Teacher's Training in Romania and Germany A Comparative Study

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Introduction

Teacher training is an important branch of the education system in Romania, going over time through several stages and steps of reform. Teacher training is important not only because teachers must have some knowledge in order to teach students, but also because they need to manage conflicts or special situations within the department. Lifelong training is important for the teacher to keep pace with technological developments and ultimately with the new requirements of modern society.

The subject of this research has a particular relevance in the context in which the role models of young generations are the stars from tabloids, and the literacy rate is two times lower than the European average.

Teacher training needs to be comprehensive, multilateral and multidimensional, it needs to include cultural preparation of methodical and psycho-pedagogical speciality. The cultural preparation is absolutely necessary in the training of teachers. An adequate general knowledge offers the teachers of various specialties the opportunity to make connections between the subjects they teach and related subjects, to include in their teaching method concepts that arouse students' interest in the subject and that develop their thirst for knowledge (Jinga, 2005, p. 63).

Pedagogical and psychological preparation is essential to all the teachers in the educational field. This can be compared with the technology of any profession without which the ignorant craftsman would grope, would lose a lot of time to discover things already known and recorded in the technology of their profession; and with all the experience and intuition in the world they would not be able to rise to the level of quality and efficiency achieved by those who master the new technologies in their field (Ibidem, p. 64).

More and more members of society tend to identify the profession of being a teacher, from a certain point of view, with the lack of money (or with low and very low wages), with that category of people who are strict, distant, hard to approach, well-prepared, but lacking the ability to transmit their knowledge; from another point of view, the profession of being a teacher is identified with a weak productive inefficient profession or a profession increasingly humiliated, insulted and ignored (Albu, 2013, p.59).

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Teacher Training in Romania

In an increasingly complex and demanding society the concern for professionalizing teacher training has become an important topic in the educational and training system. This is all the more important as the teacher is no longer just a simple transmitter of knowledge, becoming an important factor in discovering and even creating new knowledge. The teacher must acquire various skills, must be highly adaptive to the new and have interdisciplinary and professional skills. Training and forming the teachers is done in concentrically organized dimensions, starting from individual study, to institutionally organized forms at the level of departments, commissions, related specialties, pedagogical circles, periodical developments, master's degrees, postgraduate courses and the system of full-time professional degree and teaching certifications (Bunăiașu & Strungă, 2013; Bunăiașu, 2014(1); Bunăiașu, 2014(2); Frăsineanu, 2013; Popescu, 2008; Popescu & Ștefan, 2014; Vlăduţescu, Bunăiașu, & Strungă, 2015).

Initial training

Regarding the teaching career, Emil Păun said that "the effort of rationalization and alignment of the entire process of initial and lifelong training of teachers on the basis of professional standards" is not "easy to achieve given the specificity of the educational activity often involving variables whose standardization is neither possible nor necessary" (Păun, 2000).

Initial training is done in the universities, through the Departments of Teacher Training (DPPD), which are specialized structures that ensure professionalizing in teaching career, initial training and continue operating in accordance with specific regulations established by the Ministry of Education and Research (Law of National Education no. 1/2011), "supplemented by regulations adopted by the universities' senate, based on their autonomy" (Apostu et al., 2009, p.44). For job positions in education, university graduates must acquire psycho-pedagogical and methodological preparation in the study programme, to obtain a DPPD certificate, which is structured in two modules: Module I (30 credits) – it takes place during the semesters of the undergraduate studies (years I-III) or during postgraduate studies and it offers certification on completion; Module II (30 credits) will take place after receiving the Bachelor's Degree, during the specialized Master's Degree and before the exam for full-time professional degree or during postgraduate studies, which allows them to obtain a certificate (Stanciu, 2008, p.304).

The mission of Teacher Training Departments in Romania focuses on three areas: the initial training for the teaching profession; lifelong training and perfecting the training of the teaching staff in primary and secondary school, through Master's Degrees, periodical developments, and through the exams for obtaining teaching degrees; theoretical and applied scientific research in science education.

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According to the data available on the official website of the Ministry of Education and Research, in Romania there are currently 44 Teacher Training Departments (DPDD) operating in state universities and 9 Departments operating within private universities.

Lifelong Training

From a correlative point of view, training is dependent on the initial training and on the university. This allows for continuity and a "development of formative mechanisms for career progression on one hand, but on the other hand this partly isolates the theoretical training process from the conceptual-pedagogical base" (Panait, 2014).

Lifelong training represents a framework for the becoming of an adult in cognitive, emotional and psychosocial plan, being an opportunity for personal development which allows the adult to create new knowledge and adapt knowledge gained to contexts that are constantly changing. In this teacher training, the trainees are not just objects of formation, but they constitute active elements of this process which is opened to a partnership with the trainers (Cucoș, 1999, p. 74).

The concept of lifelong training sets important directions in perfecting teacher training, outlined by consolidating the undertaken reforms and reevaluating primordial elements in a technologically advanced society. This goes beyond fundamental representation of "the remedy to the deficiencies in the insufficient initial training for the whole professional career" (teaching), lifelong training, in a (post) modern interpretation, "begins to be conceived as a long-term process and lifelong learning", being defined as "a set of activities and practices that require the involvement of educators to gain personal knowledge, improve skills, analyze and develop professional aptitudes" (EURYDICE, 1997, pp. 8-9).

