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## The Necessity of Teacher Development in the Czech Republic

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### Abstract

This article explores the critical need for teacher development in the Czech Republic, considering the current challenges and global trends in education. It examines issues such as financial compensation, administrative burdens, and the support available for teachers' professional growth, while comparing the Czech situation to successful international models. The article highlights the necessity of investing in teachers' professional development to improve instructional quality, alleviate psychological stress, and make the teaching profession more appealing. It suggests specific measures for enhancement, including reforms in compensation, digitalization of administrative tasks, the introduction of mentoring programs, and increased psychological support. A collaborative approach that involves all stakeholders and a long-term strategy aimed at supporting teachers and advancing the Czech educational system is essential for achieving success.

**Keywords:** Teacher, professional development, education, reform, compensation, administration, mentoring, psychological stress, Czech Republic, innovation in education.

Education is essential for societal development, with teachers serving as the backbone of this system (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2015). The Czech Republic, similar to many other nations, encounters various challenges in education, such as increasing administrative tasks, inadequate financial compensation for teachers, and insufficient systematic support for their professional growth (Greger & Ježková, 2018). Although public expectations for teachers are high, their professional development often takes a backseat in educational policy.

## **Introduction**

As we approach 2025, the Czech Republic is at a pivotal moment for educational reforms. The Education Policy Strategy of the Czech Republic until 2030+ is currently being implemented, but its effectiveness largely hinges on the quality and motivation of teachers (MŠMT, 2021). Global trends like the digitalization of education, personalized learning, and a focus on developing soft skills are creating new demands for educators. At the same time, the disparity between societal expectations and the actual conditions within schools is growing.

This article aims to emphasize the significance of ongoing professional development for teachers within the Czech educational framework, compare it with successful international practices, and suggest effective strategies to enhance their status.

## **Current Challenges in the Teaching Profession in the Czech Republic**

### **Financial Compensation and Social Recognition**

Despite recent increases in teachers' salaries, their real wages continue to fall short of the demands and responsibilities associated with the profession. Data from the Czech Statistical Office (ČSÚ) indicates that the average salary of a Czech teacher is around 65% of what university-educated workers earn, which is lower than the average in developed countries. This diminished prestige of the teaching profession is evident in the declining interest among young people in entering this field.

According to the latest data from the Czech Statistical Office (ČSÚ) for 2024, the average salary for teachers has reached CZK 52,300, marking a 15 % increase since 2021. However, this amount still falls short of the government's goal of achieving 130 % of the average wage. An analysis conducted by the Pedagogical Chamber reveals that as many as 30 % of young

teachers are considering leaving the profession within their first five years, primarily due to inadequate financial compensation and a lack of social prestige (ČSÚ, 2025).

In contrast, countries like Finland not only provide better salaries for teachers but also create pathways for consistent career advancement, boosting the profession's prestige. Estonia, recognized as an educational leader in Europe, encourages teachers through financial incentives and professional development programs. The Czech Republic might benefit from implementing differentiated pay based on experience and teaching effectiveness (idnes.cz).

### **Administrative Burden**

Teachers dedicate a large part of their working hours to paperwork and tasks that don't involve direct teaching. A survey by the Pedagogical Chamber found that as much as 30 % of teachers' time is spent on administrative duties, which takes their focus away from the teaching process (pedagogicke.info).

A study by the National Pedagogical Institute in 2024 showed that teachers typically spend around 11 hours each week on administrative responsibilities. This includes tasks like completing reports, developing individual education plans, and communicating with parents via electronic systems. Consequently, 68 % of the teachers surveyed reported that they lack sufficient time to prepare high-quality and innovative lessons (skolstvi.ms). One potential solution is the digitalization of education, which could help lessen the administrative load on teachers. This could involve implementing automated systems for grading and attendance, using electronic forms, and enhancing collaboration between schools and the Ministry of Education.

### **Support for Professional Growth**

There is a lack of a cohesive system for regular teacher training that addresses current pedagogical challenges, such as working with students who have special educational needs and implementing modern teaching methods.

The Further Education of Pedagogical Staff (DVPP) system in the Czech Republic is characterized by fragmentation and insufficient quality in the courses offered. In contrast, countries like Finland and Singapore have a systematic approach to planning and funding teacher professional development, providing up to 100 hours of training per teacher each year.

In the Czech Republic, however, this responsibility often falls on individual schools. A 2024 analysis by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports revealed that only 45 % of Czech teachers engage in structured professional development programs, which is significantly lower than the OECD average of 70 % (op.europa.eu).

