TEACHERS TRAINING,
A CRUCIAL APPROACH IN THE AREA OF CHANGE

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Abstract *¾An opinion regarding the necessity for reconsideration of the system of teachers' training in Europe, and maybe not only, is presented. The educational reforms, existing in almost all educational systems in the world, show that it is important to adjust the education to the new dynamic requests of an extremely dynamic society. This is possible only if the main "actor" in education area is a properly trained professional. We suggest there should be developed a European strategy for teachers' training, starting with the final point: a clear but adjustable in time, "competence profile". The literature of the last decades presents a lot of preoccupations about the "manager profile" even in the area of education. The teacher is a manager too, an educational manager, with the same main necessary competencies everywhere in the world, especially now when the world seems to be so tiny. When it is clear where we should arrive, imagining the ways becomes an easier issue.*

Index Terms *¾Teachers' training "competence profile", Educational manager, Training strategy, Effectiveness, European teacher.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important issue to take care about everywhere in the world. Specialists within the area, and people involved in politics too, speak about this issue but not always in the same way. Everybody knows that it is very important to put the education as a national priority but sometime this is only a declarative aspect. Looking around, no mater where in the world we are, each citizen has a child within the large or restricted family to be educated, so everyone is interested in the education issue.

For doing an effective education it is necessary to have schools, materials, high technology etc. but, first of all it is necessary to exist competent teachers.

There are a lot of definitions for competency but for our purpose we write downs a very simple one. To be competent means to gather the deep meaning of four verbs: to know, to be able to, to know to be, and to know to become (*savoir*, *savoir-faire*, *savoir-être*, *savoir-devenir*) and to act according to their synergetic meaning. How to train competent teachers is still a crucial question everywhere on the earth. From a historical perspective the teachers' training seems to present a dramatic change of paradigm passing through different kind of focused aims, related to different outlines of training. A too academic approach, focused on high *knowledge* in the area of educational psychology, pedagogy, sociology of education etc. was rejected, but instead of it the philosophy of "school based training" as the only really important thing to be done, gave no more satisfaction in terms of a proved competence. Learning to be a teacher according to a model, not always very attentively selected and trained himself or herself, does not seem to be the best choice. The teaching-learner has to have his/her own knowledge about education and about children, teenagers or young adults involved within educational process, about educational system, about educational management, his or her own values and beliefs in order to be aware and an active learner in front of the model.

Teachers' training, both the initial and continuing training, should base itself on a very clear strategy. It would be effective to develop a European core strategy focused on this purpose because of a lot of reasons; it appears to be necessary:

- to train the European students following core targets according to core values;
- to develop an united European core culture, keeping the nature of each national culture;
- to improve education in order to develop all the European countries;
- to open the space (phisical and psychological space) for everybody within Europe;
- to ground the peace and the developing learning society.

All these are possible if there is a core value system developed, and the education is able to build it. Within educational field teacher is the main managing actor, as the adult partner of the student. Together they develop the identity of a new generation, according to rapid changing requests of a dynamic society. The quality of teaching activit becomes more important in this specific context. Teachers training seems to appear more important, too.

The literature of the last decades presents a lot of preoccupation about the "manager profile" even in the area of education [1]-[6]. The teacher is a manager too, an educational manager, with the same main necessary competencies everywhere in the world, especially now when the world seems to be so tiny. To imagine a clear pattern, a general European one, of what a teacher have to be and to be able to do could appear as an interesting issue.

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THE COMPETENCE PROFILE OF A TEACHER

Defining the concept

The *competence profile for an effective teacher* means, in our view, the configuration and the quality of the personality of a teacher, according to his or her status and role supposed to be accomplished in an effective way. This competence profile of a teacher could be built on areas (domains, sides) of specific activities of a teacher; for each area could be presented | described *knowledge, abilities (capacities) and features of personality* organised in three categories according to what *must, should and would* exist. These described items, being formulated in terms of exactingness and expressing a criterion or a norm for an assessment process, show expected values from a teacher activity. They are **standards** for an effective teaching activity. The competence profile of a teacher is, therefore, *a defined structure of professional and ethics standards.* It is not immutable, because the requests of the educational field are dynamic and, on the other hand, the personality of a specific teacher is developing too.

To imagine such a competence profile could be the first step of an entire strategy of initial training, selection, assessment and continuing training of teachers.

