It should also be remembered that even if the goal is not met during the class, it does not mean that we did not get closer to it.

“We had a math class focused on powers. Suddenly, a wasp flew into the classroom through the open window. The pupils were startled, ran out into the corridor, and waited for the wasp to fly away. My original goal for the lesson suddenly became unimportant, everyone was interested in the wasp. There was no point in continuing to teach at that moment, no one was concentrating on mathematics. Fortunately, no one was hurt, and we were able to return to the powers after a while.”

Zuzana, Secondary School Teacher, Pilsen

However, objectives are not intended only for pupils – the teacher should also set their own personal objectives as a means of consciously focusing attention. A specific **teacher development objective** should have a clear impact on pupils. It should be evaluable/measurable, e.g., I will implement the XY method in my teaching practice. I will regularly collect evidence of learning. I will read a book (by), I will attend a course/webinar. We are never too good to stop being able to get even better!

Novice Teacher Challenges

“It is important to accept things that don’t quite work out as an opportunity, thanks to which we learn to be better teachers, but also partners in life.”

Michaela, Primary School Teacher, České Budějovice

The reality of novice teachers finding themselves at the beginning of their career as pedagogues is full of new situations which they must acknowledge and manage. For example, they face concerns regarding how they will stand up as professionals, how their colleagues will accept them in the staff community of their first job, how they will be able to cope with the requirements of the curriculum, if they will communicate effectively with pupils and their legal representatives, how they will maintain a balance between personal and professional life, etc.

However, even in the teaching profession, there are enough colleagues who are empathetic, think about problems, and try to find the best possible solution for everyone. Surely you will find a colleague like that at your school. Don't be afraid to turn to them for advice. Remember that everyone has started at some point and that everyone has felt insecure at some point.

Challenges Novice Teachers May Face

Administrative Duties

At school, a novice teacher faces a huge amount of paperwork. It is necessary to know which documents must be filled in and how. These documents not only evidence what happened in the school/classroom, but, if necessary, can serve as proof that the teacher did not neglect anything.

Classroom teachers face the biggest administrative burden. As a rule, novice teachers are not classroom teachers so that they have enough time to learn the procedures necessary for everyday functioning in the classroom.

However, novice teachers must learn to use the information system, which serves as a tool for managing the school and pedagogical administration. The most frequently used systems include Bachelors, dmSoftware, Škola OnLine, EduPage, Edookit, iŠkola and Etřídnice.

These systems make it possible to keep electronic records of pupils and teachers, including their personal data and contact information. They are also used to communicate with parents and pupils, to record attendance, classification, information about the timetable and possible substitutions. They also allow teachers to create and manage lesson plans, including content and teaching materials.

Profession-Related Issues

Novice teachers may also find themselves in the role of class teachers. This is very challenging because they are not only required to know the school operation in detail, but also to be capable of effective class collective management including concerns for the pupils in a broader sense. How to deal with this can also be the subject of consultations with the mentor teacher. The relationship between the novice teacher and the mentor teacher is key in this regard.

Evaluation and correction of the first (and other) written **works** or **performance**: novice teachers may sometimes have doubts about whether they have made a mistake in their

assessment, whether they have been too harsh in their assessment, or, on the contrary, too lenient. A consultation with a senior colleague is certainly in order. Evaluation is dealt with in greater detail in the chapter on mentoring.

“At our school, we have a recommended classification based on how the final exam of our vocational training students is graded. If we follow this, I can never be stricter than my colleague in the same subject and I can avoid possible complaints from students. The recommended classification at our school is as follows: 100-85% 1, 84-70% 2, 69-55% 3, 54-40% 4, under 40% 5. I noticed that even students get a grasp on what is expected of them.”

Michaela, Secondary School Teacher, Prague

Communication and Cooperation with Others

Communication with Mentor Teacher

Cooperation with the mentor teacher includes ongoing advice, suggestions, and feedback. They usually work with the novice teacher the most during the first two to three weeks. However, there were also instances when this was not the case. It may happen that you and the mentor teacher have different views on certain teaching methods and learning activities. It does not automatically mean that someone's opinion is wrong. Try to find out which specific arguments the mentor teacher uses to back their views and try to find more information about the given topic yourself. Remember that although you may not agree professionally with your mentor teacher, your dispute about the matter should not become personal. This topic is discussed further in the chapter on mentoring.

Communication with Teacher's Assistants

The teacher is responsible for the course of the teaching process. This means that they have to find a way of effective cooperation with the teacher's assistant. It is often not an easy task. Determining competencies right from the start is definitely worth it. It should be noted that the teacher is responsible for the way the teacher's assistant works and that even with an age difference, a certain hierarchy must be observed. It is important to maintain regular communication and to share what the teacher's assistant did and will do with the pupil. It is also recommended to share teaching ideas and experiences. Furthermore, to clarify on the first day who will do what in order to ensure the assistant is helpful to you during the educational process so you may focus mainly on those who are less independent.

A Teacher's Assistant is a pedagogical worker who participates in the education of a child, pupil or student with special educational needs and is assigned to the teacher as their support during teaching. (The description of the activities of teaching assistants is governed by Decree No. 27/2016 Coll. on the education of pupils with special educational needs and gifted pupils, as amended). A teacher's assistant helps pupils acquire or consolidate their skills and use their potential within the educational system. The individual education plan makes it possible to adapt the education to the needs of individual students and thus define the role of the teacher's assistant. An important part is regular communication and coordination between the teacher and the teacher's assistant, the student's family and, if necessary, the counselling centre.

The web portal asistentpedagoga.cz is a valuable source of information not only for teacher's assistants, but also for teachers and parents. In addition to practical advice and tips on what effective cooperation between a teacher and a teacher's assistant may look like (e.g., occasional informal exchange of roles), links to the stories of teacher's assistants who have helped more than 200 children attending schools are available there. Case studies can be downloaded in Czech and English.

Communication with Legal Representatives

Teachers often feel worried about how the pupil's parents will react, cooperate, and view the whole situation in the event of a crisis. A novice teacher may sometimes be perceived by the other party as less experienced in the field. In such a situation, it should be remembered that parents are experts on the child, and teachers, on the other hand, are experts on education (and feel free to verbalise it this way). However, not everything that happens during a class can be easy to grasp at first glance for a layman. Be prepared to defend your teaching methods and, if necessary, explain to parents what the objectives of these methods are and why you decided to employ them. Both parties deserve clear and respectful communication based on three pillars:

- Not to damage the relationship with the parents
- Not to hurt yourself
- Pass the responsibility on to the parents

The key question remains *"What can I/the school do and what can you do as a parent?"* Both parties care about the child, so it is important to take the parents as allies, even in times of criticism. Examples on how to effectively manage such situations are included at the end of this chapter.

Communication with Pupils

It can be difficult for a novice teacher to **recognise** a situation where it is no longer just an **ordinary violation of discipline**, but a state when the pupil is not concentrating on the given activity **due to** other **serious issues**.

Maintaining **students' discipline** during class is essential for a positive classroom climate. Many teachers try to build their relationships with students from the beginning on a friendly basis and based on mutual trust, which some students might abuse. It's good to set boundaries and stick to them.

It is very difficult to recognise a situation when the student's behaviour is just a release of excess energy, i.e., when it is a common manifestation of rude behaviour or a lack of concentration on the given activity, and situations when there are clear signs of a more serious problem that requires a different approach than with the average student. It is always good to consult other colleagues about the case. It is possible that they too have been in a similar situation with the student in question and that they may know an effective way to solve it.

Maintaining Personal and Professional Life Balance

The teaching profession is time-consuming. We must not forget that the entire lifestyle of a novice teacher changes. From being a student, they become a teacher, and on top of that, they also have to solve a lot of practical issues, such as finding a place to live, joining a new team, etc. In general, they learn to work with their time in a new way. Novice teachers may experience more fatigue at first. They often make unreasonable demands on themselves – they try to do everything 100% correct and to please everyone. But such an approach can lead to professional burnout over time. Novice teachers are also often unable to separate professional and personal life. Even after working hours, they think about what happened at school and in fact never take a break from work. Psychohygiene and boundaries between personal and professional life are therefore very important.

Dealing with Criticism

Delivering Criticism

If you are anticipating an unpleasant meeting with parents, it is definitely worth having another colleague next to you who is on “Your Team”. They don't even have to say anything, just have

your back. It is good to introduce such a meeting with the clearly defined objective of the meeting (what we want to achieve) and to speak in the 1st person plural (that is, *we* together, not *I/the school vs you*). This should be followed by a relationally neutral description of the child's behaviour (he/she is disruptive, and no one wants to cooperate with him/her) and what's more, they are missing out (learning, relationships).

Handling Criticism

Each of us bears experienced behavioural patterns stemming from our parent and child ego states (see Chapter 3, Soft Skills). In tense situations, we easily slip into stereotypical roles, which makes constructive partner communication almost impossible. Consider the following exchange:

P: *"You are biased against my child; he/she gets bad grades from you."*

T: *"That's not true. It's not my fault that he/she fools around and doesn't learn anything."*

In this situation, the teacher feels attacked and reacts to criticism by verbally lashing out and evaluating the child. The teacher perceives the accusations as an attempt by the parents to rid themselves of responsibility for the child's behaviour. The parent gets their confirmation that the teacher is an idiot. Both sides leave the situation convinced of their truth; nothing has been resolved.

