# *KEY SKILLS IN THE CONTINUOUS TRAINING OF PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION TEACHERS*

**Nicoleta Elena MIRCEA***

**Abstract***: The teaching profession, a noble profession, today, more demanding, more complex but increasingly devalued calls a process of reconstruction and recognition. Reconstruction refers to the competence profile architecture and recognition to the value dimension, to the socio-professional status of the teaching profession.*

*Training competence profile for teachers in secondary education generates a skills profile constantly adapted to the socio-professional and educational policies. As specified in the European stipulation, teachers train their key skills today, for an effective teaching approach and for an active citizenship. Communication skills in their mother tongue and in foreign languages are basic skills in teaching profession. Being a good communicator in the mother tongue is a sine qua non requirement of teaching mission and learning foreign languages, of international circulation recommends the teacher as being an active citizen of Europe.*

**Keywords***: key skills, continuous training, training standards*

## Introduction

### European benchmarks in key skills training

Current socio-economic changes cause the reorganization of policies on education and teacher training, both at European and national level. European context creates new directions of action for the period between 2016 and 2020, for member states, both for short-term problems related to the crisis and for the subsequent challenges. So "ensuring an employment rate of 75% for the age group 20-64 years, an investment of 3% of EU GDP in research and development, reducing the dropout rate below 10% and population growth between 30 and 34 years, 40% for pursuing higher studies" (Europe 2020 Strategy), are major objectives for the European states in implementing national policies. For the period 2016 - 2020, Romania is part and contribute to achieving EU strategic goals. National policies on education and training are tested by developed based documents for training and development of all beneficiaries of key competences.

Thus, both pupils and teachers form, develop and apply in varied contexts of knowledge or life, the 8 key competences (Recommendation 2006/962 / EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences):

a) Communication skills in their mother tongue and in two foreign languages;
b) Math, science and technology core skills;
c) Digital skills (use of information technology for knowledge and problem solving);
d) Axiomatic or valuing skills (necessary for active and responsible participation in society);
e) Personal life management skills and career development skills;
f) Entrepreneurial skills;
g) Cultural expression skills;
h) Lifelong learn skills.

* Ministry of Education, e-mail: mircea_elena_nicoleta@yahoo.com



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Utility and applicability of key competencies are provided in a wide spectrum of knowledge and everyday life being considered as "a package of transferable and multifunctional knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by all individuals for personal fulfillment and development, social inclusion and employability. These must be developed until the ending of compulsory education and should act as a foundation for further learning as part of lifelong learning" (European Commission).

Policies on education and training exploit new finalities, taking into account their essential characteristics, as future benefits for pupils and teachers. Key competences are defined by a system of knowledge - skills - attitudes, they have an implicitly transdisciplinary nature and they are somehow the educational aims of compulsory education.

**Reference points in teacher training**

Linking European directions with the national system of education and training it is required the capitalization of European culture, at national level, by the new competence profile of the modern teacher. In this sense, we can talk about new skills that can be developed in the professional profile of teachers like language skills, scientific skills and technological skills, entrepreneurial and multicultural skills.

In Romania, teacher training aims the training and continuous development of teaching skills in line with the priorities mentioned above. Current policies on teacher training are objectified in a series of updated legislative documents that provide the legal and functional frame, in this regard. National Education Law 1/2011, as amended and supplemented, supported by secondary legislation- Methodology on continuous education of the staff in pre-university education, approved by OM. 5611/2011 as amended and supplemented, Methodology on accreditation and periodical evaluation of training providers and the programs they offer, approved by OM. 5564/2011, as amended and supplemented, set the general framework for competence profile development for the teaching profession, as training standards. In a concise analysis, professional standards for teacher training in Romania are structured as follows:



