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## **Programs for Re-Training of academic degree holders for Teaching**

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### **Abstract**

Concurrently with the shortage of teachers, there has been a considerable change in the characteristics of the people who turn to teaching, and they are not similar to the characteristics found in the past. The programs for re-training for teaching exist in different countries around the world, and the number of the academically educated people who learn in the programs for the re-training for teaching is steadily increasing<sup>1</sup>. The main change is the large increase in the number of people who choose to work in teaching as a second career<sup>2</sup>.

**Keywords:** second career, teaching profession, Re-Training for Teaching, traditional programs, alternative programs.

### **Programs for the Re-Training of Academically Educated People for Teaching in the World**

Considering the change in the characteristics of the people who turn to teaching, there is increasing recognition of the need to develop for them unique training programs, so that they can fit well into the education system and contribute to the improvement of the quality of the workforce found in it<sup>3</sup>. Some of these programs are based on the perception of the de-regulation in the training of teachers, an approach whose main supporters are public people and economists. The training in such programs is rather short and enables entry into the teaching profession before the completion of the studies and the practical training<sup>4</sup>.

In different states in the United States and in Europe, in recent years alternative programs, short-term, for the training of teachers have proliferated. These programs are very different from one another, but the common denominator for most of them is that the participants have at least an undergraduate degree in one of the disciplines taught in the schools but have not formally studied the fields of education or pedagogy. They received a very short training in some academic institution (college or university) or do not receive any training at all, and they begin to work in teaching. In parallel, they are given theoretical and practical training and support in their work in the school. In the past decade in the United States approximately 175,000 teachers who had undertaken some type of alternative training have entered the field of teaching<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Avdor, S. (2013). Assessment Research: Successes from the Teachers in an Experimental Project for the Training of Academically Educated People for Teaching in a Model Based on the Principles of Schools for Professional Development, *Vision and Action*, The Achva Academic College, 15. (Hebrew)

<sup>2</sup>Wagner, T., & Emanuel-Levy, D. (2015). Are They Really Novices in Teaching? Motives and Self-Efficacy of Those Who Choose Teaching as a Second Career, *Pages*, 61, 82-112. (Hebrew)

<sup>3</sup>Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (2005). Introduction. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.) *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do* (pp. 1-39). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

<sup>4</sup>Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21st Century Teacher Education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(3), 300-314.

<sup>5</sup>Weissblay, E. (2014). *Accelerated Program for the Re-Training of Academically Educated People for Teaching*, The Knesset Center of Research and Information, December 15. (Hebrew)

The steadily increasing number of people turning to teaching as a second career in the United States has raised questions regarding the construction of alternative training programs, the goal of which is to address the personal profile, and to take into consideration the candidates' life experience and maturity<sup>6</sup>.

Thus, for example, unique programs were developed to train people from the military to work in the education system. The initiative for such programs began in the year 1992, and these programs are called Troops to Teachers (TTT)<sup>7</sup>. Such a training program enables military people to be addressed, interviewed, and employed in the field of teaching for three years before they leave the military service. During this period, they are supposed to learn education, to experience practical teaching, and to obtain a teaching certificate. The training program helps recruit teachers who will learn subjects that are needed in the system (mathematics, sciences, and special education) and support them in the stage of the entry into the system<sup>8</sup>.

A second career in teaching is distinct from a first career in teaching in aspects relating to previous experience, which significantly influences the professional development. Therefore, in the transition from a first career to a second career in teaching, it is necessary to weigh the specific needs of this group of people training for teaching. The training programs are required to act from four principles:

1. Suitability to the expectations of the students.
2. Coping with the challenges related to the transition to teaching.
3. Care in the transition to teaching.
4. Development of a theory of practice<sup>9</sup>.

There are differences between the programs in terms of curriculum and structure, because of the characteristics of the academic background and their scholastic needs<sup>10</sup>. A significant number of those who submit their candidacy did not intend to do so and to turn to the regular training program. The force of attraction of the alternative programs derives from the fact that they propose a quick and practical way of entering the teaching profession<sup>11</sup>.

Sometimes the learners in these programs constitute separate learning groups from the students who learn in the regular training programs and sometimes they are integrated in them. The profile that characterizes the candidates for alternative training programs includes candidates without significant educational background and experience who have an undergraduate degree. These programs attract a higher percentage of the male population than do the traditional parallels. For the most part, the candidates' age is slightly higher than that of their parallels in the regular programs, they have business or military experience, or they have a background in mathematics, science, and foreign languages<sup>12</sup>.