A draft of the strategy for the initial teachers training

We present a draft of a possible strategy of initial and continuing training for teachers, which has as a starting point some items of a *competence profile* of a teacher. The purpose of this presentation is to invite to reflection, to determine a higher awareness of the importance of a serious concerning about what a teacher has to be now when a new millennium is starting.

The main steps of this strategy could be (Fig. 1):
- defining the *competence profile for an effective teacher* as a request of the formal educational field;
- defining the *teachers training standards* as purposes of the training (the products of it);
- defining the *aims, goals and objectives* of this training as a process considered in its evolution;
- selecting the *contents* involved in this training, according to the appointed domains of the competence profile;
- choosing the right *methodology* for training (methodology of teaching, of learning and of evaluation);
- establishing the proper *tools* of this training;
- running the training according to the plan;
- evaluating the results of training according to the aims and, finally, to the standards of the competence profile.

Table 1 presents a draft of the structure of a competence profile; this is organised on *domains* of competencies in teaching profession, colligated to *competencies and their components* (capacities), to possible *areas of training*.

Further, it is possible to develop curricula for each area of training without neglecting the general purpose- the competent teachers as a product of the initial and continuing training (Table 2).

Effectiveness of a competence profile as an instrument

To imagine such a competence profile could be teamwork in a European partnership in order to have a European dimension of this profession. Having as a final target this competence profile, each educational system would elaborate the training objectives and would select the adequate contents according to its own institutional structures. It could also be developed, a European Module containing curricula for initial training of teachers, which offer a large possibility to choose and adjust different included curriculum to specific institutional structures.

Fig. 2 presents the usefulness of a competence profile from different points of views. A competence profile could be a useful instrument for training but also for selection and assessment. During the initial training it is necessary to develop at least the competencies included in "must" category, which should be criteria for an initial selection within the working area. Further on, using the routes of the continuing training, it is possible to develop and to increase the competencies included in "should" and "would" category. It is necessary not to forget that, on the basis of the initial training, there should be developed a further training for specific categories of teachers, as academic teachers for example.

CONCLUSION

Being a teacher is a difficult profession, an extremely important one, for present and for future. Within an united Europe, a competence profile of a *European teacher* could have a real contribution for a more effective education, for a European spirit and an open soul and mind for the entire world.

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[4] Niculescu R., M., "Manual de (auto)formare a managerului ºcolar", ("Handbook for <Self>Training of the School Manager"), Ed. Scorpion 7, Bucharest, 1997.

[5] Niculescu R., M., "Agenda directorului de ºcoalã", ("The Notebook for a School Head"), Ed. Scorpion 7, Bucharest, 1997.

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Evaluating the training according to the standards of "competence profile" and according to educational | training standards.

Running the training (initial and continuing training) according to the plan.

Establishing the proper *tools* of this training (materials, textbooks, evaluation instruments).

Choosing and using the right *methodology* for training (methodology of teaching, of learning and of evaluation).

Selecting the *contents* involved in this training, according to the appointed domains of the competence profile and according to each competence | capacity to be developed.

Defining the *aims, goals and objectives* of this training as a *process* considered in its evolution.

Defining: *teachers training standards* as purposes of the training (the products of it).

Defining the *" competence profile for an effective teacher"* as a request of the formal educational field; *as a defined structure of professional and ethics standards.*

Final evaluation according to the standards of "teacher's competence profile".