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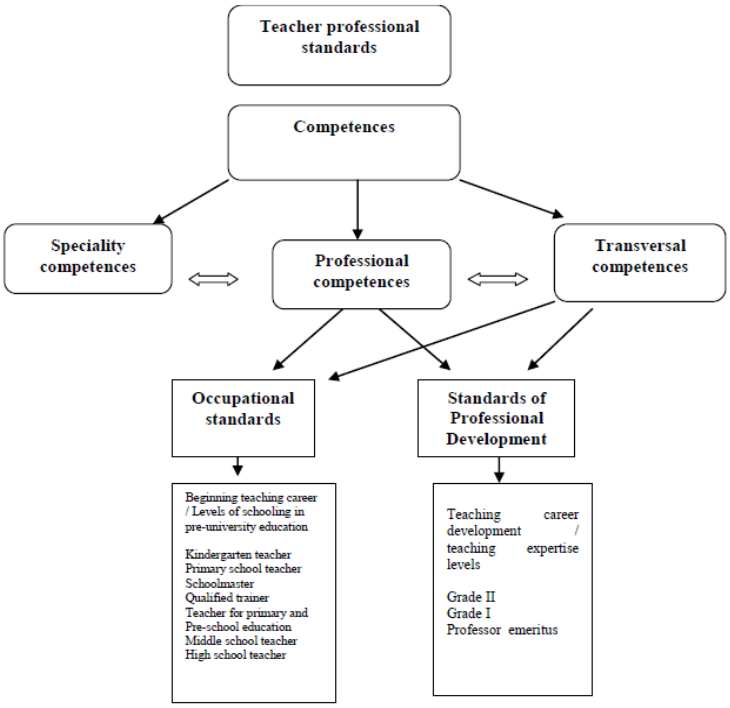



Fig. 1. Structure of the teachers professional standards (Source: Strategic project financed by the European Social Fund "*Restructuring the training of staff in secondary education by generalizing the professional transferable credits*" ID- 3777)

The new professional standards propose a new model for definition and description of standards/ professional skills, being structured on competence units, elements of competence unit (knowledge, skills, attitudes), achievement conditions, level of qualification and of staff expertise.

In order to ensure transferability of teacher skills to the learning process, they exploit key competences, as diverse experiences and contexts of learning. We illustrate further the importance and relevance of key competence of speaking in the mother tongue in education process.

Thus, the communication competence in the mother tongue refers to the individual's ability to express and interpret concepts, beliefs, feelings and opinions, both orally and in writing, as well as readiness to interact with others in an appropriate and creative manner. (Mândruț, Ardelean 2012 cited in Tudor, 2015). Analyzed by the integrated elements, the communication competence in the mother tongue is as follows:

Table. 1: Components of communication competence in the mother tongue (Mândruț, Catana Mândruţ 2012 cited in Tudor, 2015: 78)



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| Knowledge | Skills | Attitudes |
|---|---|---|
| - vocabulary<br>- Functional Grammar<br>- Functions of language<br>- Awareness of the main types of verbal interaction<br>- Literary and nonliterary texts<br>- Characteristics of different styles and registers of language<br>- The variability of language and communication in different contexts | - To communicate orally and written in a variety of situations<br>- To monitor and adapt their own communication to the requirements of the situation<br>- To distinguish and use different types of texts<br>- Search for, collect and process information<br>- Use resources<br>- Formulate and express oral and written arguments. | - Positive attitude for constructive dialogue<br>- Appreciation of aesthetic qualities and a desire to promote them<br>- The interest to communicate (interact) with others<br>- Awareness of the impact of language on others<br>- The need to understand and use language in a positive and responsible way |

In Loredana Tudor sense, the didactic approach to communicative competence in the school curriculum, involves the identification of the following components (Tudor, 2015: 79):

- knowledge concepts, new terms;
- skills: using language as a tool for individual knowledge construction, understanding of messages, applying of some stages, schemes of argumentation of the position taken to a problem in order to convince, proposing solutions to a problem, assessing the advantages and limits, taking quick decision, making feedback, conducting assessments, sharing of common values, development of personal texts, use language for communication of innovative ideas;
- attitudes: conducting assessments, arguing personal opinion.