The suitability of the training programs to the learners' characteristics and the education system's needs is expressed in several ways. Some of the programs are accelerated, with a short duration of training, and the trainees for teaching teach in the schools already during the program. Some of the programs are primarily online, apart from teaching experience in schools.

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<sup>6</sup>Kfir, D. (2008). Recruitment for Teaching of Academically Educated Adults Who Seek a Second Career and Their Alternative Training at a High Standard, In D. Kfir & T. Ariav (Eds.) *Crisis of Teaching: Towards the Corrected Training of Teaching* (pp. 176-193), Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem and HaKibbutzHaMeuchad Press. (Hebrew)

<sup>7</sup>Siekkinen, M. (2008). *Military Veterans in Georgia Public School Classrooms*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Walden University, Minneapolis, MN

<sup>8</sup>Wagner, T., & Emanuel-Levy, D. (2015). Are They Really Novices in Teaching? Motives and Self-Efficacy of Those Who Choose Teaching as a Second Career, *Pages*, 61, 82-112. (Hebrew)

<sup>9</sup>Tigheelaar, A., Vermunt, J.D., & Brouwer, N. (2012). Patterns of Development in Second-Career Teacher's Conceptions of Learning and Teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28, 1163-1174.

<sup>10</sup>Avdor, S. (2013). Assessment Research: Successes from the Teachers in an Experimental Project for the Training of Academically Educated People for Teaching in a Model Based on the Principles of Schools for Professional Development, *Vision and Action*, The Achva Academic College, 15. (Hebrew)

<sup>11</sup>Hammerness, K., & Reininger, M. (2008). Who Goes into Early-Entry Programs? In P. Grossman & S. Loeb (Eds.) *Alternative Routes to Teaching: Mapping the New Landscape of Teacher Education* (pp. 31-64). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

<sup>12</sup>Zeichner, K. M., & Schulte, A. K. (2001). What We Know and Don't Know from Peer-Reviewed Research about Alternative Teacher Certification Programs, *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52 (14), 266-282.

Some of the programs focus on the practical part of the teaching – the understanding of the students, the examination of the ways of teaching in the class, evaluation, and reflection. In these programs the component of receiving help of mentor teachers in the schools is prominent.

A comparison performed between the alternative programs and the traditional programs found that the cost of the shortened training of a student teacher in the alternative path is more expensive than the cost in the traditional program, while the effectiveness of the alternative paths is greater than that of the traditional paths, since more graduates enter teaching in actuality after the completion of the studies. In addition, the alternative paths have added value for the system since they contribute to the staffing of disciplines that are difficult to staff<sup>13</sup>.

### **Programs of Re-Training for Teaching in Israel**

One of the proclaimed goals of the unique programs for the training of academically educated people for teaching is the attraction to teaching of diverse personnel of quality who come from different population groups. The fundamental assumption is that through accelerated programs, in which the participant is required to dedicate a relatively short period of time to effortful training and when in this framework tuition scholarships and salary benefits are proposed, it is possible to bring to the teaching profession candidates who would not come otherwise, including academically educated people who seek to embark upon a second career. Conversely, it was argued that many participants in alternative programs would have registered to the traditional programs but preferred the shortcut and the economic benefits offered to them in the accelerated programs<sup>14</sup>.

The traditional programs in the colleges of education include regular training of four years, in combination with the undergraduate degree studies, and in the universities the training for teaching generally lasts two years, some during the undergraduate studies. These programs, which are built according to an agreed-upon, approved, and set outline of studies, incorporate disciplinary knowledge on the topics of teaching and education, professional knowledge in pedagogy and didactics, and practical work experience. Alternative programs are distinct in different parameters from the traditional programs and there is no fixed model of alternative training. The programs are found on the continuum, when at one edge there is emergency licensing, which has limited requirements, and at the other edge there are sophisticated online programs for people with unique life experience.

It is difficult to address alternative training programs as a homogeneous corpus of knowledge<sup>15</sup>. In the research literature there is evidence of programs of different types.

1. Programs for which the main professional development is conducted during the service (in-service programs) while the theoretical part is inculcated in a concentrated process during the vacations from the school.
2. Programs based primarily on distance learning and on computerized simulations of teaching situations.
3. Programs for populations with specific abilities, such as guidance and instruction in other areas.
4. Programs with full scope, compressed into an intensive process in a short period of time.

