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Methods and techniques of professional training of beginner teachers. Comparative analysis

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Abstract. The status, merits, and importance of a profession in society are given by the level of qualification of the practitioners, but also by the skills and professionalism they demonstrate. In addition to these attributes there must also be motivation, perhaps it is the most important aspect of all those listed. The teaching profession also belongs to the category of professions that successfully fall under this rule. The performance of the educated requires thorough training and motivation from the teachers. That is why in order to have remarkable results in education, we need not only reforms, but also teachers trained from a theoretical point of view, but also from a practical point of view. In the teaching profession an important element is practical, because it highlights situations that are not found in books. Thus, the future teacher observes the problem situations in advance and is documented. Through practice, teachers are motivated to deepen the theoretical notions as well.

Keywords. Methods, techniques, training, teachers

1. Training of junior teaching staff in Romania

1.1. Initial teacher training in Romania

In a society that is increasingly agitated, more and more complex and in a continuous development, the professionalization of new teachers acquires extremely important valences for the educational and training system. Teacher training is a fundamental aspect for the educational system in Romania, which has gone through many reforms over time. The training of new teachers is important not only to possess a vast set of knowledge and information, but also so that they can cope with unusual situations, conflicts that they may face throughout their careers. (Albu, 2013)

The formation of the new teacher is really necessary, because he is a determining connecting factor in discovering and creating new knowledge for his students. He not only conveys them, but also helps the students to acquire them. During his/her training, the teacher must accumulate a set of competences, such as adaptation to the new or managerial competences, but also interdisciplinary and professional competences.

Thus, the training and improvement of teachers acquires the appearance of a spiral, because they start from individual study, then by participating in pedagogical circles, bachelor's,

master's, training courses, postgraduate courses. In addition to these forms of improvement, we also mention the teaching degrees in education: the finalization, the second degree and the first degree. (Jigău, Apostu et al, 2009)

Regarding the training and improvement in the teaching career, Emil Păun stated that "the effort to rationalize and settle the entire process of initial and continuous training of teachers based on professional standards" is not "exactly easy to achieve given the specifics of the educational activity that often involves variables whose standardization is neither possible nor necessary" (Păun, 2000).

1.2. Legislative framework

The starting point and training in the teaching career is started in the high schools with pedagogical profile, then within the Universities, through the Departments of Teacher Training (DTT), these being some structures that have as specific ensuring the professionalization in the teaching career, the initial training. DTT operates in accordance with the specific regulations established by the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research (Law of National Education no. 1/2011), "supplemented by regulations, adopted by the Senates of the Universities, based on their autonomy"

The roles that DTTs have are as follows:

- initial training for the teaching profession - for those persons who are not based at least on a pedagogical high school
- continuous training – through specialization courses, these courses are also transmitted by the CCDs to which the beginner teacher belongs
- improving the training of the teaching staff - master programs, doctorate programs
- teaching degrees, research studies in the educational field.

According to the official data that appears on the website of the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, at the moment in Romania there are 44 DTTs operating in state universities and 9 DTTs operating within private universities. (Stanciu, 2008).

Depending on the level at which he wants to teach, the young aspirant to the teaching career must have a certain training. In Romania, the teaching profession is regulated by law. Thus, according to the provisions of the National Education Law no.1/2011 (art.236, para. 1), with subsequent amendments, **the initial organization for occupying the teaching positions in pre-university education** includes:

1. initial, theoretical, specialized training, carried out through universities, within programs accredited according to the law
2. didactic master with a duration of 2 years or the training within the psycho-pedagogical training programs of level I and II carried out through the specialized departments within the higher education institutions;
3. the practical internship lasting one school year, carried out in a school, under the coordination of a mentor teacher.

In Romania, in order to be able to teach, the pedagogical high school is necessary, this aspect applies only at the preschool and primary level. For the other educational levels, a bachelor's, master's, doctoral degree is required.

The initial theoretical training programs in the specialty and psycho-pedagogical are accredited and evaluated periodically by the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research, through ARACIS or other competent bodies, according to the law.

Students and graduates of higher education who opt for the teaching career have the obligation to graduate from the courses of a teaching master with a duration of 2 years.

In order to be able to carry out the practical training within this teaching master, a permanent network of schools is formed, based on framework agreements concluded between the schools / institutions that provide the initial training and the School Inspectorates, under the conditions established by an Order of the Minister of Education.