The valences of the key competence of communication in the mother tongue, as the variable of efficiency of the educational process, are multiple, for situations as:

a) promoting a teaching style based on communication, effective networking, bilateral feedback, responsiveness and transparency;
b) unlocking the barriers (excessive severity, formal character of teachers work (lack of interest, lack of understanding towards students, poor training, etc.), inappropriate language (misuse at a high level of abstraction etc.), lack of love for students, fear of risk, prejudice, authoritarianism, stereotyping, ignorance, inflexibility, selective retention, precedence, accepting criticism) of communication teacher - pupil/ student - teacher:
c) training and developing students communication skills in the fluency of verbal expression and in the ability of interpretation and reasoning their own ideas;
d) capacity for free expression of students;
e) fostering cooperation and collaboration between students;



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**New strands:**

**a) for students**

Communication skills in their native language will be used to improve the reading ability of pupils, following the results of comparative studies OECD, the international tests PISA, PIRLS, TEAMS. According to OECD (PISA 2006, 2009, 2012), Romania recorded the weakest scores of EU students aged 15 at international tests on writing and reading skills, mathematics and science. In 2012, the PISA international reading test, almost four from ten students (37.3%) are below the second level of performing at international testing, compared to the European average level (17.8%). The results of comparative analysis indicates a high level for students in the age 15, from Romania, who have low reading skills and reading.

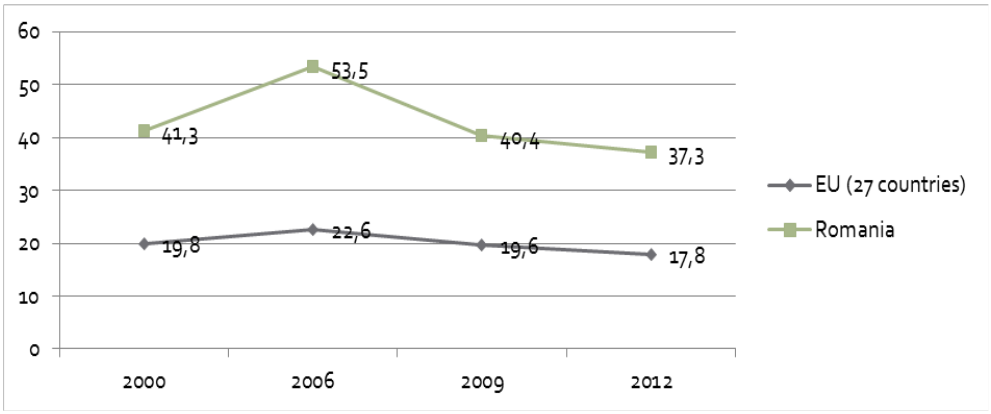



Fig. 2. The proportion of pupils with poor performance in reading (PISA - level 1 or lower) from 2000 to 2012 - Romania-EU comparative data (Apostu, Balica et all: 57)

In order to achieve the European target of 15% students with poor results in PISA tests in 2020, our country, Romania, must make significant efforts to improve education quality to reduce the current gap that places Romania on the last place, beating only Bulgaria.

**b) for teachers**

For the period 2016-2020, a general measure for teachers is to increase the percentage of involvement in training programs for the thematic area of communication in various situations. According to training offer registered in 2016 at the ministry of education, training market offers training programs accredited with suitable theme in this respect for linguistic communication, teaching communication or management communication.



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**Conclusion**

Turning to the current context of the knowledge society in which we place key competences both in teacher training and in student's education, we confirm the need for training and development. The necessity to form key competence of communication in the mother tongue, operationalized in specific skills, as we exemplified in this approach, constitutes a repeated pattern for each key competence. Teachers competence profile permanent adapting is a condition of the current educational process, adequate to pupils and their real needs in education.

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**Electronic resources:**

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