

**EDU WORLD 2018**  
**The 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference**

**STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING THE INITIAL AND  
CONTINUOUS TEACHING TRAINING**

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***Abstract***

An important qualitative analysis regarding the restructure of the initial and continuous teachers training was made in Romania under a project financed by World Bank. From this analysis we can identify a few items that may constitute important milestones in the efficient change process. The paper presents the signals that indicate how to intervene and to improve the teaching training programs. In the same time, the paper offered several advantages: awareness and clarification of the current situation of the teacher training program, identification of ways to reorganize the specific activities of this program, exploring possibilities for improvement of the initial and continuous training processes. The interview grid built up contains a series of seven major questions, which varied from a minor form of addressing, to additional questions which were added to each individual, as the case. The collected responses were grouped into several categories: change, new horizons, identified issues, development proposals, motivational strategies, meta-ideas (cross-cutting ideas that surpassed the issue of the investigation) and conclusions. One of the findings of this study was: to increase the participation of the trainees in the training programs offered by Department of Training for Teaching Career (DTTC), teachers recommend a series of strategies: valorisation of life experiences, co-participation in educational actions, interactive strategies, role plays, open lessons, highlighting the usefulness of the presented content, direct involvement of the students in solving problematic situations.

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**Keywords:** Teacher training, strategy, development, teacher career.



## **1. Introduction**

Reforming the initial and continuing training system is not an end in itself but a prerequisite for achieving an essential mission: building a real, oriented, motivated, and open teacher education career in Romania.

### **1.1. Perspectives on the process of teacher training**

Education is seen as an ambitious task for the development of individual and society. Each individual is encouraged and helped to make use of his/her abilities and opportunities of learning throughout his/her entire life. Therefore the university professors are expected and required to offer very much; to turn this vision into reality depends to a large extent on such professors (Delors, 2000). Professors play a determinant role in training the youth taking into account that the former have to teach the latter not only how to trustfully view the future but also how to build that future with responsibility and awareness.

Teachers and future teachers are key players in any strategy that aims to stimulate and develop a knowledge society, because access to knowledge is an essential aspect of such a society.

The key elements are the following:

- Adequate support for teachers in order to respond to the challenges of a knowledge society;
- Acquiring the necessary skills for teachers, given their role in the knowledge society;
- Providing an adequate qualification for new entrants to the profession and ensuring greater attractiveness for the teaching profession;
- Orientation of training systems to pedagogical competence and educational performance (European Commission, 2004).

The mission of higher education is to generate and transfer knowledge to society by: initial and continuing education at university level for the purpose of personal development, professional insertion of the individual and satisfaction of the need for competence of the socio-economic environment; scientific research, development and technological transfer, through individual and collective creation (Eurydice, 2018, Teaching Institutions, para 1).

## **2. Problem Statement**

### **2.1. Strategy for developing the initial and continuous training**

One document of a great importance for the restructuring scheme in the initial and continuous teacher training in pre-tertiary education is the educational policy document entitled Strategy for developing the initial and continuous training of school education staff - 2001-2004 which transmits the essential message - the need to change, to improve and to increase the quality on teaching training program by following the goals to be met (Ministry of Education, 2001-2004).

- Resize the ratio between theoretical and practical component of the curriculum of teacher education;
- Develop master programs, applying the provisions of the Bologna process;
- Ensure coherency in the entrance teaching career by adapting the certification scheme in professional recruitment mechanisms;

- Redefining entrance teaching career period by introducing advisory assistance system (mentoring);
- Extension of the teachers' specific competencies in using information and communications technology.
- Professionalizing teaching career in Romania.

The document proposes a modern way of approaching the process of initial and continuing training, career dedicated to professionalizing teaching career, strengthen the status of teaching profession, centred on mobility and development, on professional and dynamic development at an European level (applying the system of transferable professional credits).

Professional development is designed to encourage the creation of structures that would facilitate the teacher's work on the classroom, would prepare him to become their own subject and instrument of individual development across multiple forms of self-education.

We can mention some professional development indicators (Paniş 2009):

- Ensure the continuity in order to avoid erosion of accumulated knowledge;
- Adapting programs and methods to the original objectives;
- Training a person for a reality in which he find the real location of developments, changes and transformations that might arise;
- Establishing a close link between various forms of action and objectives of education.

Some principles of reconstruction of the initial teacher training system could be:

- rather alternative routes for certification than single route;
- rather teachers of 2 or more (if possible) disciplines than professors specializing in one discipline;
- rather a unitary structure of masters, built around psycho-pedagogical training, than disparate programs (Ciolan, 2016).

### 3. Research Questions

Respecting the specificity of a semi-structured interview, the built-in interview grid included a series of seven major questions which varied from a minor form of addressing, to additional questions which were added to each individual, as the case.

Concerning the interview protocol, we specify that locations chosen by the participants have respected a number of features: lack of distorted noise, creating an informal and relaxed climate.

The interviews were audio recorded with the agreement of the participants. During the discussions, there were no written notes in order to make a better communication between the members.

The research questions on which the interview grid was built were:

What is the DTTC mission?

What educational offer does DTTC provide to its students?

What are the motivational factors involved in choosing a career?

What is the impact of DTTC training programs on students from a professional and personal perspective?

How will DTTC evolve?

## 4. Purpose of the Study

In the study below, we applied the interview technique to get information on how members of the Department for Teacher Training (University POLITEHNICA of Bucharest) are referring to the process of initial and continuous teacher training in the context of the new Education Law.

Beyond the research goal, the study offered several advantages for the department such as: awareness and clarification of the current situation of the department, identification of ways to restructure / reorganize the specific activities of this institution.