Occupying a teaching position for the period of the practical internship with the duration of one school year is achieved by:

- competition on vacant/ reserved positions / departments
- distribution by the County School Inspectorate / of Bucharest municipality on the positions left unfilled after the competition.

The persons during the practical internship lasting one school year are applied, accordingly to the teaching position temporarily occupied, all the provisions of the legislation in force. To be able to occupy such a position, people who aspire to it must satisfy a number of conditions.

In order to further motivate the new teachers to embrace this profession, it was decided to allocate scholarships to students in the master's programs, provided that those who follow these courses practice in the educational field.

1.3. S.W.O.T analysis of the methods and techniques of starting teachers in Romania

SWOT analysis regarding the advantages/disadvantages of the methods and techniques of professional training of teachers in Romania. This analysis aims to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of this field of training so important for our country.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- The existence of a legislative framework regarding the training of new teachers
- The existence of educational platforms that allow teachers access to information related to their professional training
- The existence of a large number of well-trained teachers in the educational field, who can be mentors for teachers at the beginning of the road

Weaknesses

- The shallowness with which some training courses are carried out, their insufficiency on certain desired topics.
- The deficient relationship between theoretical and practical aspects at the level of curriculum development;
- Duration and location of training courses: at the same time as the classroom activity, weekends
- Lack of facilities in educational institutions.
- Failure to adapt the teaching style to the needs and specifics of the new teachers
- The persistence of approaches to teacher-centred teacher training at the expense of those based on the formation of competences and attitudes.

Opportunities

- The material resources (spaces, technical facilities, learning materials) involved in the training programs are mostly of quality, ensure the good development of the internships and the favorable context for the active participation of the learners;
- Carrying out European and international programs, diversifying the training offer, developing the market of training providers;
- The relative flexibility conferred on the training activities by the current National Curriculum;
- Easy access to information via the Internet.

Threats

- The disadvantage of home: specialized courses are most often held in large cities in a county
- The high cost of some courses, the cost of trips, accommodations
- Too little or too long duration of some courses.
- The use of classical teaching methods in particular.
- Reluctance to change represented by the need to develop skills and attitudes, generally generated by convenience and habituation;
- Poor information of the new teachers about the training courses.
- Late appearance of announcements for training courses on the website of universities, ISJs.

2. Training of beginner teachers in Germany

2.1. Initial teacher education in Germany

In Europe, four or five years are studied to become a teacher. In order to be able to teach in preschool, primary, gymnasium, only a license is required, but in Germany it is a little different. Here it can be taught at the pre-primary level, only with the qualification at the upper secondary or post-secondary level (European Commission, 2013).

In Germany, teacher training is divided into two stages. The first stage is represented by a course in higher education, and the second stage is the practical training period.

Teaching training courses are offered by Universities, Colleges of Education and Colleges of Art and Music. Practical pedagogical training is carried out in teacher training institutes and training schools, this pedagogical training also bears the name of preparatory service. As a result of the reforms of education, the teaching practice has increased substantially.

In Germany, two components are pursued when training new teachers:

- General component: which represents knowledge of the matter on which would follow to hand it over.
- Professional component: how they relate to students, how they make themselves understood by children.

The method of selection of teachers in Germany is the general entrance exam in higher education.

The institutions dealing with the provision of teacher training offer a wide range of training and improvement courses.

The institution that trains teachers in pre-school education is called the Vocational School for young people and community workers. And in recent years, the number of courses leading to obtaining a diploma have increased. Some of the staff are also based on a social worker diploma. This training may comprise three years of study at a higher education institution and one year of practice, or either a course consisting of four years of study, including two semesters of practice.

The basic requirement to be able to hold a position in education in Germany is passing the Abitur exam (the equivalent of the baccalaureate exam in Romania) or graduating from the higher education cycle. Another requirement is the passage of the state exam, which provides the teaching qualification

Because the areas that the teachers choose here are varied, and the way they are formed is different. That is why in Germany there are six different types of teaching careers:

Type 1 - teaching careers at primary school or primary level;

Type 2 - general teaching careers at primary level and all or individual types of schools at lower secondary level;

Type 3 - teaching careers at all types of secondary school;

Type 4 - teaching careers for general education subjects, at upper secondary level or for high school;

Type 5 - teaching careers in professional subjects at upper secondary level or vocational schools;

Type 6 - teaching careers in special education.