Alternative training was not intended to eliminate the traditional training programs but rather was intended to add channels of training in which it is possible to obtain a teaching certificate, after all the required conditions were fulfilled, even if they were done so in alternative ways. Alternative programs are required in the following situations:

- Severe shortage of teachers, in specific areas of knowledge or age programs, which requires preparation to provide an urgent response to the problem.
- Attempt to attract to teaching special populations of quality, which are not included in the traditional pool of trainees for teaching, an urgent need that arises from the field, such as a new curriculum that requires unique training or another organization of the system.
- Economic considerations, which obligate a different preparation, such as drastic changes in the training budget, significant cut or addition of a large budget.

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<sup>13</sup> Darling-Hammond, L. (2001). The Challenge of Staffing Our Schools, *Educational Leadership* 58, 12-17.

<sup>14</sup> Weissblay, E. (2014). *Accelerated Program for the Re-Training of Academically Educated People for Teaching*, The Knesset Center of Research and Information, December 15. (Hebrew)

<sup>15</sup> Greenfeld, N. (2010). Different Tracks for the Entry into the Teaching Profession, *Journal of the Mofet Institute*, February, 41, 8-11. (Hebrew)

- Change of the field of occupation of the population with high academic abilities as a result of unemployment in the economy.

In all the institutions in Israel that train teachers in the traditional programs there are also alternative programs, which grant their graduates a teaching license. The training of academically educated people for teaching is the program that encompasses the greatest number of trainees and is held in most of the institutions. This training is labeled 'alternative', since it separates between the academic studies in the disciplinary field and the training processes, which commence only after the completion of the academic degree in a given field of knowledge. This channel is different from the traditional training approach, in which the two areas are learned, or at least some in parallel. This channel is considered unusual in the constellation of training in Israel and has not been budgeted for many years. Only in recent years, and under the pressure of the reality in the field, did this training program become an integral and budgeted part of the regular training constellation<sup>16</sup>.

The duration of the program for the training of the academically educated for teaching ranges from one year to two years (two to four semesters) and at its end the graduates are granted a teaching certificate. In the year 2010 about 2,040 new academically educated people registered to this program in the different colleges. The program accepts academically educated people with a degree in the disciplinary field or in nearby fields<sup>17</sup>.

The curriculum is in the format of training studies for teaching of the learners for the combined undergraduate degree (Ariav Outline) and includes studies of education, pedagogy, and didactics of the teaching of the subject and practical experience. The mapping of the accelerated programs for the re-training of academically educated people for teaching that have operated in recent years found that eight programs have a number of shared themes.

1. An especially complex and meticulous process of the classification.
2. A unique curriculum at the disposal of the Council of Higher Education that has a main component of experience in teaching.
3. Economic benefits for learners and sometimes also for the graduates of the programs.
4. Obligation of the learners to engage in teaching for a certain period after the end of the training and obligation of the Ministry of Education to employ the graduates.
5. Performance of part of the training after the learners begin their full-time or nearly full-time employment as teachers<sup>18</sup>.

### **Programs of Re-Training for Teaching – Supporters and Opponents**

The issue of the alternative training of teachers inspires controversy and at its basis is the question of the 'professionalization' of the teaching profession and the training required for it. According to one position, teaching is a profession acquired in an orderly process of training, which occurs in a recognized academic institution and includes all the components required of the beginning teacher:

- Disciplinary knowledge in the topics of teaching and in education
- Professional knowledge in pedagogy and didactics of the teaching subjects
- Complex clinical experience

The contradicting position supports the elimination of the regulation, or the de-regulation of the teaching profession, and its supporters strive to eliminate the monopoly of the academic institutions on the training for teaching and to convey the emphasis from the quality of the teacher's teaching to the students' quality of learning.

