

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES OF A NATIONAL TRAINER IN THE FIELD OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS FROM SECONDARY EDUCATION

EXEMPLE DE BUNE PRACTICI ALE UNUI FORMATOR NAȚIONAL ÎN DOMENIUL FORMĂRII CONTINUE A CADRELOR DIDACTICE DIN ÎNVĂȚĂMÂNTUL PREUNIVERSITAR

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Abstract. *This paper presents the author's living experiences as a national trainer. There are presented not only some examples of good practices in the field of in-service training, but also some difficulties encountered within the in-service training programmes. I presented examples of curricular design focused on the competences, of strategies for in-service training, and examples of the evaluation methodology as well. The in-service training process of teachers from secondary education should be modernized according to the development standards of a postmodern society.*

Key words: teachers training; curricular design; competences; paradigms of professionalization;

Rezumat. *Comunicarea prezintă experiența acumulată de autor ca formator național. Sunt prezentate nu numai câteva exemple ca bune practici în domeniul de formare continuă, precum și unele dificultăți întâmpinate în cadrul programelor de formare continuă. Am prezentat, de asemenea, exemple de proiectare de tip curricular axat pe formare de competențe, strategii de formare continuă și exemple de metode de evaluare. Procesul de formare continuă a cadrelor didactice de la nivel preuniversitar ar trebui să fie modernizat în conformitate cu standardele de dezvoltare ale unei societăți postmoderne.*

Cuvinte cheie: formare continuă; proiectare de tip curricular; competențe; paradigma profesionalizării;

INTRODUCTION

The authors of the Report to the Club of Rome, entitled *No Limits to Learning. Bridging the Human Gap*, argued that the human gap, including the one between societies is based on the fact that one does not learn how much and how he/she should need. Thus, instead of anachronistic types of learning (of maintenance and by shock), the unprecedented dynamism of the present historical time implies the innovating learning (which has as main features: the anticipative and participative characters)

The Report to UNESCO of the International Commission for Education in the 21st Century mentioned that the main pillars of the education in the new millennium would be related to learning to know, learning to be, learning to act and learning to live together with the others.

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MATERIAL AND METHOD

I. Key competences in professionalizing the training of teachers from secondary education

I.1. Teacher training process focused on competences

De Ketele defined in 1996 the competence as an ordinate totality of abilities that are practised to some contents in a certain category of situations to solve the problems limited to that situational area (*apud* Roegiers, 2001). This definition emphasizes the three constituent parts of a competence: content, ability and situation.

Learning is “at the same time a divergent process, at the level of capacities and convergent at the level of competences” (Roegiers, 2001). The interdependence between capacity and content will lead to the formulation of a specific objective (Roegiers, 2001).

Competence = (abilities X content) X
situations = specific objective X situations

The definition of the competences can also be realized in a metaphorical manner (transfer of knowledge or stimulation of the subject's resources at a given time) (Perrenoud Ph., 2002, *in* Dolz J., Ollagnier E., Édts.). The metaphor of stimulation underlines the subject's activity, which implies “a *totality of complex mental operations*, connected to some situations, rather *transforming the knowledge*” (Perrenoud Ph., 2002). The metaphor of stimulation suggests “the orchestration, the coordination of multiple and heterogeneous resources” of the subject, a permanent recombination of these resources (Perrenoud Ph., 2002). “Mobilization has nothing magic, it is an effort of the spirit” (Perrenoud Ph., 2002)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

I.2. Paradigms of professionalization

We live in an extremely complex and dynamic world accompanied by the negative consequences of the current crisis which manifests worldwide. That is why forming professionals for all the fields of society represents an important direction from the perspective of turning human to good account. “A society is not prepared to pay the correct price of professionalization unless the tasks to achieve seem very important for a job. It is not enough for the professionalization to be pledge for the quality and efficiency of education. It is not relevant to favour the professionalization of the teacher unless increasing attention is paid to training new generations” (Perrenoud, 1993.). We would also add a social status that the society should recognize! This is how one can explain the superior results of certain modern educational systems.

The professional teacher can turn to good account his competences in any situation, is able to adapt, is efficient and has a superior expertise (M. Altet, in L. Paquay & al., 1998). He is, first of all, “a professional in articulating the teaching-learning process into situation, a professional of the interaction of shared significations.” (M. Altet, In L. Paquay & al., 1998)

Specialists in the field identified six paradigms of training the professional-teacher (L. Paquay, M.-C. Wagner, In L. Paquay & al., 1998):

- a) an “educated teacher”;

It refers to mastering the scientific subject as well as elements specific of specialty didactics. In our country, the conception of the one who knows his scientific subject as a guarantee of developing an efficient activity as a teacher has remained as dominant.

b) a “technician”;

The module-training programmes often had in view training competences organized in a pre-established order, through a mechanical approach. A solution might be the organization in integrated modules (De Ketele, 1990 *apud* L. Paquay, M.-C. Wagner, in L. Paquay & al., 1998).

c) a “craftsman - expert”;

The teacher should excel in the art of assembling, structuring different elements in a coherent educational project, as a real tactician of everyday life.

d) a “reflexive expert”;

This is mostly an analyst of the educational situations regarded in their singularity and a reflexive decision factor. The authors of the quoted volume mention at a certain time the development of the professional intelligence (L. Paquay, M.-C. Wagner, In L. Paquay & al., 1998). It is within this area that we define our efforts to develop the metacognitive competence both for students and teachers.

e) a “social actor”;

Nowadays teachers are more and more imposed to involved themselves into group or institutional projects. In our country there have also appeared the opportunities to access European funds. This component is neglected in initial training and in-service training cannot achieve a pragmatic approach within this field.

f) a “person”

This appeal is focused on personalized training. The man is a project “thrown” into the world, in a state of “creation”, of permanent training all along his life. The individuality of the human being has increasingly imposed the paradigm of a **personalized training**.