Evaluation and assessment within the training process, according to the aims, goals and objectives.
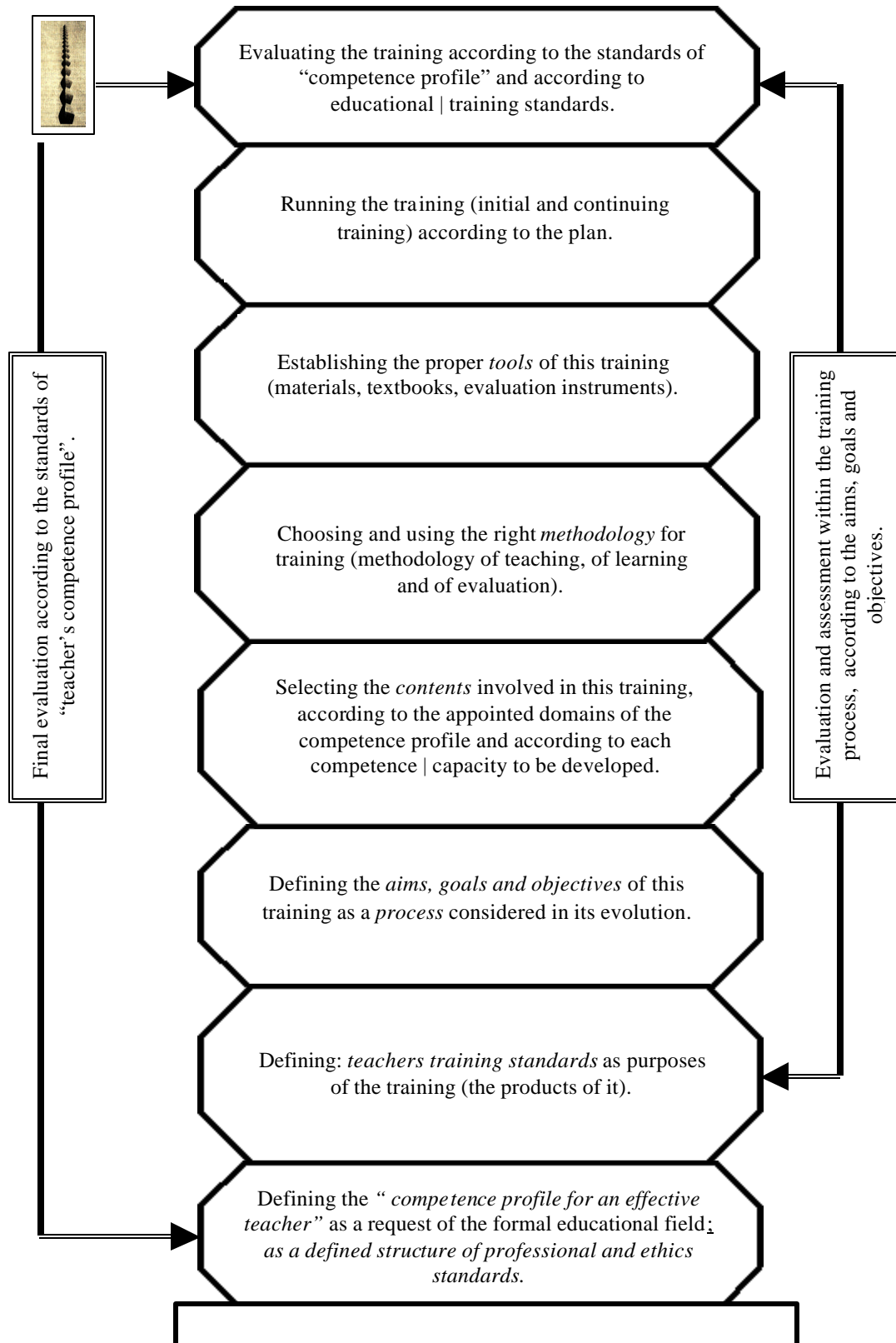
FIGURE 1.
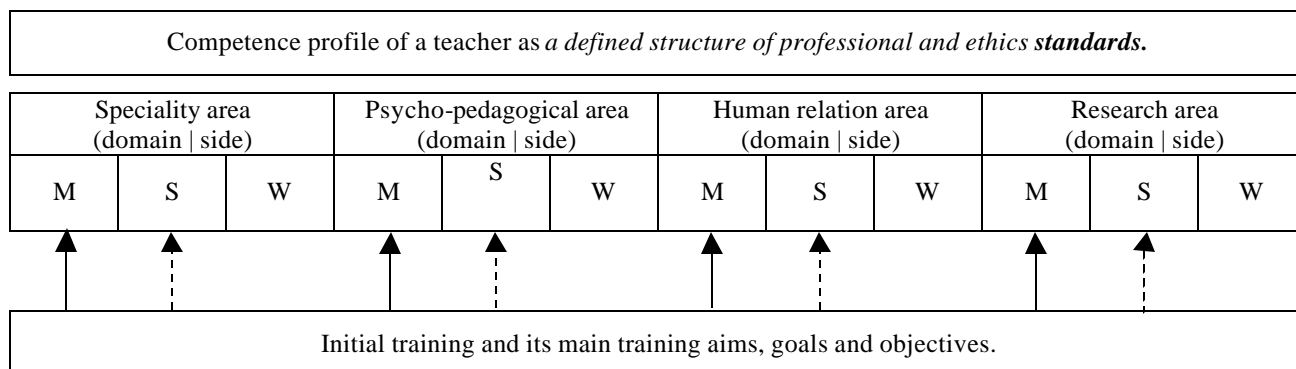STEPS OF THE TEACHERS TRAINING STRATEGY

TABLE 1.
A DRAFT OF THE STRUCTURE OF A COMPETENCE PROFILE.