The first stage of teacher training in Germany

It is different depending on the type of career each teacher chooses. For most, a course lasting seven semesters and 210 transferable credits is required. Additional courses can also be done that help to get another department.

The second stage of teacher training in Germany

All training studies followed at Universities or equivalent institutions (Colleges) are followed by a preparatory service. This service lasts an average of two years and gives teachers the opportunity to practice in schools: in this way theoretical knowledge is harnessed and the practical part is trained and valued. This practice may also consist of assisting in the lessons of other teachers.

2.2. Legislative framework

The responsibility for the training of teachers in the German educational system lies with the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder. The first and second state examinations are carried out by state authorities.

The training of teachers in all types of teaching careers is regulated by the legislation of the Länder. Relevant legal provisions include laws (R88, R90, R92, R95, R99, R101, R104, R111, R120) Study regulations for teacher training courses, examination regulations for the first national examination or for bachelor's and master's examinations, training regulations for the preparatory service course and examination regulations for the second state examination (KMK, 2013, p.181 <http://www.kmk.org/bildung-schule.html>).

2.3. S.W.O.T. analysis of the methods and techniques of starting teachers in Germany

Strengths

- People who want to pursue their teaching career follow a probationary period that lasts between 24 and 36 months;
- Older teachers can benefit from a reduction in the number of hours
- The highest relative proportion between minimum teacher wages and GDP per capita;
- National induction programs for beginner teachers in pre-primary, primary and general secondary education (lower and higher);
- The continuous training of teachers is a compulsory one.
- The general entrance examination in higher education is the only selection method in force;

Weaknesses

- Number of teachers under 30 is low in Germany
- An incentive for in-service teacher education is not provided
- The simultaneous model is the only possible option for a teaching career, that is, there is also a need for study and internship.

Opportunities

- In order to hold the position of director, the academic must have at least 5 years of experience at the department as well as a management course.
- Education employees are employed for an indefinite period.
- The "First, teach" program as an alternative route. It is a private charity movement, founded and funded by a variety of corporate sponsors. Its main purpose is to recruit exceptional graduates from various fields to teach in schools in disadvantaged areas. This initiative, which has been going on for 10 years in the UK, is gradually being adopted in other European countries (such as Germany).

Threats

- Around half of the teachers in Germany are over the age of 50.
- It is one of the countries with the lowest percentages of teachers in the active population (apx. 1.6%).

3. Research methodology

3.1 Hypothesis and research objectives

Progress and performance at the educational level is closely linked to the level of specialized training of teachers, and their optimal preparation involves establishing a solid basis in terms of initial training.

3.2 Research objectives:

O1-identification, at individual and system level, of the importance of the initial training of teachers in pre-university education in Romania.

O2- identifying the differences in methods and techniques of initial teacher training in Romania compared to beginner teachers in Germany.

3.3 Research hypothesis

- It is presumed that the training methods and techniques of beginner teachers in Romania have a lower efficiency on their training compared to the training methods and techniques of beginner teachers in Germany.

3.4 Research variables

Dependent variable - motivation and personal involvement in one's own initial training of beginner teachers

Independent variable – the Romanian legislative framework regarding the initial teacher education

3.5. Description of the batch of subjects

The research is based on a comparative analysis of the methods and techniques of training beginner teachers in Romania and Germany and on the application of a questionnaire addressed to beginner teachers in Romania. The questionnaire aims to identify the initial training needs of beginner teachers in Romania.

3.6. Presentation of the methods used in research

The methods used at the beginning stage of the research study:

- Documentation techniques and independent study

Methods used in the middle stage (of collecting) research data:

- Elaboration of the questionnaire

- Application of the questionnaire

- Case study

Methods used in the final stage (interpretation) of the research results:

- Methods of quantitative and qualitative interpretation of research.

3.7. Research tools

In order to identify the methods and techniques of initial training of beginner teachers in Romania and the level of satisfaction in terms of professional training, a comparative analysis was made between the initial teaching training in Romania and Germany and a questionnaire. The questionnaire was applied online, on a number of 25 beginner teachers.

4. Interpretation and analysis of the questionnaire

The first 3 questions in the questionnaire are designed to collect information about the teacher's background, age and seniority in education. Of these three questions, the most important being that of the background environment, because it can influence the desire and motivation for teacher training, but also the actual seniority at the department.