In building the interview, it was considered how the Department of Training for Teaching Career (DTTC) is related to the initial and continuous training process taking into account a number of factors involved in motivating, preparing, developing and perfecting future teachers.

Thus, the purpose of the investigation was mainly descriptive, we search for exploring possibilities to improve the initial and continuous training processes as well as identifying the ways of changing, transforming, developing the Department of Training for Teaching Career (DTTC) as an institution.

### 4.1. Target population

The target population of this investigation is represented by members of the Department of Training for Teaching Career (DTTC). In terms of the sample, it was built by seven members of the department. The sample has been selected so that it can capture the most up-to-date opinions about the studied subject, being the oldest members. However, in order to get a more realistic picture of this issue, we believe that it will be necessary in the future to extend the investigation to all members of this institution.

## 5. Research Methods

A several meetings was organized using the interview technique to obtain information on how the DTTC (University POLITEHNICA of Bucharest) members relate to the initial and ongoing teacher training process in the context of the new Education Law.

From the point of view of scientific knowledge, the interview is an important tool for collecting data on the life experience of investigated subjects and, at the same time, is a form of psychological and social interaction with immediate influence on the behaviour of the actors involved.

From a methodological point of view, it is the case of a semi-structured interview with a set of pre-determined open and additional questions; directed (the researcher conducts the interview, through a series of questions that he puts to the interviewee); of opinion - refers to issues that are more difficult to observe directly (vision, attitudes, conceptions of initial and continuing training, but also identifying ways to transform DTTC).

## 6. Findings

In terms of data processing, several steps were taken: In the first phase, the audio content of the meeting was completely transcribed in electronic format. Then, the raw data processing was collected, highlighting the main ideas from the discussions with the participants. Next step - essential ideas were extracted for each question. The collected responses were grouped into several categories: change, new

horizons, identified problems, development proposals, motivational strategies, meta-ideas (cross-cutting ideas that went beyond the investigation). Finally, a research report was presented to DTTC members.

As regards the DTTC's mission, the majority responded that this concerns to the initial, continuous training and improvement of teaching staff in university and pre-university education, designed in a flexible and comprehensive manner;

Concerning the motivational factors that lead the students to join the psycho-pedagogical training program, in the opinion of the videoconference participants, we mention: the desire to become a teacher, communication skills development, the possibility of obtaining very high marks, the access to the scholarship, reserve solution to increase the chances of insertion into the labour market after the undergraduate studies;

The small number of hours of teaching practice today make that future teachers to be sometimes better informed, but other times inadequately trained for this profession;

In order to increase the participation of the trainees in the DTTC training programs, teachers recommend a series of strategies:

- capitalizing on life experiences,
- involving in educational actions, interactive strategies, role plays, open lessons,
- highlighting the usefulness of the presented content,
- direct involvement of the students in solving problematic situations, scholarships financed from the state budget,
- professionalism in carrying out the training activities
- some of them said “Attractive course means a course which combine technical training with socio-human training, such as educational marketing (educational marketing being a mix of an economic field with technical influences and education)”.
- These courses / training programs organized by DTTC provide a humanistic (pedagogical) view of the processes and phenomena of everyday life in all its components: relational, social, cultural, learning, etc. without which the personality an individual cannot be complete
- Psycho-pedagogical training offers new opportunities, certification of acquired skills

Students' awareness of the impact of the training programs on the personal and professional level: the students learn to communicate, give value judgments, analyse processes and situations in terms of cause - effect, increase the receptivity and perception of social relations, as well as self-control and self-education, acquire or develop a wide range of skills and competences: learning, communication, evaluation, psycho-pedagogical, managerial skills, curricular design, competencies related to the teaching profession standards;

It would be useful to develop interdisciplinary masters programs, thus ensuring a specific pedagogical training, but also is correlated with the specializations offered by the university;

Regarding the evolution of DTTC, the interviewees mentioned: diversifying the educational offer according to the educational marketing studies, reorganizing into a new structure, transforming into a training centre;

The development modalities for DTTC proposed by interviewees were: raising status at the faculty level, developing projects, grants, providing education institution with attractive programs for potential stakeholders.

## 7. Conclusion

Teacher Training Departments began after 2005 to introduce measures to align the requirements of European education, so that some of the shortcomings reported have been corrected.

To increase work quality teaching is not necessary only increasing the quality candidates needed training, but also increasing the quality of training programs. It is necessary, experts believe, changing views on the proportion and structure of pedagogical practice during initial training.

In the context of the new law on education, only the graduates who really want to become teachers will follow the 2nd level of the psycho-pedagogical training program within the specialized master; the motivation narrows, they will be more focused on the knowledge and skills that would be use in their later activity;

There are no continuity or equality chances - "after graduating from a faculty, everyone can engage in their profession, teachers do not;

A good teacher should induce the young ones mental dynamism, moral stability and affective feelings. Any teacher should be prepared for changes, needs of social life and needs of the new generations, and to train by himself/herself, to reach self-perfection. Training and perfecting the teacher is performed in concentric organized dimensions, starting from the individual study to institutional organized structures at the department levels, in committees, on related specialties, in the professors' council, pedagogic groups, regular courses, master's degrees courses, post graduation courses and by the system of tenure and teaching degrees as well;

DTTC's reformation as an institution is based on the idea that if the formatting institution is better organized, the quality of the training process for future teachers increases, due to the increased efficiency of the university's training programs and the possibilities of capitalizing on the potential of the teaching staff from this institution (The National Education Low, 2017)

Teacher training should be a priority of the Romanian education system. Reform of initial training is not an end in itself but is an essential prerequisite for achieving a mission: teaching career (building a real professional career oriented, motivated and open to teachers in Romania).

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