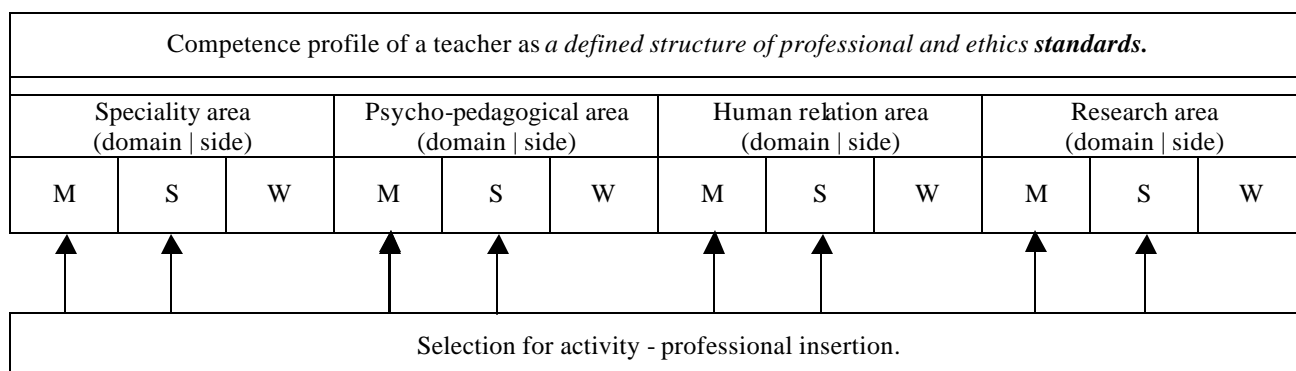| Area | domain of activity	Competencies | Capacities	Knowledge to know	Abilities and features of personality to know to do, to know to be, to know to become	Area of training
I. Speciality field	1. Holding a functional and effective system of knowledge in speciality 2. ... n	1. Speciality knowledge well structured and flexible. 2. ... n	1. Capacity to use information of speciality in different contexts, in an effective and creative way 2. ... n	Training in speciality during the university studies
II. Psycho-pedagogical area	**Psychological competencies** Holding psychological knowledge and skills in order to work in a proper and effective way with the learners.	1. Holding a functional and effective system of basically knowledge in the area of general and social psychology. 2. ... m	1. Being skilled to use general and social psychology knowledge in different life contexts. 2. ... m	Educational psychology
	Pedagogical competencies Being competent to teach and to evaluate (to assess) in a proper way in order to develop the knowledge, the skills and the personality of the learner	1. Holding a very well structured, functional system of pedagogical knowledge. 2. ... p	1. Being able to analyse, to explain and to apply (to operate with) the main concepts and principles of fundamental pedagogy. 2. ... p	Studying: Fundamental pedagogy; Introduction in curriculum; Methodology of teaching and of evaluation
III. Human relations area	1. Communication skills.	1. Knowing communication techniques. 2. ... h	1. Being able to use various and effective methods in order to stimulate the communication with learners and other people working with (to be detailed on specific communication skills). 2. ... h	A cross-curricular result of the other areas studies.
	2. Social skills related to the work in groups (teams) as a teacher.	1. Holding specific knowledge regarding the group psychology, especially for childhood and adolescence age. 2. ... x	1. Being able to understand the features of a concrete group of learners. 2. ... x	Special syllabus within educational psychology and pedagogy studies.
	3. Social skills related to the work in groups (teams) as a partner of other teachers.	1. Holding adequate knowledge about age psychology. 2. ... y	1. Being able to solve a task promptly and correctly. 2. ... y	Cross-curricular effect of the entire training
IV. Research	Being competent to develop an educational research, at least at the methodological level.	1. Knowing the methodology and the techniques of educational research. 2. ... z	1. Being able to plan a research. 2. ... z	A specific syllabus within pedagogy

TABLE 2.
STRUCTURE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIFFERENT CURRICULA (A PROPOSAL).