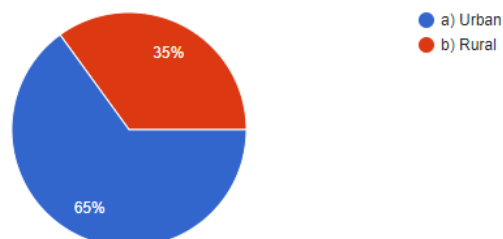


Fig.1

The majority of respondents are young teachers, aged between 18 and 25, but also teachers over 25 years of age. Those in the second age group are people who may be in a second specialization or who only now want a career in education. From the diagram it can be seen that many young people want to embrace this profession, many of them embrace the teaching career since the completion of high school studies, which is gratifying, because it shows the desire of young teachers to contribute to the formation of new generations.

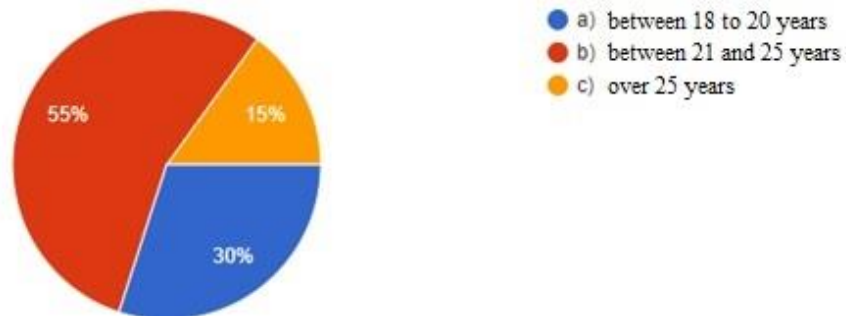


Fig.2

On question 4, most junior teachers replied that they feel somewhat prepared or less professionally prepared for their teaching career. This shows the insecurity with which they step into the new stage, which can entail difficulties in adapting to the workplace, with colleagues, with classmates, even with parents.

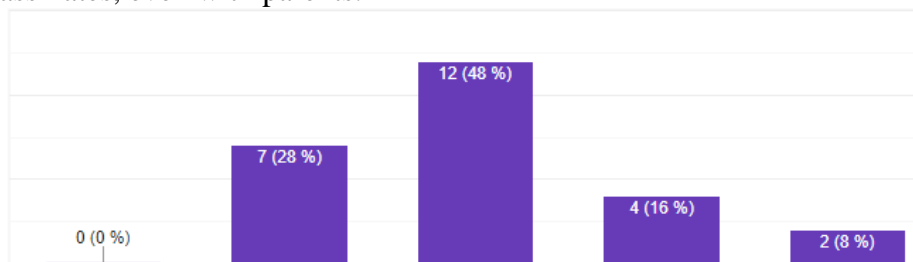


Fig. 3

Question 5, wants to show the importance of a thorough preparation in for this professional. Most of the respondent teachers said that only the pedagogical high school/ faculty does not prepare them enough for this profession. The causes can be multiple, from the disciplines addressed, to the insufficient hours of practice. From this it can be concluded that for the new teachers, other professional training stages would be needed.

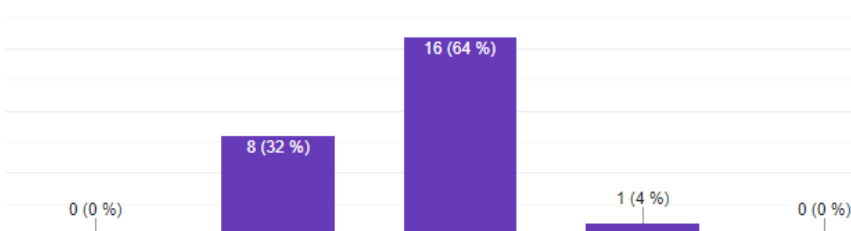


Fig.4

In question 6, the opinions of the teachers are divided, one part believe that a beginner teacher should have competences of knowing the teaching methods, others believe that communication skills are necessary, another part considers that the competences of managing the class are important. Taking stock of the responses received, it can be understood that these

three competences are among the most important competences that a junior teacher must have. They complement each other and together they lead to a beneficial educational approach.