The personalized training radically changes the role of the trainer who becomes an organizer, an entertainer, facilitator of varied experiences of training and education.

The quoted authors consider that each of these paradigms develops a certain face of the profession, that this does not refer to contradictory approach but rather to complementation (L. Paquay, M.-C. Wagner, In L. Paquay & al., 1998).

1.3. Key competences of a professional teacher

The efforts of the specialists have tried to catch the specific competences of an individual in general (EU, 2006), of the graduate of a school period (Canada 2001, France, 2005) as well as those which lead to training a professional teacher.

Phillippe Perrenoud synthesized 10 basic competences of a teacher, each of them having other specific ones (1996): to organize learning situations; to administrate the learning progress; to conceive and evolve the differentiating devices; to involve the students in learning and working process; to work in a

team; to participate in the school administration; to inform and involve parents; to integrate ICT; to cope with the tasks and the ethical dilemmas of the profession; to administrate one's in-service training process .

Lately there have been preoccupations in this line in Romanian literature as well. Among these, there should be mentioned the research developed by a group from the University of Pitesti within a research project (Ezechil L., 2009). The authors distinguished six general competences, each of them having a number of specific competences: methodological competences, communication and relation competences, for the students' evaluation, psychosocial competences, technological competences and competences of career management.

II. Curriculum projection focused on competences of in-service training programme of teachers in secondary education

In-service training programmes in which I was involved were projected in a systemic, curriculum view, underlining the interdependence between competences/objectives, the scientific content, training strategies and methods and instruments of evaluation. Here are some examples from the programmes of in-service training.

Table 1

Interdisciplinary school curriculum

CS	Topic / Contents Development	Type of activity	Duration
4. From theory to practice. Projecting and simulating some interdisciplinary didactic approach			
I 8	4.2. Projecting and simulating some interdisciplinary didactic approach	Interactive discourse Power Point	15 min.
I 6, 8 III 3	Organizing work groups in order to approach the work topic. Enouncing and explaining the work topic Work task : Simulate an activity with an interdisciplinary character Solution of the work task and presentation of the results of the activities Debate : Examples of good practices and generalizing the positive experience	Practical activity Work group Formative evaluation	50 min. 20 min

III. Modernizing strategies of developing stages of in-service training of teachers of secondary education

One important element in the efficiency of developing in-service training stages is represented by the catching moment. The modalities are extremely varied and represent the trainer's personality as well as the particularities of the members of the training group. Here are suggested only a few elements which can be realized at the beginning of an in-service training stage.

Techniques of introduction and self-knowledge

- Technique of introducing oneself in pairs;
- What stresses you at your job?
- What could make you relax?

- Defining the present moment with only one word;
- Diagram of coat of arms.

The efforts of the researchers and experts had in view perfecting the teaching-learning strategies, by turning to good account the acquisitions of psychopedagogical research and other fields. The end of these preoccupations has in view the realization of an efficient teaching-learning activity.

1. One orientation is represented by the re-evaluation of “traditional methods” mostly criticized because of the students’ passive character during the teaching-learning process.

2. Using active-participative strategies.
3. Unprecedented emphasis of the heuristic character of didactical strategies
4. Predominant use of active, applicable methods
5. Integrating ICT in the in-service training activity
6. Developing critical thinking (CT)

IV. Methods and instruments of evaluating the efficiency of developing stages of in-service training for teachers in secondary education

From the curricular (systemic) perspective, evaluation is the component which shows us the efficiency of the teaching-learning process. Evaluation is also a function of the educational system, interdependent with the other two: teaching and learning. The key to the approach is represented by emphasizing the relation between curriculum and evaluation, but it is also centred on competences (M. Stanciu, 2003).

The trainer has to develop his didactical activity by thinking systemically (“to see the forest”) and to act on the spot, according to the existing variables of the place and space where the training process takes place. This means that, starting from the objectives had in view, he will have to select those relevant content elements (avoiding informational overloading), choose those training strategies which will emphasize the educational values of the training process, the forms and ways of organization. Through the methods and instruments of evaluation, the trainers must have a realistic image concerning the efficiency of in-service training process.

We insist upon the fact that evaluation must be present throughout all the didactical approach, within each sequence of this training effort. What does formative evaluation really mean? It is this effort to assure a continuous feed-back in each training sequence.

At the end of the training stage there will be a summative evaluation, with use of complementary methods and instruments. The participants in the training process usually present their individual/group projects (having discussions about them); instruments of evaluating the activity developed by the trainer are applied; suggestions to continue lifelong learning are given. The evaluation commission makes general appreciations regarding the participation in the training stage and the participants receive qualifications.

CONCLUSIONS

1. From the perspective of connecting the educational and training system to the mutations of informational society, we have suggested *the paradigm of personalized training*, which turns to a better account the resources that society puts to our disposal, as well as each individual's potential.

2. It tends to represent a *new educational ecology*, which has in view the development of competences of holistic approach of the phenomena and of informational processing.

3. An unsolved problem of the training Romanian system is *mentoring* young teachers until their confirmed examination in his/her post.

4. The *media means can be organically integrated in in-service training* of teachers in secondary education (there are module offers of *online* in-service training; initiation in integrating in the activities of creating educational platforms; realizing activities of group and individual frontal training; the development of the activity of distant learning, evaluation with media instruments).

5. A greater turning into account in the evolution and career of teachers from secondary and high education of in-service training portfolio

6. Experimental research in initial and in-service training should be intensified in the decisional process. Here must be reminded the efforts of the research group of Craiova, coordinated by Elena Joita.

7. There is no monitoring system of the impact of in-service training programmes over the change of teachers' habitus.

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