Parental attack drives the teacher into the role of a **victim** who becomes defensive. If the teacher manages to step out of this role (as defined by Steve Karpman's drama triangle in the table below), address and verbalise their emotions, and turn the attention to the essence of the issue at hand, the same exchange ends much better:

P: *"You are biased against my child; he/she gets bad grades from you."*

T: *"I am very sorry that you perceive it this way. I always try to treat everyone fairly. Can you think of any reasons why his/her performance has deteriorated so much lately? I would like to understand what might be going on..."*

From Drama to Winning Triangle in Communication with Parents

Role	Drama Triangle	Winning Triangle
Persecutor	pressure and aggression stemming from a sense of failure	gives feedback constructively, in objective language
Rescuer	the effort to do everything to fulfil the objective / resources	offers specific instructions, time-limited help (it is necessary to watch one's own boundaries)
Victim	vulnerability, defensiveness	disclosures one's condition, emotions

Chapter 5 - Social Dialogue

The Czech Republic

Social Dialogue in the Czech Republic

Introduction – Social Dialogue Definition and Purpose

Unions representing employees, employer representatives, and the state are social partners active in social dialogue aimed at promoting mutual cooperation resulting in adjustments of mutual relations in the fields of economic, social, salary, safety, working, and other conditions.

The goal of social dialogue is to reach agreement among various stakeholders and create a balance between social and economic interests both at the workplace and at the level of the entire society. At the same time, it represents a tool for preventing conflicts and resolving labour law disputes at the workplace and at the level of the entire society. Social dialogue thus represents the way conflicting interests are mediated in a way which does not threaten the stability of the society and prevents its disintegration.

Unions and Their Role

The role of trade unions is to balance out the disadvantage of employees vis-à-vis employers during negotiations and to foster the labour, economic, and social interests of their members. For this purpose, individual trade union member organisations form unions according to the field of economic activity, such as the Czech-Moravian Trade Union of Education Workers (hereinafter referred to as ČMOS PŠ). Individual unions are united in trade union headquarters; in the Czech Republic, in the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions. At this level, trade unions most often become involved in politics and actively assist in its creation through social dialogue. This is quite natural, because it is precisely in this sphere where binding rules regarding workplaces and relations between employees and employers are stipulated.

On the other hand, trade unions also provide their member organizations with various services and, quite commonly, legal services in the area of labour-law disputes. For example, ČMOS PŠ member organizations may help resolve disputes between teachers and employers. In the event

of a teacher's complaint against the employer, they can represent the teacher and use other union structures to negotiate with the school's founder. One of the tasks of trade unions is to provide employees with information from the employer.

Social Dialogue in the Czech Republic

Social dialogue in the Czech Republic takes place in two areas. The first is collective bargaining at the workplace, where representatives of employees and employers negotiate and conclude collective agreements on working and salary conditions at the workplace.

In addition to collective bargaining at the level of individual workplaces, collective bargaining may take place at the level of the entire industry between representatives of employees and employers concluding collective agreements of a higher level, establishing common working conditions. In the Czech Republic, sectoral collective bargaining is not exactly succeeding compared to some EU countries where collective bargaining at industry level plays a primary role. For the time being, there is not even sector-wide collective bargaining for the area of regional education, due to the absence of the necessary legal regulation and the high degree of decentralization of the Czech education system.

The second social dialogue field represents the Economic and Social Agreement Council of the Czech Republic (hereafter RHSD CZ), operating on the basis of an approved statute, as a joint voluntary, negotiating, and initiative body of the government, trade unions, and employers for tripartite negotiations, with its seat at the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Its goal is to reach a consensus on social and economic policy issues in order to maintain social peace. It thus fulfils the role of a stabilising and coordinating element. The RHSD CZ ensures a greater plurality of opinions in decision-making and allows those interest groups that are directly affected by the issue to comment on the matter.

Similar to the RHSD CZ, the Council of Economic and Social Agreement of the South Moravian Region and the Council of Economic and Social Agreement of the Capital City of Prague act as negotiating bodies at the regional level.

Social Dialogue Advantages and Threats

Social dialogue creates space for the exchange of opinions and perspectives, which enables a better understanding of partners' needs and helps build mutual trust. In this way, it makes it possible to find compromises which respect different interests that benefit all interested parties.

It thus contributes to better working and social conditions for employees on the one hand and, on the other hand, creates stable business conditions that enable entrepreneurs to make better long-term decisions. Another advantage of social dialogue is that it may promote more qualified decision-making and better legal standards, as it provides social partners with information from practice that political representation may not have or may not have enough of. From the economic point of view, social dialogue contributes to limiting transaction costs and increasing work productivity and decision-making efficiency.

The prerequisite for the above is the willingness of representatives of the state, employers, and employees to conduct a dialogue, to listen to different opinions, to respect the interests of the parties involved, to seek compromise solutions, and to fulfil agreements. Unless these conditions are met, social dialogue may turn from a means of cooperation to a battle arena. In such a situation, it may prove problematic to reach an agreement between the parties. This may lead to a conflict between the social partners or start a political crisis. However, the absence of social dialogue has an equally negative impact.

Additional Resources

You can read more about social dialogue, trade union rights, especially in the context of the teaching profession, in the book called *On Education and Democracy: 25 Lessons from the Teaching Profession*¹⁶ in the chapter *Trade Union Rights, Teacher Autonomy and Professionalism*.

Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining is a key part of social dialogue. Its goal is to reach an agreement between the employer and the trade union regarding working conditions, salary, work benefits, and other aspects of work in the form of a collective agreement.

Collective bargaining allows employees to join forces and ensure a balance between the interests of the employer and employees. In this way, employees are generally able to negotiate better conditions than they would be able to achieve during individual negotiations with the employer. Only a trade union can negotiate a collective agreement with the employer.

¹⁶ Susan Hopgood and Fred van Leeuwen, *On Education & Democracy: 25 Lessons from the Teaching Profession* [in Czech as *Vzdělávání a demokracie, 25 lekcí z učitelské profese*], published by ČMOS PŠ in cooperation with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2021, ISBN 978-80-87748-63-3.

Trade union organisations and employee organizations play an important role in collective bargaining, providing the trade union and employer representatives with the necessary information on the development of individual economic indicators, such as salary growth, inflation, etc.

Collective bargaining, the goal of which is the conclusion of a collective agreement, is a process that can consist of several rounds of negotiations, in which individual parties present their ideas and demands and gradually reach a compromise. A collective agreement may be concluded for a certain or an indefinite period of time. Agreements concluded for an indefinite period of time may be updated, subject to the consent of both parties. A sample collective agreement is available for download on the website of the Czech-Moravian Trade Union of Education Workers.

Latvia

Social dialogue in Latvia

Introduction – What is Social Dialogue and How is it Defined in Latvia?

Social dialogue is one of the basic elements of the European social model. It allows the social partners (representatives of employers and employees) to actively participate, including through contracts, in shaping the European social and employment policy. In the sense of EU law, social dialogue is a dialogue between trade unions and employers' organizations, or the so-called social partners. Social dialogue includes all types of conversations, consultations, exchange of information between government, employer and employee representatives or between them on issues of common interest related to economic and social policy.

The goal of the social dialogue is to promote cooperation between social partners and reach an agreement, ensuring social stability and economic development in the country. The quality of social dialogue depends on cultural traditions, historical, economic, and political processes of the country.

The National Trilateral Cooperation Council (NTSP) coordinates and organizes the tripartite social dialogue between employers' organizations, state institutions and trade unions in order to harmonize the interests of these organizations in social and economic issues. Tripartite social dialogue is of great importance in the development, adoption, and implementation of policy decisions, especially in labour market, legislation, and social security issues. NTSP consists of representatives nominated by the government, the Confederation of Latvian Employers (LDDK), and the Latvian Free Trade Union Confederation (LBAS). NTSP meetings are convened by the Prime Minister as necessary.

Where is Social Dialogue Stated and Regulated at National and Local Level? - Documents Governing Cooperation

- Constitution of the Republic of Latvia

- Trade Union Law
- Labor Law
- Labor Protection Law
- Strike Law
- Regulations of NTSP sub-councils
- General agreement
- Collective agreement

What are the Forms of Social Dialogue?

1. Bilateral social dialogue between employer and employee organizations.



2. Tripartite social dialogue, involving public institutions.



The social dialogue of the industry (sectors) covers a certain field of activity: education, health, culture, interior, energy, food industry, transport industry, etc.

What is Important – The Cycle of Social Dialogue

Discussions, negotiations – agreement on action (time, resources) – implementation – monitoring, assessment. Feedback on assessment is obligatory.

Collective Agreements Between the Employer and Employees – Organizational Level

"Employees have the right to a collective agreement, as well as the right to strike. The state protects the freedom of trade unions." Article 108, Constitution of the Republic of Latvia.

A collective agreement is a written document between the employer and employees, which provides for more favourable terms for employees than those stipulated in the Labor Law and other regulatory acts. The provisions of the collective agreement must not worsen the legal status of employees. The purpose of the collective agreement is to improve the quality of labour relations.