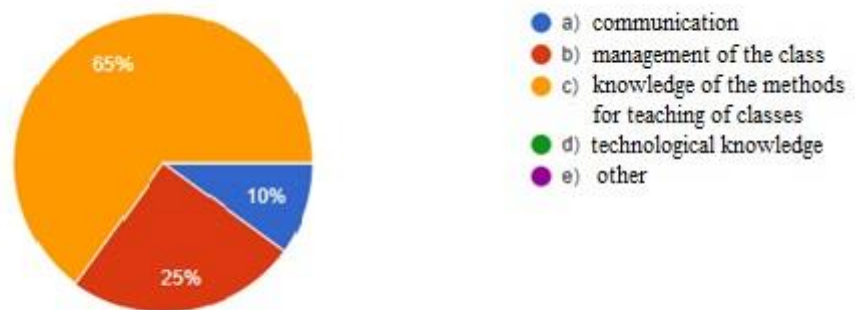


Fig. 5

In question 7, the answers were between small and sufficient, which shows that the new teachers are unsure of their knowledge and skills. This is not necessarily because they are not prepared, but because they have not had enough time to practice these skills, to apply what they have learned/ the question is related to question 5, which shows the uncertainty of the staff at the beginning of the road and the importance of a long internship.

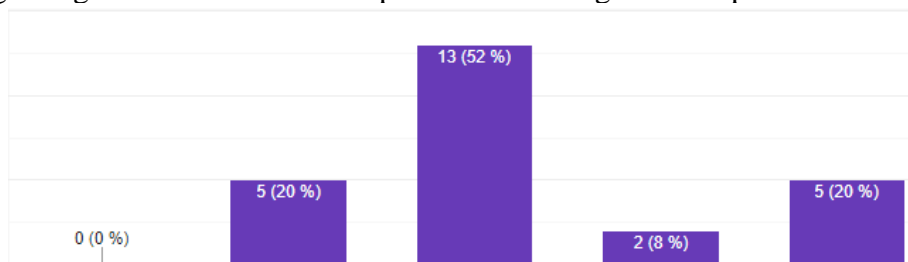


Fig. 6

The areas of teaching activity where beginner teachers say they would need more training are: the didactics of the subjects and the formation of the operational objectives, but also information about the use of interactive teaching-learning-evaluation methods. Mastering these areas would lead to more self-confidence and new approaches to teaching. The way in which the teacher prepares the lessons and fulfills the proposed objectives, can increase self-confidence and in what the teacher can do, therefore a thorough training and the acquisition of the necessary knowledge is necessary.

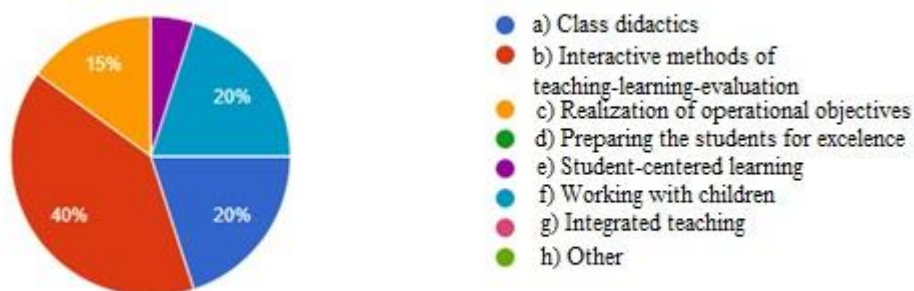


Fig. 7

In question 9, all teachers agreed that the initial training is the most important in terms of the professional path to the department. This can be compared with the foundation of a construction, if the foundation is solid, the building withstands over time and copes with all the weather, but if the foundation is weak, the building will not stand either.

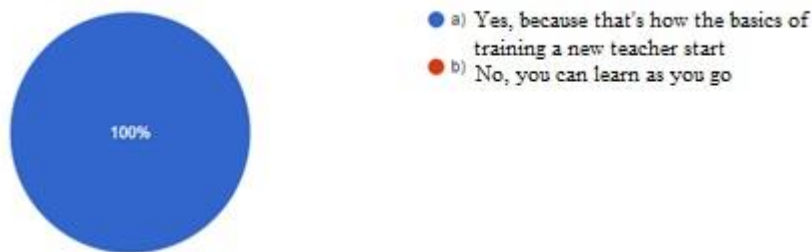


Fig. 8

At question 10, it can be noted that all responding teachers agreed that these initial training courses are of particular importance in terms of preparing new teachers.