<sup>16</sup>Greenfeld, N. (2010). Different Tracks for the Entry into the Teaching Profession, *Journal of the Mofet Institute*, February, 41, 8-11. (Hebrew)

<sup>17</sup>Berkovitz, Y., & Vigosar-Shalev, Y. (2010). *Alternative Training of Teachers in Israel: Background, Mapping, and Conceptual Analysis*, Background Document for the Van Leer Conference of Education 2010, Available at: [http://www.vanleer.org.il/Data/UploadedFiles/ITEC\\_SitePages/27-sFileRedir.pdf](http://www.vanleer.org.il/Data/UploadedFiles/ITEC_SitePages/27-sFileRedir.pdf) (Hebrew)

<sup>18</sup>Weissblay, E. (2014). *Accelerated Program for the Re-Training of Academically Educated People for Teaching*, The Knesset Center of Research and Information, December 15. (Hebrew)

This approach gives up the regulation of the training by professional academic organizations and opens the profession to those who were trained by other organizations and according to other methods, and even to those who were not trained at all before the start of their work<sup>19</sup>.

Those who object to the use of alternative programs for the entry into the teaching profession raise a number of explanations for their position:

- Lack of clarity about the effectiveness, added value, and success of alternative programs, given the absence of supporting research evidence.
- Concern about the harm to the teaching profession and its image because of the lowering of the entry barriers to the profession.
- Extensive dropping out of graduates of the alternative programs and the creation of the phenomenon of the 'revolving door', which harms the schools' ability to form a staff of teachers, to develop them professionally, and to promote changes for the long term<sup>20</sup>.

Those who indicate the advantages of the alternative programs for entry into teaching maintain that the programs enable to attract to the teaching profession candidates who would not otherwise have entered it and to increase the number of candidates from which it is possible to choose the best, since the programs intended for those who are interested in teaching as a second career bring to the field candidates who have qualities not possessed by students of the traditional training programs: maturity and experience, comprehensive and practical knowledge in the disciplinary areas they teach, a high cognitive level, a sense of mission, and belonging to groups of population that infrequently turn to teaching by the traditional ways<sup>21</sup>. In addition, through these teachers it is possible to provide an immediate solution for the problem of the shortage of teachers. According to this position, alternative training was not intended to eliminate the existing training programs but to add paths of training, in which it is possible to obtain a teaching certificate after all the required conditions are obtained, even if they are obtained in alternative ways.

The re-training program Teach for All America in the United States constituted an inspiration for other re-training programs in the world, for example, Teach First in England, and later on in Israel. However, the alternative training programs in the United States are also a recipient of criticism. It is argued that the most severe expression of the shortage of teachers is the decline in the quality of the generation of new teachers, because of the lowering of the threshold of the requirements from the candidates and the opening of alternative programs of training, which are shorter and more rapid<sup>22</sup>. It is further argued against the programs that for the most part the acceptance conditions of the alternative programs are traditional and therefore include a requirement for a disciplinary academic degree. However, the required threshold score is low and does not indicate academic excellence and in addition these programs are not selective at all. The findings of a survey of the National Center for Alternative Accreditation of Teachers in the United States indicate that 47% of those who turn to the alternative training programs would not have turned to teaching from the beginning had these flexible programs not been established. Many of the teachers who were licensed in these frameworks maintained that the fact that they could teach immediately after the end of the training, while completing the requirements for the accreditation, is the main factor attracting them to join the program. Additional criticism focuses on the idea that the alternative training is intended first and foremost to complete the supply of the teachers existing in the system and therefore these programs are planned to attract new populations to the teaching profession<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>19</sup>Kfir, D. (2008). Recruitment for Teaching of Academically Educated Adults Who Seek a Second Career and Their Alternative Training at a High Standard, In D. Kfir & T. Ariav (Eds.) *Crisis of Teaching: Towards the Corrected Training of Teaching* (pp. 176-193), Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem and HaKibbutzHaMeuchad Press. (Hebrew)

<sup>20</sup>Ariav, T. (2010). 'Traditional' and 'Alternative' Teacher Training: What the Argument Is Really About, *Journal of the Mofet Institute*, 41, 3-6. (Hebrew)

<sup>21</sup>Kfir, D. (2008). Recruitment for Teaching of Academically Educated Adults Who Seek a Second Career and Their Alternative Training at a High Standard, In D. Kfir & T. Ariav (Eds.) *Crisis of Teaching: Towards the Corrected Training of Teaching* (pp. 176-193), Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem and HaKibbutzHaMeuchad Press. (Hebrew)

<sup>22</sup>Salant, E. (2004). *Integrative Review – The Global Lack of Teachers, Factors and Dimensions of the Phenomenon*, Mofet Institute, February. <http://portal.macam.ac.il/ArticlePage.aspx?id=61> (Hebrew)

<sup>23</sup>Rosenberg, M. S., & Sindelar, P. T. (2005). The Proliferation of Alternative Routes to Certification In Special Education: A Critical Review of the Literature, *Journal of Special Education* 39(2), 117-127.