The conclusion of a collective agreement can be initiated by the employer, employee representatives, or organizations. To conclude the collective agreement, both parties hold negotiations, during which they agree on the procedure for developing and discussing the draft collective agreement. Proposals, recommendations, corrections for the draft collective agreement can be submitted in writing by any employee.

Three Main Functions of the Collective Agreement:

- Protection function
- Settlement and prevention of labour disputes
- Social welfare

A Collective Agreement May Include the Following Key Aspects:

- Wage and labour protection
- Employees' professional qualification improvement

- Order and schedule of duties to be performed
- Payment system, bonuses, and other rewards
- Health care and treatment times and conditions
- Prohibition to enter into an employment contract with other employers
- Duration of working hours on holidays and before holidays
- Allocation of study and additional leave
- Time and conditions to leave the workplace during a break
- A shorter notice period and the employee's right to withdraw it

Who concludes the collective agreement? The collective agreement is concluded by the employer and the trade union or authorized representatives of the employees. It is concluded for a certain period of time.

Who approves the collective agreement? The collective agreement is approved by the majority of votes at the general meeting of employees, in which at least half of the company's employees participate. If the collective agreement is concluded by the employer and the employees' union, which represents at least 50% of the company's employees, then it is not necessary to convene a general meeting of employees to approve the collective agreement.

When does the collective agreement come into force? The collective agreement enters into force on the day of its signed, if no other date is specified in the collective agreement, and is valid for 1 year, unless otherwise specified in the collective agreement.

What does the collective agreement cover? The obligations stipulated in the collective agreement apply to the employer and all employees. The employer is obliged to familiarize the employees with the collective agreement.

REMEMBER! The employer is not entitled to refuse negotiations on concluding or amending the collective agreement!

10 Steps on the Way to a Collective Agreement Developed by the Latvian Free Trade Union Confederation (LBAS)

No Clarifying the needs and wishes of employees	
1.	The trade union approaches the employer with a proposal to conclude a collective agreement
2.	The employer is not entitled to refuse negotiations on the conclusion of a collective agreement
3.	The parties negotiate
4.	Once the content of the collective agreement is agreed upon, the collective agreement is signed
5.	Every employee has the right to submit proposals in writing for the collective agreement
6.	If no agreement is reached due to objections, a written response to proposals must be submitted
7.	The employer must provide the trade union with the necessary information for concluding a collective agreement
8.	The signed collective agreement must be approved by the employees
9.	Time frame of the collective agreement
10.	The employer is obliged to present all employees with the collective agreement within 1 month

References:

Note: lectures on social dialogue of I. Vanaga, President of Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees, have been used to organize the project material on social dialogue in Latvia.

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Lithuania

Teachers and Social Partnerships in Lithuania

Social Partnership: General Provisions

The concept, system, principles, levels, and forms of social partnership in Lithuania were first established in the Labour Code, which entered into force on 1 January 2003. With the new version of the Labour Code (LC) coming into force on 1 July 2017, the regulation of social partnership has been maintained, but the rights of employee representatives in social partnership have changed. The main objective of social partnership is to reconcile and implement the interests of the parties to an employment contract through the use of forms of social partnership. Currently, social partnership is implemented in Lithuania:

- 1) By setting up and participating in bilateral and tripartite councils and concluding agreements on labour, social and economic matters (Part III, Chapter III, Section I of the LC). These are, generally, information or socio-political forums at the sectoral, territorial or national level, where information and opinions are exchanged. It should be stressed that bilateral or tripartite partnerships cannot replace the powers of the legislature.
- 2) By initiating the collective bargaining and conclusion of collective agreements (Part III, Chapter III, Section II of Part III of the LC), which shall be based on the agreement of specific obligations. Only trade unions and employers' organisations (or individual employers in the case of an employer- or workplace-level social partnership) may be involved in this type of social partnership, which can take place at any level. The main objective is to agree on the working conditions of workers (wages, working time, working and social benefits, work organisation, etc.).
- 3) In the context of information and consultation procedures (Part III, Chapter III, Section III of Part III of the LC). This is an obligation on the employer, which guarantees the right of workers to receive information through works councils and to participate in consultations with employers or their representatives on the implementation and defence of labour, economic and

social rights and interests. It should be noted that the new LC introduced a dual model of employee representation: works councils represent employees at the employer level and have the right to information and consultation, while trade unions represent their members and have the exclusive right to collective bargaining. Through the National Collective Agreement and the Collective Agreement of the Lithuanian Education Sector, territorial collective agreements, as well as individual collective agreements at the employer level, the right to information and consultation is also granted to trade unions which are parties to the respective collective agreements.

4) By participating in the management of a legal person (Part III, Chapter III, Section IV of the LC). The purpose of this form of social partnership is to enable employee representatives to be involved in the employer's decisions affecting their day-to-day working conditions in the company, so that those decisions can be verified, understood and effectively implemented. In order to achieve this objective, Article 210 of the LC stipulates that employee representatives in public and municipal companies have the right to appoint a part of the legal entity's collegiate management or supervisory body, which is appointed or elected in accordance with the procedure laid down in the company's constituent instrument - the management board, the supervisory board.

5) In conflict resolution: by initiating collective disputes over rights and collective disputes over interests (Part IV of the LC). Collective disputes of right and interest can only be initiated by a trade union as a party to collective bargaining and a collective agreement.

The parties of a social partnership are defined in Article 162 of the LC. 1. The parties of the social partnership - the social partners - are the employees' representatives and the employers' representatives and their organisations, and the parties of the partnership at the level of the employer (or, where applicable, the workplace) are the employer and the employees' representatives. The parties of a social partnership are not the participants in the individual employment relationship (with the exception of the employer, which may be an independent party of a social partnership at the level of the workplace or the employer), but their representatives under the law. Individual employees are not considered to be parties of a social partnership, but the LC distinguishes individual cases where they may be considered to be parties of a collective relationship: Articles 207(3) and 208(3) of the LC lay down the obligation for the employer to provide information directly to employees if there is no works council in

the establishment. Article 165(2) of the LC clearly defines who the workers' representatives are: the works council, the trade union and the workers' trustee. The competencies and relationship between the works council and the trade union have already been defined above. It is worth mentioning that the third form of employee representation, through the employee trustee, is only possible in small legal entities with up to 20 employees and is very rare in practice. Employers' organisations are considered to be the employer's representatives (Art. 181 of the LC), although at the lowest level, i.e., between the employer and the workplace, the employer is directly involved in the social partnership relationship. For example, the employer is the direct dialogue partner of the works council, while at branch or territorial level the same employer is represented by an employers' association. It is worth noting that there are no works councils at territorial, sectoral or national level, so that employees are exclusively represented by trade unions.

The Government of the Republic of Lithuania or institutions authorised by it, and municipal institutions shall be considered as parties of the social partnership when they act as employers or their representatives, as well as in other cases established by law. The function of the State and municipalities in the field of social partnership is special. On one hand, their institutions can participate by representing the State (in the broadest sense) as a member of the dialogue in tripartite social partnerships at national, territorial or sectoral levels. On the other hand, in the public sector, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania or the institutions authorised by it, and municipal authorities act as employers or representatives of employers (schools, medical institutions, etc.) who employ workers.

In accordance with Article 163 of the LC, social partnership in Lithuania may be conducted at the following levels:

- 1) National
- 2) Sectoral (production, service, professional)
- 3) Territorial (municipal, county)
- 4) A natural person of the employer or a legal person of the employer, and in the case provided for in Article 21(4) of this Code - its subdivision (branch, representative office)
- 5) The workplace (if provided for in this Code, in labour law norms or in social partner agreements). Social partnership at the level of the group of employers concerned (group) is not yet regulated in Lithuania. When the draft LC entered into force in 2017, social partnership at the level of a group of employers was foreseen, but it was dropped when the law was adopted.

A group of members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania registered an amendment to the LC back in 2018 proposing to introduce social partnership at this level. This amendment is supported by both trade unions and employers, and it is expected that the legislator will soon adopt amendments to the LC to regulate the new level of social partnership, which is currently only regulated by the European Works Councils Act.

Lithuanian Teachers in Social Partnerships

The participation of Lithuanian teachers in the social partnership is special, as education workers belong to one of the most associated sectors and are the most active in social dialogue at all levels. Article 49(3)(3) of the Law on Education provides for the right of representatives of trade unions representing teachers to represent the interests of teachers and to defend their rights in accordance with the law. In accordance with this provision, the Law on Trade Unions and the provisions of the LC, teachers and other employees in the education sector actively participate in social partnerships through trade unions or works councils. Article 169(3) of the LC provides that in establishments where there is no large trade union representing more than 1/3 of the staff of the establishment, works councils shall be established. Article 171(5) of the LC provides for the right of trade unions to put forward their candidates for the works council, from which one representative of the trade union must be elected. Teachers, through both trade unions and works councils, thus fulfil the objectives and functions of social partnership. Teachers' unions are particularly active in the conclusion and application of collective agreements. All agreements concluded in Lithuania at all levels are registered in the publicly accessible Lithuanian Register of Collective Agreements. An analysis of the data contained in this register (see table) shows that there are 94 collective agreements in the education sector, of which 83 are at the employer level, 7 at the territorial level, 3 at branch level, and 1 at the national level, which is only applicable to public sector workers who are members of a trade union. Compared to other sectors, the education sector has the highest number of signed collective agreements.