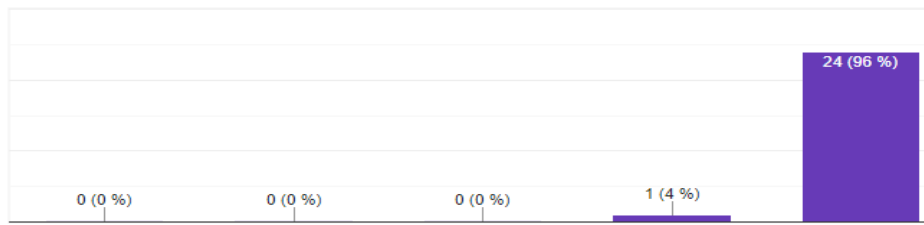


Fig. 9

On question 11, most teachers agreed that the organization of courses within the CCDs is important and that it helps them in their initial preparation. A small number of frames they found them little or no useful.

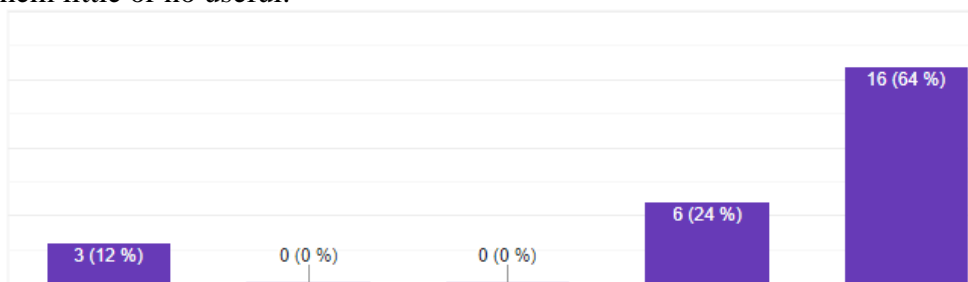


Fig. 11

To question 12, the answers are shared, some of the new diactic staff agree with conducting training courses in online format, some of them want mixed meetings. The reasons are shared, the time, the commute. The majority of training courses are held in large cities in the county, usually where the ISJ is located, many staff are forced to use their own car, the time spent on the road is quite long. And many other reasons.

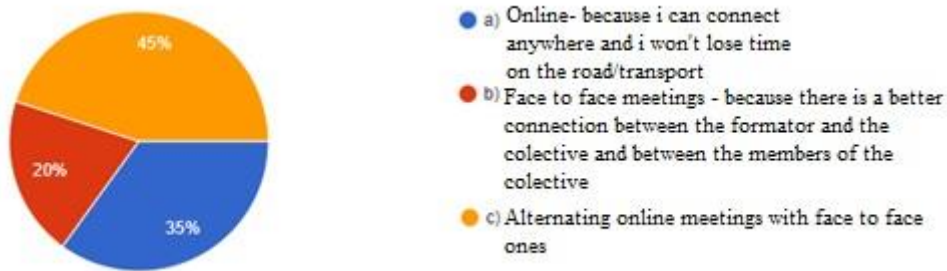


Fig. 12

On question 13, all junior teachers agreed that they would have needed a much larger internship. This would have increased their confidence in their teaching skills and maybe put them face to face with many more situations from which they could have learned.

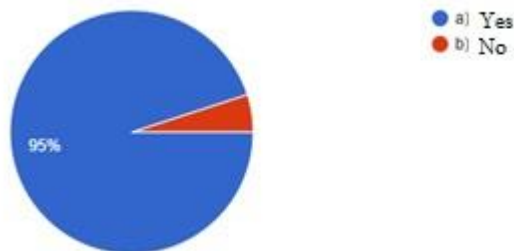


Fig. 13

Most junior teachers responded that a mentor is needed at the onset of this profession. This is also highlighted in the graph below. A single respondent believes that this is not important for a beginning teacher. Hence the importance of a mentor to guide the steps in the teaching profession on the new teacher, to help him discover his style, skills and possibilities for professional development.