Competencies | Capacities		Contents to be approached	Instructional standards	Methodology	Didactic materials and tools	Number of classes
Knowledge	Abilities and features of personality					

1. INITIAL TRAINING

Competence profile of a teacher as *a defined structure of professional and ethics **standards.***											
Speciality area (domain | side)			Psycho-pedagogical area (domain | side)			Human relation area (domain | side)			Research area (domain | side)		
M	S	W	M	S	W	M	S	W	M	S	W

Initial training and its main training aims, goals and objectives.

2. SELECTION FOR ACTIVITY - PROFESSIONAL INSERTION

Competence profile of a teacher as *a defined structure of professional and ethics **standards.***											
Speciality area (domain | side)			Psycho-pedagogical area (domain | side)			Human relation area (domain | side)			Research area (domain | side)		
M	S	W	M	S	W	M	S	W	M	S	W

Selection for activity - professional insertion.

3. CONTINUING TRAINING

(for assessing the unattained standards and, according to them, for establishing the targets of the continuing training.

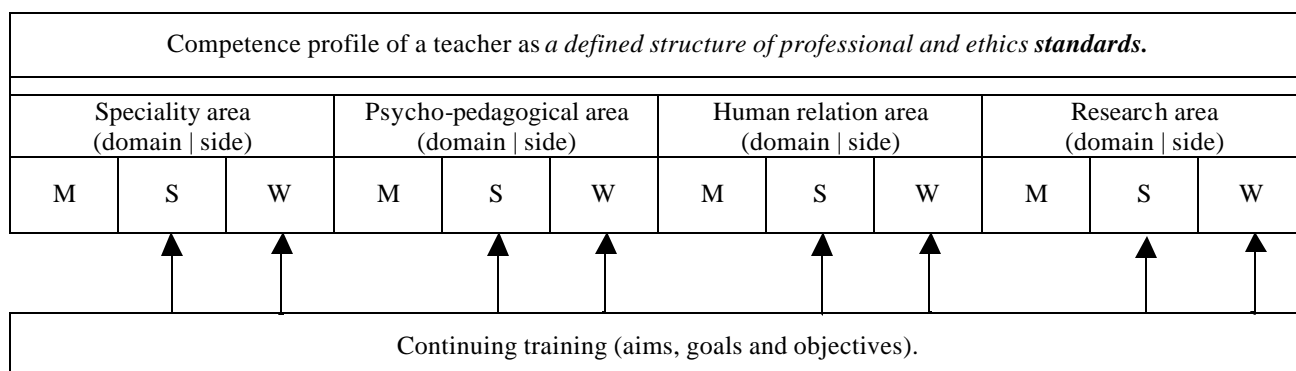| Competence profile of a teacher as *a defined structure of professional and ethics **standards.***											
Speciality area (domain | side)			Psycho-pedagogical area (domain | side)			Human relation area (domain | side)			Research area (domain | side)		
M	S	W	M	S	W	M	S	W	M	S	W

Continuing training (aims, goals and objectives).

FIGURE 2.
COMPETENCE PROFILE AND ITS USEFULNESS.
LEGEND: M – MUST STANDARDS; S – SHOULD STANDARDS; W – WOULD STANDARDS.
EXPLANATIONS: INITIAL TRAINING WILL BE FOCUSED ON "MUST" STANDARDS AND, AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, ON "SHOULD" STANDARDS, FROM EACH AREA OF THE COMPETENCE PROFILE OF THE TEACHER. SELECTION FOR ACTIVITY- PROFESSIONAL INSERTION WILL BE FOCUSED ON "MUST" STANDARDS OF EACH AREA OF THE COMPETENCE PROFILE OF THE TEACHER; THE JOB WILL BE WIN BY THAT APPLICANT WHO DEMONSTRATES TO ACT ACCORDING TO THE MOST "SHOULD" STANDARDS. CONTINUING TRAINING WILL BE FOCUSED ON THE UNDEVELOPED COMPETENCES INCLUDED IN "SHOULD" CATHEGORY AND ON THOSE INCLUDED IN "WOULD" CATHEGORY.