Pre-school and pre- primary	General education	Informal education	Vocation al schools	Higher education	Territo rial CA	Sectoral CA	National CA
19	54	7	5	5	7	3	1

Teachers are actively represented in social partnerships at national level. There are even several trade unions in Lithuania that bring together workers in the education sector. The largest is the Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Union (LŠMPS), which unites more than 11,000 education sector workers. Another sectoral trade union, quite unique in its nature, is the Lithuanian Trade Union of Heads of Educational Institutions (hereinafter "LŠĮVPS"), which brings together the directors of various Lithuanian educational institutions. Both of these trade unions are members of the Lithuanian Federation of Trade Unions for Education and Science and the Lithuanian Confederation of Trade Unions, which is a trade union active at national level. Accordingly, LŠMPS and LŠVPS, through the Confederation of Lithuanian Trade Unions, participate in the social partnership at national level and are parties to the National Collective Agreement. In accordance with this collective agreement, teachers have the following additional rights and guarantees:

- 2 paid days for self-development or volunteering
- Paid study leave
- 5 paid days to improve health (with employer's notice)
- TU Participation in the investigation of misconduct or professional misconduct
- TU involvement in the investigation of a case of psychological violence
- TU information and consultation
- Abolition of the works council in the institution
- Use of salary savings to be coordinated with the PS
- Right of the TU to give an opinion when the head of the institution is evaluated

Given that education unions are active at the branch level, there are as many as three collective agreements in force in Lithuania that apply to teachers. In accordance with the collective agreement of the Lithuanian education sector signed by the LFEA, the following additional rights and guarantees are provided for teachers:

- Paid study leave
- 5 paid days to improve health (with employer's notice)
- 3 additional days of annual leave
- 72 paid hours for trade union activities for members of governing bodies
- 3 paid working days for TU members to attend TU events
- Alignment of the pay system with the PS (pre-school and general education schools)
- Reduction of a TU member's workload only for objective reasons
- Remote working for TU members
- Coordination with the PS on the period of aggregate working time accounting

LESTU is the only trade union operating at branch level, whose unions operating in individual territories of Lithuania have signed territorial-level collective agreements and represent teachers and other education sector workers at territorial level. The LESTU has 7 territorial collective agreements, which mostly agree on rules for information and consultation, the establishment of and participation in working groups, rules for reducing class/grade sizes, additional paid days off for union members, etc.

As mentioned above, teachers and other workers in the education sector are particularly active in social partnership at employer level. The education sector is the leading sector in terms of the number of collective agreements concluded at employer level. Collective agreements at this level mostly cover:

- Working and rest time
- The conclusion and performance of employment contracts
- Teleworking arrangements
- Setting the remuneration system
- Additional guarantees for trade union members
- Trade union rights to information and consultation

- Allocation of teachers' workloads and vacancies
- Work during school holidays, etc.

As the education sector is rich in collective agreements at various levels, the question of which collective agreement applies to a teacher often arises. Article 197(4) of the Labour Code lays down the rules for the application of several collective agreements to an employee, which states that the *lex specialist* (special) provision applies. These are the minimum standards, which are modified by Article 10 of the 2022 National Collective Agreement and Article 13 of the Collective Agreement of the Lithuanian Education and Science Branch. The agreements uniformly stipulate that where a trade union member is covered by several collective agreements at different levels, which provide for identical improvements in their working conditions, they are covered by the provision which improves his situation the most. It is necessary to assess on a case-by-case basis which provision of the collective agreement is more favourable to the worker and to apply it.

Teachers' interests are represented in the Tripartite Council of the Republic of Lithuania, permanently operating at the national level, which is established and operates in accordance with the procedure laid down in the LC, and in the commissions and committees attached to it; in the Lithuanian Science Council, of which a representative delegated is a LESTU member; in the Tripartite Council attached to the Employment Service of the Republic of Lithuania; and in other national-level trilateral or bilateral councils, committees or commissions. Trade unions in the education sector also participate in bilateral or tripartite commissions or working groups set up by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport on a sectoral basis, and in bilateral or tripartite councils on a territorial basis (e.g., the tripartite council for the education of the Marijampolė municipality).

Teachers are actively involved in social partnership through individual and collective dispute processes. Trade unions represent their members in individual labour disputes between teachers and their employers. Collective legal disputes are initiated to resolve issues of application and enforcement of the law. Unions in the education sector are the only ones to initiate a collective interest dispute and to launch a strike procedure at branch level. Through this form of social partnership, teachers are actively involved in defending their interests in the collective bargaining process.

Teachers are particularly active and visible in the social partnership because of the productive and responsible activities of the trade unions at branch level. LESTU has a number of projects that focus on teacher education, the defence of teachers' rights, or the analysis of problems. Examples include the regular live broadcast of the programme "Teachers, for teachers, about teachers" on Facebook, the launch of a joint project with the State Labour Inspectorate on the prevention of psychological violence in the education sector, the organisation of the summer camp "Friendship Summer" for Lithuanian and Ukrainian schoolchildren, the analysis of problems in pre-school education and the organisation of a conference on this topic, etc.

Poland

Social Dialogue in Poland

Social dialogue in Poland is only partially regulated. The Social Dialogue Council Act and the Trade Unions Act define the relations between trade unions, employers, local authorities and the government. Social dialogue involving trade unions takes place at national, regional, municipal and school levels.

1. At National Level

The role of trade unions at the national level includes:

- Participation in providing the opinion on draft legislation
- Participation in setting the minimum wage in the country
- Participation in the committee setting the rules for the distribution of European Union funds
- Giving an opinion on the multi-annual national financial plan
- Proposing amendments to legislation together with employers' organisations

For example, representatives of the Polish Teachers' Union participate in the work carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science on changes to the law in the area for which this ministry is responsible. However, it must be added that this dialogue leaves a great deal to be desired, as meetings are extremely rare, and the position of the social side is almost always ignored.

The recent experience of the Polish Teachers' Union at the national level mainly concerns the increase of teachers' salaries, which are known to be low. The Polish Teachers' Union has also been taking steps to maintain the existing regulations on teachers' working time, as the Ministry of Education and Science cyclically returns to the idea of increasing the number of teaching salary hours, even though studies show that the total working time of teachers already exceeds 40 hours per week.

2. At Regional Level

The dialogue at the regional level on school issues is not very intensive and mainly concerns the issues of teachers employed in pedagogical libraries and schools for certain professions (schools run by the provincial government).

3. At Local Level (city/municipality/county)

In Poland, municipalities and cities are responsible for the functioning of kindergartens and most schools, and county authorities are responsible for the functioning of secondary schools. Therefore, dialogue at this level is very intensive. Social dialogue at the local level concerns:

- Some components of teachers' remuneration (e.g., the amount of the incentive allowance or the function allowance for teaching in kindergartens)
- The remuneration of non-teaching school employees
- Working conditions in schools
- Participation in the election of school and kindergarten directors

Representatives of the ZNP branches participate in agreeing the content of local government resolutions on the principles of granting allowances for the remuneration of female and male teachers.

4. At School Level

Social dialogue at the school level concerns:

- The number of teachers' overtime hours and the tasks they perform
- Social fund for female and male employees and pensioners
- Individual employee issues (e.g., termination of employment or punishment)

The company trade union organisation expresses its opinion with regard to the intention to terminate the employment relationship of an employee or worker who is a member of a trade union. It can also, in the event of termination of employment, represent such a person before

the labour court (in such a case, it is represented by a representative of the trade union organisation, or a lawyer hired for this purpose).

5. ZNP's efforts to strengthen dialogue

The Polish Teachers' Union ZNP aims to strengthen social dialogue by preparing union activists to participate in negotiations. It also aims to build a group of committed people who will be experts and leaders in their communities. Through the pre-pandemic Covid-19 project 'Sovereign consults, good law builds', participants acquired and developed competences related to organising trade union activists and local residents to consult and lobby for desired changes within the legislative process, which may involve changing existing laws or proposing new legal solutions.

6. Social Dialogue in Education – Good Practices

The Covid-19 pandemic came as a surprise and a challenge to all. In some areas, such as health care or the organisation of education, it required exceptionally fast decisions and innovative solutions. Exceptional situations also expose gaps or inadequacies in existing systems and generate new needs. Social dialogue at such turning points is of particular importance. The extent to which it has helped to improve remote education is shown in the three-minute film *Us in Pandemic*:

<https://znp.edu.pl/znp-przedstawia-my-w-pandemii-eng/>

Chapter 6 - Digitalization and Digital Competences

Digital Competencies of a Teacher

DigComp Framework

Educators are role models for the next generation. It is therefore vital for them to be equipped with the digital competencies all citizens need to be able to actively participate in a modern digital society.