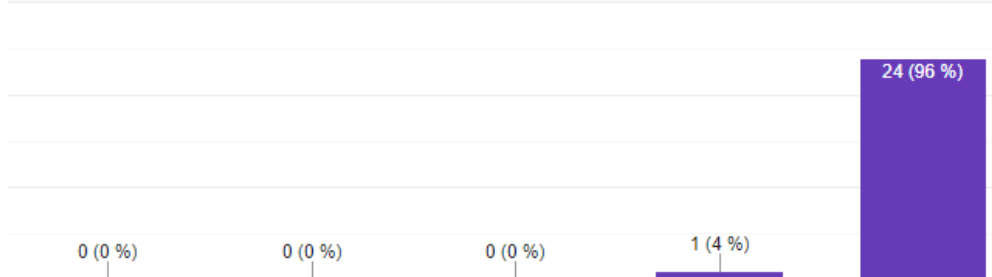


Fig. 14.

Among the things beginner teachers would have liked to know are the activities of the committees, the way of debauchery of the inspections in the classroom and the examples of tenure and completion. The way of obtaining credits, the amount of documents that a didactic framework must draw up and hold.

In conclusion, beginner teachers in Romania do not feel fully prepared for the debut on the education scene, which is due to several factors of a different nature. Here we can mention the reduced number of classes of pedagogical practice, the lack of a mentor, self-confidence, the multitude of requirements, exams, about which many beginner teachers find out at the moment when they are put face to face with them. They considered it more than necessary to have a mentor to guide their work, especially in the first year of activity. Initial and in-service

training courses are more than effective, but a survey, a research, should be carried out to find out which are the areas where teachers need guidance.

Many beginning teachers are unsure about the skills and capabilities acquired at the beginning of the road. This is due to the lack of practical activity.

One thing is really important, if the profession is chosen with the soul, and the one who practices it is dedicated to it, with a lot of work and dedication, things will settle on the right path.

Conclusions

Between Romania and Germany there are a multitude of differences, both in terms of organization, infrastructure and national strategy in education, as well as cultural and mentality differences. It is known that Germany is an organized and rigorous country, and the education system is no exception.

A similarity between the two countries in terms of initial teacher education is the passing of the maturity exam, so one can attend the courses of a faculty in the field, and a difference would be that in Romania one can practice only with the pedagogical high school, but in Germany, teachers can access this profession, just by following the courses of a faculty.

In Germany, the initial training is carried out in two stages, the general component, which concerns knowledge in the field, then the professional component, which is aimed at relating to students and how they are understood. In Romania, knowledge and practice is carried out in parallel at both high school and university level. And the duration of the internship is short, compared to the other country.

In Germany and other European countries, the preparation for this profession involves clear re-treatment and specific methods, while in Romania, this training involves a written examination and an aptitude test. Sometimes this selection seems superficially carried out, just to cover the necessary manpower, without taking into account professional and practical training. It seems more important to have someone in front of the students than who is in front of them. That is why many teachers feel unprepared, fearful about their professional debut. It is only after a few years of work (practice) that they feel truly ready. The teaching profession is under the sign of unpredictability, since it is worked with children, all different from all points of view, and the preparation for this unpredictable is not found in books, but in practice.

Another similarity between the two countries in terms of training beginner teachers, is the fact that teaching positions can be filled, without studies in the field, and then, whoever wants to attend training courses in accordance with the chosen education cycle. In Romania this is called an exam for unskilled substitutes, and those who want a career in education can take a professional conversion course, which lasts two years. In Germany this course is called induction course for beginning teachers.

Due to the rigor of the process of initial teacher training, young people do not lean towards this profession, and the population of teachers is aging in Germany. In Romania, there is no question of this. Young people are increasingly turning to this profession, especially girls.

Another difference identified is the financial motivation, while in Germany the salary for a beginner teacher is attractive, the one in Romania still has to wait.

Another important aspect for both countries is that the teaching profession offers young people professional safety.

As a result of the research carried out, it was possible to identify a series of beneficial approaches to the beginner teachers in Romania:

- Development of new and improved guides to good practice, with clear examples,

detailed, concrete and real.

- Approaching a rational and conscious mindset regarding the formation of new teachers and the responsibilities they have. The future of the country depends on them, so it requires a thinking of the type of "it can only be so", not "it goes like this".
- Increased exigency in terms of training and selection of new teachers.
- Financial incentive commensurate with the tasks and duties of the profession.

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