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The Need of Continuous Teachers Training in the Coaching of Vocational Education¹

Maria Prazeres Casanova,

Cristina Loureiro dos Santos

Maria Adelaide Silva

The accelerated changing of the social, economic and political world, makes new individual and social requirements at the development of human resources level, arise, particularly from the teachers who teach courses in vocational education. Teachers, in the exercise of their professionalism, are aware of their difficulties and shortcomings, but also of the requests and demands, placed on them.

Teachers seek training so that they can meet their needs of:

- Learning, motivation and interpersonal relationships, social integration and evaluation of their students;
- Organizational leadership, management and coordination;
- Relationship and inclusion in the community at local and international level;
- Promotion of their personal and professional development. Professional development takes place in a continuous, interactive, full of advances and setbacks process, in a tension between *the already* and the *not yet*, the *unfinished*, in a spiral of achievement and maturity of Knowledge.

¹ Centro de formação de Associação de Escolas do Concelho de Almada, Portugal

In John Dewey's view (1974:220), quoted by Alarcão and Tavares, 1987), the "ultimate goal of teacher training is to make the teacher a *thoughtful and alert student of education*, able to observe, to perceive and to reflect" (p. 23), to induce changes in the behaviour, in methods and techniques to use, in the perceptions and representations, taking into account the real needs of students. The achieved changes aim, in turn, to impel transformation and development in students and organizations where they belong to, and also in educational community.

The use of diagnosis of training needs analysis of teachers with a "heuristic tool" (Rodrigues, 1999:476), but also as a hermeneutic instrument (Casanova 2005:165), which interprets the latent or hidden needs, explaining them and clarifying them, it appears to us as the means of raising awareness of the implicit needs pass from the plan of needs to the plan of the right to be satisfied and, as Barbier says, needs are translated "into objectives for action" (1996:89). It is the interaction of the needs to know and understand the human being, with the demand of to know – know, that knowledge occurs, while " converted information into personal response through reflection " (Zaragoza, 2001:35). The needs to know – know give rise to needs to know how to do, and these originate the needs of to know how to be. The dimension of to know how to be emerges from the symbiosis of to know-know, know-how and to know-be emerging the maturity of Knowledge, or metacognition.

The diagnosis of training needs of teachers for vocational education courses seems to us of particular importance, given its specificity. With strong technical, technological, artistic and professional trend, it gives young people the "insertion into the working world" (Decree-Law 139/2012, art. 6.º d)) in a qualified way, the pursuit of higher education and success and personal enhancement. At the same time, the legislation establishes specific rules for the organization, action, evaluation and accreditation of vocational education by requiring teachers training in, according to law.

Within the framework of the construction of knowledge that we define the purpose of this exploratory study: to diagnose training needs of teachers who teach professional or vocational courses. Due to this goal come the research questions we want to answer:

- What areas do teachers wish and need to reflect?
- What are these teachers training needs at the level:
 - of management and organization of the course?
 - of the teaching practice ?

- of the pedagogical relationship ?
- of indiscipline and desertion ?
- of students assessment?
- of the school community?

Methods

This study is guided by a quantitative approach. And, in that sense, we have resorted to the application of a closed questionnaire, as indicated by Ghiglione and Matalon (1993), putting all questions, previously issued to the respondent, without any adaptation or explanation in order to compare and quantify the issues. In addition to the closed questions, respondents were given the opportunity to identify other training needs not mentioned above.

The establishment of the survey took into consideration the following levels: management and organization of vocational courses, teaching practice, pedagogical relationship; indiscipline and school dropout; students assessment, and relationship with the school community.

The survey was applied, at first, to a sample of convenience and random to people who identified themselves as teachers in a social network or belonging to a Teachers Training Centre. Secondly, the same survey was applied to teachers who took mostly as vocational education teachers.

To accomplish the data analysis, we used one of the measures of central tendency: mode. The mode, according to Moreira (1990, cf. Lemos, 1989), is the index that is repeated more often, allowing us to verify the distribution curve of the indicators.

In addition to the issues of closed response was also presented an open question where respondents could identify their training needs in addition to those already mentioned. Collected data content analysis was performed to answers and we adopted the procedure proposed by L' Écuyer (1990), Mucchielli (1988) and Lüdke and André (1986).

The collected data were analysed in order to conduct to a training program, which is meaningful if it is able to be at service of the satisfaction of students needs in the context.

Expected Outcomes

This exploratory study will be considered in the diagnosis of training needs of teachers who teach vocational education, in the implementation of the project KEYCOACH, a training program under Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation. The overall objective of this program is improving the quality and innovation of the VET system by training VET tutors and mentors in coaching techniques and promoting the implementation of regular coaching Programmes and the creation of new trainings on key competences in soft skills for VET students.

Respondents are aware of their own training needs, which are based on the difficulties in carrying out their teaching duties.

It seems that the priority needs of teachers are related to the knowledge of the organization of the course, and modalities, techniques and its evaluation tools;

- the level of teaching practice, the highlighted priorities lie in the need to know:
- the different teaching strategies, promoting the educational success of students, of the working methodologies to be used, appropriated to the diversity of contexts;
- the ways of carrying out interdisciplinary and / or trans disciplinary joint;
- At the level of the pedagogical relationship, the preferred needs seem to indicate the promotion of students' motivation and conflict management;
- at the level of indiscipline and school desertion, teachers claim as need, the knowledge of new forms of motivation, to reduce early school leaving and also to reduce indiscipline;
- regarding the evaluation of students, teachers want to know techniques to collect data and assessment tools;
- at the level of relationship with the community, teachers primarily want to know how to establish partnerships with community institutions and businesses.

It seems to us, from the content analysis, we could claim that, in addition to identified needs, that there exists other training needs that must be carried out, taking into account the teaching of vocational courses at a school, school cluster or a vocational school.

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