The European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp) specifies these Competencies. As professionals dedicated to teaching, they need, in addition to the general digital competencies for life and work, educator-specific digital competencies to be able to effectively use digital technologies for teaching. The aim of the DigCompEdu framework is to capture and describe these educator-specific digital competencies. The six DigCompEdu areas focus on different aspects of educators' professional activities:

Area 1: Professional Engagement

Using digital technologies for communication, collaboration, and professional development, it includes:

- **Organisational communication**

Using digital technologies to enhance organisational communication with learners, parents and third parties. Also, contributing to collaboratively developing and improving organisational communication strategies.

- **Professional collaboration**

Being able to use digital technologies to engage in collaboration with other educators, sharing and exchanging knowledge and experience, and collaboratively innovating pedagogic practices.

- **Reflective practice**

To individually and collectively reflect on, critically assess and actively develop one's own digital pedagogical practice and that of one's educational community
To use digital sources and resources for continuous professional development.

Area 2: Digital Resources

Sourcing, creating, and sharing digital resources. This area of skills highlights the importance of:

- **Selecting digital resources**

To identify, assess and select digital resources for teaching and learning. To consider the specific learning objective, context, pedagogical approach, and learner group, when selecting digital resources and planning their use.

- **Creating and modifying digital resources**

To modify and build on existing openly licensed resources and other resources where this is permitted. To create or co-create new digital educational resources. To consider the specific learning objective, context, pedagogical approach, and learner group, when designing digital resources and planning their use.

- **Managing, protecting, and sharing digital resources**

To organise digital content and make it available to learners, parents, and other educators. To effectively protect sensitive digital content. To respect and correctly apply privacy and copyright rules. To understand the use and creation of open licenses and open educational resources, including their proper attribution.

Area 3: Teaching and Learning

Managing and orchestrating the use of digital technologies in teaching and learning. This area of skills is focused on:

- **Teaching**

To plan for and implement digital devices and resources in the teaching process, so as to

enhance the effectiveness of teaching interventions. To appropriately manage and orchestrate digital teaching strategies. To experiment with and develop new formats and pedagogical methods for instruction.

- **Guidance**

To use digital technologies and services to enhance the interaction with learners, individually and collectively, within and outside the learning session. To use digital technologies to offer timely and targeted guidance and assistance. To experiment with and develop new forms and formats for offering guidance and support.

- **Collaborative learning**

To use digital technologies to foster and enhance learner collaboration. To enable learners to use digital technologies as part of collaborative assignments, as a means of enhancing communication, collaboration and collaborative knowledge creation.

Area 4: Assessment

Using digital technologies and strategies to enhance Assessment. Parts of this skillset would be:

- **Assessment strategies**

To use digital technologies for formative and summative assessment. To enhance the diversity and suitability of assessment formats and approaches.

- **Analysing evidence**

To generate, select, critically analyse and interpret digital evidence on learner activity, performance and progress, in order to inform teaching and learning.

- **Feedback and planning**

To use digital technologies to provide targeted and timely feedback to learners. To adapt teaching strategies and to provide targeted support, based on the evidence generated by the digital technologies used. To enable learners and parents to understand the evidence provided by digital technologies and use it for decision-making.

Area 5: Empowering Learners

Using digital technologies to enhance inclusion, personalization, and learners' active engagement. This includes:

- **Accessibility and inclusion**

To ensure accessibility to learning resources and activities, for all learners, including those with special needs. To consider and respond to learners' (digital) expectations, abilities, uses, and misconceptions, as well as contextual, physical, or cognitive constraints to their use of digital technologies.

- **Differentiation and personalization**

To use digital technologies to address learners' diverse learning needs, by allowing learners to advance at different levels and speeds, and to follow individual learning pathways and objectives.

- **Actively engaging learners**

To use digital technologies to foster learners' active and creative engagement with a subject matter. To use digital technologies within pedagogic strategies that foster learners' transversal skills, deep thinking, and creative expression. To open up learning to new, real-world contexts, which involve learners themselves in hands-on activities, scientific investigation, or complex problem solving, or in other ways increase learners' active involvement in complex subject matters.

Area 6: Facilitating Learners' Digital Competence

Enabling learners to use digital technologies creatively and responsibly for information, communication, content creation, well-being, and problem-solving.

- **Information and media literacy**

To incorporate learning activities, assignments and assessments which require learners to articulate information needs; to find information and resources in digital environments; to organise, process, analyse and interpret information; and to compare and critically evaluate the credibility and reliability of information and its sources.

- **Digital communication and collaboration**

To incorporate learning activities, assignments and assessments which require learners to effectively and responsibly use digital technologies for communication, collaboration, and civic participation.

- **Digital content creation**

To incorporate learning activities, assignments, and assessments which require learners to express themselves through digital means, and to modify and create digital content in different formats. To teach learners how copyright and licenses apply to digital content, how to reference sources, and attribute licenses.

- **Responsible use**

To take measures to ensure learners' physical, psychological, and social wellbeing while using digital technologies. To empower learners to manage risks and use digital technologies safely and responsibly.

- **Digital problem solving**

To incorporate learning activities, assignments, and assessments which require learners to identify and solve technical problems, or to transfer technological knowledge creatively to new situations.

Digital Threats

Digital Threats in Social Media

In addition to all the above-mentioned competencies, a modern teacher should also educate their students on the threats that social media pose to young people and their gadgets.

Social media provides an opportunity for people to connect, share their life experiences, photos and videos. But oversharing, or not paying enough attention to impostors, can compromise social media security and lead to account breaches, both business and personal.

Attackers often use social network accounts during the reconnaissance phase of a social engineering or phishing attack. Social media can give attackers a platform to impersonate trusted individuals and brands, or the information they need to execute additional attacks, including social engineering and phishing attacks.

The methods used by an attacker depend on the social media platform targeted. Facebook, for example, allows users to keep their images and comments private, so an attacker will often friend a targeted user's friends or directly send a friend request to a targeted user to access their posts.

Because many social media platforms publicly display user posts, attackers can silently collect data even without a user's knowledge. Before the actual attack happens, some actions might be carried out in the background.

First, one might carefully review LinkedIn (or any other platform) for a list of possible targets. Targets can be a mix of high-level corporate employees and low-privilege users who could be tricked into sending additional data or fall for a phishing attack that gives the attacker access to account credentials. With a list of targets, an attacker could then review social media accounts for personal information. Personal information can help the attacker gain the target's trust in a social engineering attack. It can also be used to guess answers to security questions for an account takeover or used to get closer to a user with higher privileges.

After all the needed data is collected, the attacker may use any of the following methods:

- **Social engineering:** an attacker might contact the users to trick them into sending private data, proving credentials or wiring the attacker money. In a complex attack, the attacker can pretend to be a high-level executive to trick the targeted user into transferring money to the attacker's account.

- **Phishing:** an attacker may use collected social media information to spoof the sender of an email message and trick users into clicking links or sending the attacker private data. A high-level employee's email address could be spoofed with a message instructing the recipient to send money, click a malicious link or reply with sensitive data.
- **Site compromise and data theft:** with enough information from social media, an attacker could write malware explicitly targeting the business/user or perform an attack that would provide internal network access where the attacker can then exfiltrate data.
- **Spreading malware:** like brand impersonation, an attacker could create domains and websites that claim to be the legitimate business and trick users into downloading malware or providing credentials.
- **Data breach:** if an attacker gains access to account credentials, it could lead to a significant data breach.

Because there are several social media platforms on the internet, an attacker can perform social engineering and phishing using a variety of threat methods.

Digital Threat Techniques Online

Some of the other techniques of online fraud to be aware of are:

- Likejacking/clickjacking – tricks the user into clicking items on a webpage and liking something without their knowledge. Everything you like, share, and comment on says something about you – so have a good think before clicking the “like” button.
- Fake giveaways – in the last few years, marketers in big brands have used competitions as a cheap way to earn likes, clicks, and traffic. Such competitions are all over social media and may be especially tempting to the younger audience.
- Fake news – titles and topics vary, but there's one constant: the news usually takes the form of a video or an article with an outrageous title. Titles range from recently dead celebrities

to shocking worldwide events and explicit videos. Then, when the curiosity prevails, people hit the link en-masse, compromising their account or computer, or driving money to scammers.

- Cyberbullying and abuse – the internet thrives on anonymity, and anonymity can often lend itself to bad behaviour – especially on social media, where there are no real standards or policing. Celebrity accounts, for example, can be a free-for-all for a deluge of hateful comments and mean remarks. Cyberbullying has become a feature of social media usage in the past few years with many organisations and networks actively combatting this form of abuse.
- Identity theft – identity theft affects millions of people a year. A lack of knowledge, increased trust in social media, and a lack of data standards around data collected on social media are a huge part of this. Criminals and hackers trawl social media for information: ticket stubs to duplicate barcodes, holiday posts to facilitate burglary, and personal information to crack passwords or steal identities.
- Fake apps loaded with viruses or real apps that will sell your data, e.g., quizzes.

The above list of digital threats on social media is far from complete. Therefore, it is extremely important to know that one should never publicly post any of the following on your social accounts:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Hometown
- Relationship status
- Pet names etc.

Benefits of Having Digitally Competent Teachers

A digitally competent teacher is becoming an increasingly essential figure in today's digital age. As technology continues to advance and impact various industries, it is crucial that educators remain proficient in digital technology to create engaging learning experiences for their students. In this chapter, the benefits of having a digitally competent elementary school teacher will be explored.