In some nations, such as Finland, lifelong learning for teachers is a compulsory aspect of their professional development, whereas in the Czech Republic, it largely depends on the initiative of schools and teachers. Estonia, which effectively trains educators in digital literacy and innovative teaching methods, serves as a valuable example (idnes.cz).

### **Psychological Stress and Burnout**

Psychological stress and burnout are major issues in the teaching profession, impacting both educators and the overall quality of education. The mounting pressures on teachers, stemming from various sources, lead to a gradual decline in their mental well-being. This decline not only hampers the quality of teaching but also affects teachers' personal lives.

Research shows that a considerable number of Czech teachers experience burnout syndrome, which poses serious risks to their well-being and the quality of education they provide. A 2023 study by the National Institute SYRI revealed that one in five Czech educators suffers from physical exhaustion, with 6% meeting the criteria for burnout syndrome. Additionally, a study conducted by the Faculty of Education and the First Faculty of Medicine at Charles University found that 19 % of primary school teachers display moderate to severe burnout symptoms.

The primary stressors contributing to burnout include challenging student behavior, an overwhelming administrative workload, and difficult interactions with parents. These issues highlight the urgent need for a systematic approach to address teacher burnout within the Czech educational system. To effectively tackle this problem, a comprehensive set of measures must be implemented. A crucial step would be to establish systematic psychological support for teachers, which could include supervision programs or individual coaching. Such initiatives would offer teachers a space to reflect on their experiences, share insights, and gain new perspectives, significantly aiding in the prevention of burnout syndrome.

Another vital measure is to incorporate stress prevention topics into ongoing education programs for teachers. This approach would equip educators with the essential knowledge and skills to manage stressful situations effectively and maintain their mental health.

## **The Importance of Teacher Professional Development**

The significance of teacher professional development is vital for enhancing the quality of education and for fostering personal satisfaction and sustained motivation among educators. A structured approach to professional development involves assessing needs, planning, and executing development activities, making sure that teacher growth aligns with the school's requirements and contributes to lasting improvements in educational quality (EDU.cz, 2021).

**Supporting teachers** in adopting innovative methods and digital technologies is crucial for their professional growth. By incorporating information and communication technologies (ICT) into their teaching, educators can explore new strategies like the flipped classroom and more interactive educational formats. This not only makes instruction more relevant to today's world but also enhances student engagement (NUV, 2019).

**Pedagogical-psychological** preparation is essential in teacher education, providing both a theoretical and practical foundation for the teaching profession. It includes developing skills in crisis communication and addressing the needs of children with various backgrounds. This component of professional development improves teachers' capacity to handle different situations in the classroom and cater to the unique needs of their students (DSpace CUNI, 2021).

**Mentoring serves** as a valuable resource for new teachers. By pairing novice educators with seasoned mentors, we can greatly enhance their professional development and help decrease turnover during the initial years of their careers. A structured mentoring program involves training mentors and fostering a collaborative atmosphere among educators (SRP Vedeme školu, 2022).

In the Czech Republic, there are various initiatives designed to support the professional development of teachers. One such initiative is the System of Support for the Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (SYPO) project, which offers methodological support and educational programs for educators. These efforts play a crucial role in the ongoing enhancement of pedagogical practices and the overall quality of education (Projekt SYPO, 2022).

## **Schools as Centers of Teacher Development**

Schools play a crucial role in the professional development of teachers, which is vital for enhancing the educational system and fostering the growth of educators. This perspective

highlights the significance of ongoing education and development for teachers within their work environment. A noteworthy example in this context is the concept of Just Community Schools, which advocates for democratic governance in schools and encourages teachers to actively participate in decision-making processes. This model fosters an atmosphere where teachers feel more engaged and motivated to improve both themselves and the school as a whole. The Just Community approach emphasizes the importance of moral development and responsibility through the organization of practices and the culture within the school itself (Power, Higgins, Kohlberg, 1989).

For pedagogical practice to be continuously improved, regular supervision and reflection on instruction are crucial. Teachers must be given the chance to talk about their teaching practices, evaluate their approaches, and look for more efficient ways to operate. In addition to assisting educators in honing their craft, this technique fosters an environment of transparency and reciprocal learning inside the school. In schools, supervision consists of targeted sharing under the direction of an expert who focuses on relational concerns and teacher assistance, rather than control (npi.cz).

Collegiate support represents another important aspect of teacher professional development. Educators can greatly reduce stress and overcome professional obstacles by sharing their experiences. Facilitating opportunities for teachers to collaborate and learn from one another enhances the professional community and encourages creative teaching methods. A tool for teacher care is supervision (ped.muni.cz).