Aside from a few programs such as Teach for America (TFA), in which for every slot there are six candidates competing, most of the alternative training programs accept almost every candidate. Moreover, most of the alternative programs focus on the inculcation of extensive theoretical knowledge in the field of education and not on training for teaching<sup>24</sup>. In addition, only a small number of the programs accompany the graduates and support them during their first year in the teaching profession<sup>25</sup>.

The American program served as the inspiration for the HOTAM Model, the program of Haifa University in collaboration with Beit Berl College for the training of excellent academically educated people for teaching. This model is implemented today in 24 countries around the world. However, criticism is leveled against the program, which includes documentation of the absorption difficulties of the program graduates in the schools, tensions created in the teachers' rooms following their entry, and their lack of influence on the level of studies in the classes they taught. The main disadvantage of most of the alternative programs is the absence of appropriate guidance and pedagogical accompaniment, which are essential to the cultivation of new teachers and to the prevention of their dropping out<sup>26</sup>.

Ackerman<sup>27</sup> examined the degree of satisfaction with the training among teachers who participated in re-training for teaching and who work in teaching. The findings show moderate satisfaction. The adults have reservations in all that pertain to their training for teaching. A possible reason is that the studies of the training for teaching in the framework of the re-training program are rather short and intensive, as opposed to the regular studies, which last several years, and it can be that because of the limited chapter of time of the studies, the graduates of the re-training feel that they did not receive sufficient preparation for their work in teaching. This weakness of the re-training program is the lack of success to engage in pedagogical training and disciplinary training at a high level<sup>28</sup>.

Another problem lies in the fundamental assumption of these programs about the teaching profession. According to this assumption, this is an intuitive profession. The opponents of these programs hold that teaching is a complex profession and that it is a profession learned with the role, in what is called 'on the job training'.

Regarding the differences between the graduates of traditional training and the graduates of alternative training, it can be said that in Israel, as in the other education systems in the world, it was found that alternative training does not necessarily produce teachers who are worse than the teachers obtained by traditional training, but also does not necessarily produce teachers who are better. In addition, it was found that the rate of dropping out of the graduates from the alternative training programs is not significantly different from that of the graduates of the regular programs. Most of the research studies performed until now, primarily in the United States, to examine the level of achievements of these teachers' students show that in this regard as well there are no significant differences between the achievements of the students who studied with teachers who are graduates of the alternative training tracks and the achievements of the students who studied with teachers who are graduates of the regular programs.

The degree of the success of the teachers who are graduates of alternative training programs in teaching depends on their personality data, which include academic background, previous experience at work with children, motivation to engage in teaching, and sense of mission in teaching. However, these are true for all student teachers, regardless of the nature of their training.

<sup>24</sup>Walsh, K., & Jacobs, S. (2007). *Alternative Education Isn't Alternative*, The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation (September).

<sup>25</sup>Walsh, K., & Jacobs, S. (2007). *Alternative Education Isn't Alternative*, The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation (September).

<sup>26</sup>Jacobson, L. (2005). Alternative Routes Attracting Unlikely Candidates. *Education Week*, 24 (24), 3-16.

<sup>27</sup>Ackerman-Asher, H. (2007). *Follow Up after the Graduates of the Program for the Re-training of Academically Educated Students for Teaching in the Kibbutzim College of Education*, Tel Aviv: Research Unit, Kibbutzim College of Education. (Hebrew)

<sup>28</sup>Avdor, S. (2013). Assessment Research: Successes from the Teachers in an Experimental Project for the Training of Academically Educated People for Teaching in a Model Based on the Principles of Schools for Professional Development, *Vision and Action*, The Achva Academic College, 15. (Hebrew)



To conclude, the issue of alternative training is controversial. At the basis of this matter is the question whether teaching is a profession or a job. On the one hand, some see teaching as a profession, when to work in teaching it is necessary to have orderly and comprehensive training in academic institutions of study. On the other hand, the proponents of the de-regulation of teaching seek to open the field to a broader population and to focus on practical training, during the work<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup>Weissblay, E. (2014). *Accelerated Program for the Re-Training of Academically Educated People for Teaching*, The Knesset Center of Research and Information, December 15. (Hebrew)

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