Improved Student Engagement and Learning

One of the most significant benefits of having a digitally competent teacher is improved student engagement and learning. Through the use of technology, teachers can create interactive and collaborative learning experiences that cater to different learning styles. For instance, visual learners can benefit from using educational apps that include graphics or videos while auditory learners can benefit from podcasts or audio books (Church & Swanepoel, 2016). Additionally, digital tools like Kahoot! enable teachers to create fun quizzes that promote healthy competition among students.

Increased Efficiency and Productivity

A digitally competent teacher can significantly improve efficiency by streamlining administrative tasks such as grading, attendance taking, and communication with parents through email or messaging apps. By reducing time spent on these administrative tasks, teachers are left with more time for lesson planning and individualised instruction (Karsenti & Fievez-Vallée, 2013). Moreover, cloud-based storage platforms like Google Drive allow teachers to access documents quickly from any device without worrying about hardware failures or loss of data.

Preparation for Future Careers

An essential advantage of having a digitally competent teacher is preparing students for future careers that require knowledge of technology. The demand for employees who have digital skills has been growing rapidly across many industries such as healthcare and education sectors among others (Agrawal & Shah, 2020). It means achieving expertise in digital skills early on will help individuals develop critical thinking abilities leading them toward a successful career path.

Information and Communication Technologies in Education

In current times, the role of Information and Communication Technologies in education has become more prominent than ever. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced educational institutions to adopt remote teaching methods, relying heavily on ICT tools and platforms to

ensure continuity in learning. Remote teaching has become a crucial component in addressing the challenges posed by the suspension of traditional offline teaching during the pandemic. The advances in new Information and Communication Technologies have made it possible to organize trainings remotely, offering time and cost-effective solutions (Askenazy et al., 2022).

Teachers and students now have the flexibility to schedule classes based on their availability, thanks to the various teaching methods enabled by ICT. Remote teaching has not only helped bridge the gap caused by school closures, but also opened up new possibilities for learning beyond physical boundaries. With remote teaching, learners and educators can continue their educational journey regardless of time or place. The widespread shift to emergency remote teaching during the pandemic has highlighted the importance of professional development in digital competencies among teachers. Earlier research indicated that newly qualified teachers perceived the quality of ICT training during their education as inadequate. This emphasizes the need for ongoing training and support to ensure that educators are equipped with the necessary skills to effectively use ICT in their teaching methods. In the educational context, ICT plays a crucial role in supporting, enhancing, and optimizing the delivery of education. During the pandemic, many universities and educational institutions embraced remote teaching as a means to continue education. This shift has not only increased teacher and student competencies in using ICT tools, but also improved teachers' acceptance of incorporating technology into their teaching practices. Incorporating ICT in education is not a new concept, as its use has been steadily growing even before the pandemic (Mohammad & Khancharovna, 2021).

It has proven to be an effective tool in delivering personalized and interactive learning experiences, promoting student engagement, facilitating communication and collaboration among students and educators, and empowering learners with critical digital skills needed for the future. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the critical role of ICT in education.

The suspension of traditional offline teaching due to the pandemic has significantly affected the learning progress of students. Without access to physical classrooms, students have had to rely on remote teaching methods facilitated by ICT. This sudden shift to remote teaching has demonstrated the need for effective integration of ICT in education. ICT integration has allowed for the continuity of education, enabling students to engage in learning activities remotely. Furthermore, the use of ICT in education has provided opportunities for personalized learning

experiences. Students can access educational materials at their own pace and tailor their learning to meet their individual needs. The adoption of ICT in education has also facilitated the concept of blended learning, where a combination of online and offline teaching methods are utilized. This approach not only provides flexibility in terms of scheduling and access to resources, but also promotes student autonomy and independence. Moreover, the integration of ICT in education has provided access to a wide range of digital resources and tools that enhance the quality of teaching and learning (Dzinoreva & Mavunga, 2022).

Challenges of Integrating ICTs in Education

The integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in education has become increasingly important in today's digital age. However, this process is not without its challenges. One significant challenge is the lack of infrastructure and access to technology in many parts of the world, especially in developing countries. This issue can exacerbate educational inequalities, as students who do not have access to ICTs may fall behind their peers who do.

Another challenge is the need for teachers to be trained in how to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices. Many teachers may not feel confident or comfortable using ICTs, which can hinder their ability to provide a high-quality education for their students. Additionally, there is a risk that ICTs could be seen as a replacement for traditional teaching methods rather than a complementary tool.

The future of education is increasingly intertwined with information and communication technologies (ICTs). One emerging trend is the use of virtual and augmented reality in the classroom, which enables students to experience immersive learning environments. Another trend is the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning into educational software, allowing for personalized learning experiences tailored to each student's strengths and weaknesses.

Additionally, mobile devices are becoming more prevalent in classrooms, enabling students to access educational resources from anywhere at any time.

The implications of these trends include increased engagement and motivation for students, as well as improved access to education for those who may not have had it otherwise. However, there are also concerns about the potential for technology to widen existing inequalities in education and perpetuate biases. As we continue to explore the possibilities of ICTs in education, it will be important to consider how they can be used most effectively and equitably.

Case Study: Good Practices During COVID-19 in Lithuania

The pandemic has disrupted the normal functioning of education systems worldwide. Many pupils were unable to attend school, and educational institutions had to adapt quickly to the new conditions and challenges. Lithuania is no exception.

Before the pandemic, in the OECD PISA 2018 survey, around 70% of Lithuanian school leaders surveyed said that teachers in their schools have enough time to prepare lessons by integrating digital tools.

A survey of 3,514 teachers carried out by the MoEYS in May 2020 showed that more than half (49% to 57%) of teachers were positive about their preparation and the support they received. Almost half (49.4%) of teachers felt fully prepared for working remotely, 56% of teachers reported receiving the necessary technical support, and 57% the methodological support. 48% of respondents felt that they had sufficient time and resources to prepare for distance education.

The National Agency for Education (NAE) website offers (and continues to offer) a wide range of training and seminars for Lithuanian teachers. During the sessions, educators could learn how to use tools useful for distance learning (Google tools, Zoom, Discord, etc.), as well as share teaching methodologies and good practices.

Teachers in the study also identified various problems encountered during distance learning. Here are some of them:

- Increased pedagogical workload: it took much longer to prepare lessons, adapt tasks for distance learning, etc.

- The school administration's requirement to provide detailed reports on teachers' performance was also a major problem, indicating a lack of trust in the work of distance teachers.
- Therefore, the mental and physical health of teachers has been affected, with increased workload leading to overwork, poor sleep quality, exacerbation of chronic diseases, etc.
- Failure of communication and/or lack of timely and responsible decision-making by the management of the institutions led to a haphazard selection and use of e-resources and tools by educators.
- Another difficulty experienced by teachers was the lack of interaction with pupils. Teachers found it difficult to establish a relationship that could develop into an interaction.

Therefore, at the beginning of the pandemic, the Ministry of Education issued a series of guidelines to help teachers, students, and parents adapt to the new reality and rules of communication.

For example, teachers were advised on how to organise a smooth distance learning process and avoid breaking down electronic communication networks, or how to respond to bullying or other violent behaviour at school, and in particular online.

However, in November 2020, researchers of Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) conducted interviews with school administrators, focus groups, teachers, and parents. The following factors were highlighted as key to the success of distance education:

- In the area of IT infrastructure, allowing teachers to initially choose the systems they are best paid to use, and then moving to a common system afterwards, based on the school's experience and priorities, has proved successful.
- Digital content: it is essential to have universally agreed and developed digital learning content for all subjects, topics, on a single agreed platform; it is appropriate to involve students in the development of digital content and to encourage collaboration.

- In the area of digital competences, success depends on intra-institutional cooperation and training: in the initial phase, on the functions and possibilities of technology, and in the subsequent phases, on the didactical use of technology.
- In the area of partnership, cooperation, and networking, technology can be used for socialisation: virtual teachers' rooms, virtual coffee together, meetings of methodological groups.
- In the area of strategy, management, and leadership, the use of a single channel of communication has proved successful, through which agreements and rules are clearly communicated; planning a week or two ahead and making pupils aware of these plans.

Chapter 7 - Mentoring

Me and My Mentor

In the last school year, 2022/23, the career progression procedures in place for the last 22 years were changed. The previous career model had involved a successive progression to the next steps of professional promotion (from trainee teacher to appointed teacher), with an associated increase in competence and emoluments. The minimum time for reaching the next rank (about three years), the evaluation criteria, and the organising committee rules were known. This concept was replaced by a formula of admission and professional elevation, which could occur after four years of positively evaluated seniority.

According to the Teachers' Charter amendment, starting 1 September 2022¹⁷, teachers pursue a new career advancement path in a changed form. The time to reach the status of the appointed teacher has been shortened. Still, at the same time, the period of professional adaptation, i.e., leaving the level of novice teacher, has been extended. It is assumed that the abolition of the contract teacher rank and the extension of the work period without promotion ensure that teachers entering the job have adequate time to acquire the necessary competencies before their verification, conditioning the increase in status and remuneration. The presumed aim of the change is to broaden the opportunities for teachers to develop their practical skills. In the first years of work, novice teachers are to be supported by a mentor.