Teachers' active participation in educational system reforms is essential to guaranteeing its applicability and efficacy. Since they have firsthand knowledge of the realities of the educational process, teachers ought to be given the chance to contribute to the development of curricula and instructional practices. Their knowledge and experience are invaluable when creating significant and workable improvements (eric.ed.gov). A methodical approach and the backing of educational institutions and school administration are necessary for the implementation of these measures. Establishing an atmosphere that encourages open discussion, trying out novel approaches, and professional development is crucial. As hubs for teacher development, schools may make a big difference in raising educational standards, enhancing teachers' professional identities, and enhancing the educational system as a whole.

## **Proposed Solutions**

The proposed ideas for improving the educational system and supporting educators encompass several critical areas, including:

Altering the remuneration framework is an essential initial measure in recruiting and retaining skilled educators. The proposed three-tiered career framework may effectively reflect instructors' involvement in innovative endeavors, the quality of their teaching, and their years of experience. This technique may increase the compensation of outstanding educators by as much as 30 % above the base rate, significantly enhancing the attractiveness of teaching as a profession and promoting continuous professional development.

A significant component in facilitating instructors' roles is the digitalization of administrative tasks. The implementation of a national school information system is anticipated to decrease the administrative burden by as much as 40%. This system would automatically create data, facilitate resource sharing among teachers, and provide a cohesive platform for parent-teacher communication. Educators may subsequently focus on their principal objectives of engaging with students and delivering superior instruction.

Retention of novice educators necessitates mentorship and support for new teachers. The structured two-year mandatory mentoring program may significantly facilitate new teachers' professional development and adaptation to the school environment. Participation in a program featuring a structured professional development plan, consistent consultations with a seasoned mentor, and a reduced workload could result in a departure rate of up to 50% lower among young teachers. This technique would not only stabilize the teaching staff but also enhance the quality of instruction over time.

Collaboration and a systematic strategy at the school, founder, and Ministry of Education levels are essential for implementing these proposals. Long-term investments in these areas can significantly improve educational standards and the attractiveness of the teaching profession.

## **Discussion**

The main importance of teachers in the Czech educational system has been underlined in this paper together with the requirement of methodical support of their professional growth. The

suggested actions—compensation reform, administrative digitalization, mentoring program implementation, and strengthening of psychological support—can greatly help to improve the quality of education, lower teacher psychological stress, and boost the appeal of the teaching career.

It is crucial to understand, meantime, that the execution of these policies could run across certain challenges. The successful execution of the reforms may be hampered by their financial needs, opposition to change from some players, and inadequate coordination amongst particular educational institutions.

Thus, it is imperative to keep the conversation on the function of teachers and look for further means of supporting them if we are to guarantee the continued development of Czech education. The part school leadership plays in incorporating parents in the learning process, building a supportive environment for teachers, and using creative teaching strategies should especially be underlined.

Simultaneously, further study is required to evaluate how various kinds of professional growth affect teacher satisfaction and instructional quality. Methodical data collecting and result analysis help to maximize financial resources and improve the direction of educational policies.

Only a thorough and intelligent approach based on scientific knowledge that considers the particular features of the Czech educational system will guarantee that teachers have the tools and resources required to effectively meet the challenges of the twenty-first century and to educate next generations.

## **Conclusion**

Given the thorough examination of existing difficulties and suggested remedies, it is evident that investing in teacher development is crucial for the future of education in the Czech Republic. Systematic modifications designed to enhance the professional development of educators will result in improved instructional quality and superior academic outcomes for students, as well as heightened satisfaction and stability within the teaching profession. Proposed reforms encompass the reduction of administrative burdens on educators via digitalization, the delegation of certain bureaucratic tasks to administrative personnel, the implementation of mandatory and high-quality mentoring programs for novice teachers, the



provision of accessible and state-backed professional development courses, and the enhancement of psychological support systems for teachers, including the establishment of regular supervision. Investing in teacher development is both an educational policy need and a strategic essential for enhancing the Czech Republic's competitiveness in the global knowledge economy. The successful execution of the proposed procedures may enhance the appeal of the teaching profession, elevate the performance of Czech pupils in foreign assessments, and bolster the nation's innovation capacity by 2030. Success hinges on a collaborative and proactive strategy involving all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, school founders, educators, and their professional associations. A comprehensive long-term strategy and meticulously devised procedures are essential to guarantee that the educational system in the Czech Republic is effective, inclusive, and well equipped for future challenges.

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