Interesting Fact

For many of us, mentoring, tutoring, and coaching are words taken from the English language, adopted by other languages in the 1970s, when methods of individual support based on an experienced mentor-mentee relationship became very popular in the United States and Europe. However, the term 'mentor' is much, much older.

Setting out on the Trojan War, Odysseus entrusted his son Telemachus's care to a friend. The friend's name was Mentor, which means thinker in Greek; which indeed he was. Like ancient

¹⁷ Text as amended Act of 26 January 1982 Teachers' Charter (Journal of Laws 2021, item 1762 and 2022, items 935, 1116, 1700 and 1730).

culture, modern pop culture often uses the master-apprentice theme, for example, the characters Obie-Wan Kenobi and Luke Skywalker.

Mentoring is considered to be a feature of organisations or institutions that place a high value on the development of human resources, where there is a good atmosphere where employees feel secure. The structure is transparent, where colleagues respect each other and are open to working together. Mentoring is part of a systemic approach to support the careers of employed individuals and prepare them to work effectively in a specific position and within an organisation. The important thing is that a successful mentoring process involves a well-motivated mentee and a competent, well-chosen mentoring partner. The result of such cooperation should be a perceptible increase in the self-confidence of the newcomer or novice, their practical and full use of expertise, their ability to function freely within the organisation, its structures and culture, as well as their commitment, readiness to be active, creative and cooperative and to support others.

Mentoring is also becoming one of the leading themes for improving the quality of education systems worldwide. The European Union has taken up the topic, allocating substantial funds to international projects that aim to develop concepts to support novice teachers and tools to help them plan and implement their professional development plans.

1. Individual Support Models

In the European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER) conducted by EU-OSHA¹⁸, psychosocial stress, noisy environments, and musculoskeletal disorders were identified as the most critical health and safety risks in the teaching profession. In addition, the increase in levels of violence in the workplace, which negatively affects the safety and well-being of workers, is of concern. These risks have increased during the pandemic and are also a consequence of the digital transformation in education. The findings also show that education workers consider psychosocial risks to be relatively the most difficult to manage.

¹⁸ <https://osha.europa.eu/pl/facts-and-figures/esener>

Interesting Fact

In this context, ETUCE – the European Trade Union Committee for Education stresses the need for a supportive working environment that prioritises teachers' physical safety and mental health to counter psychosocial risks and alleviate the teacher shortage affecting many European countries. The ETUCE, therefore, demands that governments and policymakers take adequate measures to improve the safety and well-being of teachers, academics, researchers, and other education workers to restore the attractiveness of the teaching profession, with a particular focus on the younger generations. In the European Campaign to Enhance the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession, among the ten key demands, three address the issues mentioned: Support an effective career start to ensure retention! Ensure quality professional development! Ensure workload control and a work-life balance!

Supporting career starters in their chosen profession can be done in various ways. It can include facilitation, counselling, coaching, tutoring, or just mentoring. Each of these approaches has its advantages and disadvantages. Based on our age, experience, and resulting beliefs, we have different understandings of various words, their meaning and the challenges they generate. Let us put these concepts in order:

- Facilitator makes communication easier, allowing us to identify the role's goals, objectives and responsibilities quickly.
- The counsellor/advisor generally knows how things are supposed to be, what they entail and what the responsibilities and constraints are. They provide information and give guidance.
- A coach facilitates the formulation of goals and related development paths. They help us to recognise our own inner limitations and the fundamental values that guide us, which we are not always aware of. In this way, they help us to understand what factors may determine our careers.
- A tutor, like a counsellor, can and does know a lot and, at the same time, like a coach, allows us to choose from this knowledge and possibilities what is most essential and optimal for us and for the tasks that our professional work, for example, puts before us, to strengthen our role in the team. Finally, a mentor ...

2. Mentor – Functioning Practice

The mentor combines the competencies and roles of all the functions mentioned above. It is suitable for them to be an authority champion and have key competencies in those activities for which they will prepare the novice teacher. Ultimately, the mentor should be someone who will share not so much knowledge as experience. Last but not least, it should be someone who can help his/her mentee to find the best solution - and one that takes into account the skills and resources of the mentee.

A mentor should also be someone who makes someone take their first steps in the profession, capable of formulating goals and selecting the most effective and feasible solutions to achieve them. He or she should not just be a theoretician but an experienced practitioner who has himself or herself made innovative attempts, has not been afraid of mistakes, and has been successful in his or her career (including in collaboration with others). It is also essential that the mentor treats the mentee's success as their own, so that they can notice it, describe it, and celebrate it on an equal footing with the person supported. It is, therefore, all the more worthwhile to ensure that the mentor is a person with a lot of experience, empathy, and sensitivity to others.

3. Mentor – Competence Profile

A mentor can be defined as a person who can help others in many ways with their knowledge, actions, or intellectual pursuits. At the same time, a mentor, thanks to his/her competencies and experience, is a role model, or at least an essential point of reference to follow in the search for one's own ways of doing specific tasks or performing a chosen function. The main objective of a mentor is to support the personal and professional development of the mentee by, among other things, helping him or her to grasp the broader meaning of what is currently happening, which at first glance may seem irrelevant.

The mentor should develop and support the mentee in his/her abilities within the framework of professional development opportunities.

The relationship between mentor and mentee should be based on a soft form of leadership on the one hand and, on the other hand, providing inspiration or the necessary resources to learn and work on one's own development. The soft leadership aspect is particularly evident in decision-making processes, where the mentor should provide advice and not make decisions for or on behalf of the mentee - even when he or she disagrees with the mentee. This is because

the mentor's responsibility in this respect is only to provide opinions, reflections or, in exceptional cases, expertise based on his or her own experience and using his or her knowledge and skills.

The key competencies which a mentor should have are:

- The right motivation to act in a supportive way, devoid of directives and focused on the mentee's needs and his/her capacities and development priorities
- Knowledge and understanding of what is required in a given situation
- The ability to translate knowledge into concrete action
- Communication proficiency, including the ability to give clear and constructive feedback and to listen to others
- Proficiency in sharing experience, including effectively communicating needed and complete information
- Openness to working with others
- Building in the mentee an inner conviction about the importance of the work of the teacher and the prestige of the profession
- Care to keep confidentiality and inspire confidence
- The ability to self-evaluate and keep a distance between themselves and their own and the mentee's results

In addition, the mentor is obliged to broaden his/her knowledge and improve his/her skills in so far as this function is necessary. He or she should participate in the assessment process and take part in the observation of compulsory demonstration activities prepared by the mentee.

The mentor should be able to learn lessons for the future, build up his/her authority in the team, and listen and take into account the opinions of others, for example, the management of the educational institution.

3.1. Interview with the Mentor / Mentee

The mentor and mentee aim to formalise their relationship during the first interviews. We deliberately use the formal plural here. The first meeting should be devoted to getting to know

each other. This can be as basic as how you address each other – formally (Mr., Mrs., Colleague) or informally – by first names.

We called it the first interview, which is perhaps a somewhat surprising choice, but above all, we wanted to encourage you to think about what you would like to know about your mentor/mentee and the questions you want to ask the person with whom you are likely to work closely for two years or more. However, we hope your first conversation will be a dialogue in a relaxed atmosphere. Therefore, also think about what you would like to say about yourself.

Task / Exercise / Activity

Interview with a mentor/mentee	
<i>This is the place where you should write down your mentor's basic contact details, the date of your first meeting and - if you feel like it - make a note of your impressions of the meeting or take a selfie together.</i>	
Date of meeting	
My mentor/my mentee is:	<i>Space for first and last name</i>
Our joint photo	

A. *Forms and time of contact. If your mentor/mentee does not give you his/her contact details*

himself/herself, ask, e.g., write down questions here which will determine the rules of the mutual contact, e.g.,

“I will be in contact with you for a certain period of time.”

1. How can I contact you if you are not at school on a particular day or time?

2. May I call your private number?

3. What hours can I call you?

4. Shall I give you my contact details?

B. *Information about your mentor/your mentee. Here, you can write down questions about your career*

trajectory, your first school experience, etc. Examples:

1. How long have you been in the profession?

2. Why did you choose this profession?

3. What do you remember about your early days as a teacher?

4. What is most important to you professionally?

5. ...

6. ...

C. *Information about family, preferences etc. When asking these questions, make sure they are not too intimate and do not violate privacy boundaries. If your mentor/mentee says he/she is single, you should not ask her/him the reasons for this. You should also not ask about political views or religion. You can expect the same approach from your mentor/your mentee. She/he should also not violate the boundaries of your privacy. If she/he*

asks a question you do not want to answer for various reasons, say: "I'm sorry, but I'd rather not talk about it. It's too personal for me."

1. Are you from this city/town?

2. Which school did you go to?

3. Do you have a pet?

4. What do you like to do in your free time?

5. Am I the first person you have looked after?

6. Has anyone in your family also been a teacher/teacher?

7. ...

8. ...

D. Write down below what information you want to provide about yourself.

• ...

• ...

• ...

E. My impressions after the meeting with the mentor/mentee – note your impressions here.

3.2. Definition of Roles, Overall Work Plan

The following conversation should be about planning joint activities - frequency and location of meetings, how to give feedback, etc. Each party should discuss its expectations and define how it understands its role. It is essential to establish common goals and objectives. It is helpful to put what has been agreed on paper and revisit this action plan occasionally to see if it needs to be revised for any reason. The revision or update date should be set in advance, e.g., after each semester.

Task / Exercise / Activity

Planning the work with the mentor/mentee:	
A. Expectations	
<i>Write down here what you expect from your mentor/mentee and what she/he expects from you.</i>	
My expectations:	My mentor's expectations:

B. Roles <i>Here, write down what each party's responsibilities are and what duties they have. As a hint for filling in this box, you can refer to the provisions in the mentoring regulations.</i>	
My role as a mentee: <i>Here, you can write down what you commit yourself to, e.g., to fulfil your professional responsibilities diligently, to search for possible solutions and suggestions for action in the available sources, to read the recommended materials and participate in the improvement forms indicated by the mentor/mentee, to contact the mentor/mentee regularly and check their progress, to participate in the observation of other teachers' lessons, and to invite them to observe your own lessons.</i>	The role of my mentor/my mentee: <i>You can expect your mentor to commit to supporting you and encouraging you in various ways, to put you in touch with people and institutions whose help or cooperation you are entitled to expect. He or she will also allow you to observe their own lessons or those of other teachers, and that he or she will give you feedback on your progress and meet with you regularly.</i>
C. Objectives <i>Set the goals that you will work on. These can be broad goals, which will later be narrowed down to indicate the more specific professional goals of the mentee. These goals could be about getting to know, for example, the school environment, the school calendar, supporting leadership development – classroom management, reducing stress, enhancing motivation and job satisfaction, etc. If possible, set deadlines for these goals.</i>	
Objectives	Target Dates
D. Define dates, frequency, and location of meetings. <i>If the legal provision does not specify this, you can tentatively agree on the length of the mentoring, e.g., one year or two years. You can also agree on general meeting rules, e.g., topics, duration etc.</i>	

Deadline and Frequency	Meeting Place

3.3 Mentor Agreement

The time spent defining roles and planning mentoring is paramount for your relationship in the months and years to come. It is also a prelude to preparing the contract between the parties. Virtually all institutions where mentoring is organised have templates for similar agreements. They are nothing new in education systems either. A mentoring contract is a formal document that defines the relationship between you and your mentor and the tasks and responsibilities of both parties.

You and your mentor should treat this agreement as a contract and sign the document. Many organisations also ask the supervisors of the mentee and mentor to sign this document. By doing so, the supervisor, in our case, the headmistress or principal of the school, commits to creating the right conditions for the mentee and mentor to work together. Later in this chapter, you will find a model mentor-mentee agreement and a model tripartite agreement signed by a school management representative. The agreement has many advantages:

- It defines expectations
- Makes the parties feel responsible for fulfilling their obligations
- Helps to identify areas that will require support from other people or institutions, e.g., the psychological-educational counselling service
- Establishes conditions for fair communication
- Sets deadlines and targets
- Defines the conditions for withdrawal from the contract

An essential element of the contract is a confidentiality clause.

Mentoring requires time and commitment. And yet, both you and your mentor or mentee will have other professional and family responsibilities. With a well-designed contract, it is possible

to ensure a balance between the tasks arising from mentoring and your participation in the process and your other obligations and free time. This is achieved by, for example, discussing the structure of meetings to avoid wasting time.

A termination clause, i.e., termination of the agreement, should also be included in the contract. The relationship between mentee and mentor is professional but also very personal. Thus, if the relationship between the parties is not friendly or has deteriorated beyond repair for some reason, then the cooperation between mentee and mentor should be terminated. Either party can initiate termination.

The following are examples of two mentoring agreements. Discuss with the mentor or mentee which formula is more beneficial in your opinion. Complete the agreement's provisions to suit your individual needs or working conditions. Please print out the agreement in duplicate, one for each party, and sign it. Note: you can attach annexes to the agreement, e.g., a timetable and action plan.

Task / Exercise / Activity**CONTRACT BETWEEN MENTOR AND MENTEE**

The following contract is concluded by and between

and _____ on _____

We voluntarily enter into this mentoring relationship, which is intended to be a productive and rewarding experience. To minimise the possibility of misunderstandings, we have agreed on the following:

1. **Confidentiality.** All information and content shared between Mentor and Mentee will be confidential.

2. **Expectations.** It is expected that the Mentor(s) will provide educational and developmental advice and guidance and both parties will work together to identify the Mentee's personal and professional goals and develop a plan to achieve these goals.

3. **Meetings.** The Mentor(s) and Mentee(s) will meet at least _____ at a mutually agreed time and place. Agreed meeting dates should not be cancelled unless unavoidable. Cancelled meetings should be rescheduled. At the end of each meeting, both Parties will agree on a date for the next meeting.

Each meeting will last a minimum of ____ minutes and a maximum of ____ minutes.

4. **Duration of mentoring.** Mentoring relationships vary in length depending on the circumstances. Our aim is to maintain the relationship throughout. However, either party has the option to end the relationship for a legitimate reason, provided they notify the other party.

We agree that the role of the Mentor(s) is:

We agree that the role of the Mentee(s) is:

The mentor(s) agrees to be honest and provide constructive feedback while sharing their own experience and knowledge.

The mentee(s) agrees to be open to feedback from the Mentor(s) and to respect his/her insights and experiences.

Signature of Mentor(s): _____ Date:

Signature of the Mentee(s): _____ Date:

School Commitments

Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of 6 September 2022 on teachers' attainment of professional promotion grades (Journal of Laws, item 1914) § 2. Paragraph 2

The headmaster of a school, the teacher temporarily entrusted with the duties of the headmaster of a school, and the teacher performing the duties of the headmaster of a school in substitution for a period of at least 6 months, hereinafter referred to as the “headmaster”, shall provide support to the teacher undergoing preparation for the teaching profession and additional preparation for the teaching profession in the performance of his/her duties and improvement of knowledge and skills, in particular shall provide conditions for the teacher to participate in forms of professional development and to make use of substantive and methodological assistance of the pedagogical library, psychological-pedagogical counselling centre or other institution operating in the educational system.

MENTORING CONTRACT

The mentoring contract links the Mentor, the Novice Teacher, and the Principal and defines the responsibilities of each party. The diligent fulfilment of the duties and responsibilities enshrined in the contract directly impacts the quality of education. The Novice Teacher is a member of the school community, and this contract is intended to strengthen his/her positive relationships with students, other teachers, and parents.

Mentor and Mentee hereby agree to:

1. Develop professional and collegial working relationships by discussing expectations and coming to a mutual understanding of how to work together effectively.

2. Maintain the confidentiality of all information entrusted to each other if it does not concern matters covered by the Criminal Code.

3. Meet once a week (minimum) to discuss practice, build collegial support, and observe effective teaching practice.

Mentor hereby agrees to:

1. Prepare adequately for their role by attending relevant forms of further training.
2. Familiarise myself with the level of preparation, skills and needs of the novice teacher to ensure I receive the right type and range of support.
3. Visit the novice teacher's class and provide feedback, guidance, and support.
4. Be available for information and consultation.

Mentee hereby agrees to:

1. Participate in forms of improvement recommended by the Mentor.
2. Observe the teaching of the Mentor, as well as the teaching of other experienced professionals.
3. Work on following the mentor's suggestions.
4. Provide the Mentor with answers to questions that arise.

The Head of School hereby agrees to:

1. Observing and evaluating the Novice Teacher.
2. Provide support to both the Mentor and the Novice Teacher, including organisational support.

And declares:

3. To not solicit evaluative comments from the Mentor regarding the Novice Teacher.
4. To provide the Mentor with time off to observe and work with the Novice Teacher by reducing his/her teaching time by _____ hours per week.

Mentor: _____ Date: _____

Novice Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Director: _____ Date: _____

3.5. Mentor – Legal Context

Ubi societas, ibi ius – Where there is society, there is law, the ancients used to say. Let us, therefore examine how the function and tasks of the mentor are described in educational legislation and where to find them. Familiarising oneself with these provisions makes one realise the importance of the relationship between the law and its implementation in practice.

Following the amendment of the Teachers' Charter, related to the new formula of professional promotion, in Article 9ca in the content of points 11-13, there are provisions stating that a teacher undergoing professional preparation is assigned a mentor from among appointed or certified teachers by the head of the school. The mentor's tasks include working for the mentee teacher by:

- Providing ongoing support in the process of induction into the profession, including familiarising the mentee with the documentation of teaching, educational and caring activities and other documents in force at the school
- Providing assistance in the selection of appropriate forms of in-service training
- Sharing their knowledge and experience to the extent necessary for them to carry out their duties effectively
- To enable observation and discussion of their classes
- Observing and discussing classes taught by the teacher
- Inspiring and encouraging professional challenges

Task / Exercise / Activity

Think about and identify what elements or similar wording you can find in both legislation and the chapters on mentoring. Discuss with your mentor or mentee whether other legislation is similar. The name of the Teachers' Charter Act is mentioned in the chapter. What other issues does it regulate that directly affect school practice? List at least three examples.

1. ...

2. ...

3. ...

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