Lifelong training of teachers takes place both within the Teacher Training Departments and in the Teaching-Staff Resource Center (CCD), from each school inspectorate. DPPD can propose thematically organized or modular courses, such as non-disciplinary internships aimed at a specific segment of teachers (Jigău, Apostu et al., 2008, p. 48).

Most training courses organized by DPPD are conducted in the form of "full-time study" on school holidays and / or in the weekends.

Teaching-Staff Resource Center (CCD) provides courses for lifelong training of teachers, of the auxiliary staff and of management in each county (Ibidem, p.48), and the offer for teacher training is conducted by CCD, in each county, depending on training needs, but taking into account the human and material resources available to those counties.

Improving the skills of teachers from primary and secondary school

After initial training in college, where teachers obtain Bachelor's and Master's Degree, as well as the teacher certificate from DPPD, three training forms are organized for teachers in primary and secondary education: a)

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becoming full-time professionals, after a 2 year internship; b) certification for second degree in teaching; c) certification for first degree in teaching.

These forms of training are carried out through specialized pedagogical and methodological courses completed through examination, which offer the teachers certain rights, including financial ones.

The activity of professional development (every 5 years with 90 transferable credits) has three forms of 30 credits each: a) Specialized development; b) Psycho-pedagogical development; c) I.T. computer assisted education.

Lifelong training is conducted by participating in activities that take the following forms: a) Methodical commissions, specialized teachers and curriculum areas; b) Pedagogical circles, organized by: school, vocational technical schools, counties and in Bucharest by municipality and sectors; c) Seminars, symposiums, scientific and applied research, teacher's portfolio, teaching councils.

The legislative framework governing the teaching training in Romania

The training for teachers was always considered a priority in the educational reform, although initial and lifelong training is a step behind other components of the reform. "The system of teacher training has registered a slower development, a certain discrepancy regarding the pace and efficiency in comparison with other elements of the reform, especially curriculum and instruction, evaluation and management. Most teachers adhere to the spirit of the reform, but a third of them fail to acquire the "codes" of the reform. They are not sufficiently familiar with the concepts and methodological principles of the reform. For this reason, they fail to apply them constantly" (Vlăsceanu, et al. 2002).

According to the Education Law (no. 84/1995, Title V, Chapter 2, art. 159), lifelong teacher training is a right which is achieved mainly through improvement and professional conversion.

Lifelong training of teachers, as educational policy, benefits from a legislative framework regulating this activity: National Education Law (Law 1/2011), the Statute of teachers (Law 128/1997), Law no. 349/2004 (amendments to the Statute of teachers), the Methodology of lifelong training of teaching staff in secondary education (MEN Order No. 3770/1998), MEC Order no. 4796/2001 regarding the organization and operation of periodic training and developing of teachers and auxiliary staff in primary and secondary education and OMEC no. 5655 / 22.12.2004 amending OMEC no. 4696/2001, the Accreditation Methodology of lifelong training programs in primary and secondary education (MEC Order 3533/2002), MEC orders no. 5398 / 25.11.2004 and no. 3948 / 22.04.2005 amending OMEC no. 3533 / 08.04.2002, the Order M.Ed.C. no. 3915 / 19.04.2005 on extending training programs in other locations, MEC Order no. 4611/2005 regarding the Methodology of

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accreditation for lifelong training programs for teachers in primary and secondary education.

SWOT Analysis

This type of analysis is intended to highlight both the qualities and defects of an important branch of the education system namely teacher training in Romania, this approach clearly reflecting the personal vision of the authors, resulted from their academic training.

Strengths

• The existence of a modern curricular and legislative framework, adapted to the post modern paradigm of education;

• The existence of an infrastructure that allows access to the information resources of the Internet;

• The existence of a large number of teachers with good psycho-pedagogical training able to apply active and participative training methods;

Weaknesses

• Insufficient development of training courses in specific thematic areas; poor quality of training in certain specialized domains (especially sciences);

• Poor relationship between theoretical and practical aspects at the level of curriculum development;

• The improper placement and duration of training sessions during the school year (during the weekends, school holidays or concurrently with class work);

• Poor facilities in some schools, particularly in rural areas;

• Failure to adapt the teaching style to the needs and specificity of learners;

• The persistence in teacher training approaches which pay tribut to centering on the teacher (Ex Cathedra) instead of those based on developing skills and attitudes.

Opportunities

• Material resources (rooms, technical equipment, learning materials) involved in the training programs are mostly of high quality, they ensure a good development of the internships and the favorable context for students' active participation;

• The development of European and international programs, the diversification of the training offers, the development of the market of training providers;

• The relative flexibility offered to the training activities by the current National Curriculum;

• Easy access to information via the Internet.

Threats

• The disadvantage felt by teachers residing in cities other than county seats, where you can find the most training opportunities;

• The high cost of courses that address the interests of teacher training;

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• The high costs of travel and accommodation required if you attendi the classes, which is credible, given the low level of remuneration of teachers;

• The inadequate duration of the courses in regard to personal needs of training;

• Poor involvement of civil society in issues related to education in general and teacher training in particular and low interest of the decision makers in consultation with experts and professional associations in the field;

• Using mainly classical methods, less innovative;

• Wrong usage of some of the modern methods;

• Reluctance to the change represented by the necessity of skills and attitudes, generally generated by convenience and habit;

• Organisation of training courses at great distances from home, poor information given to the teachers regarding the training offer, the heterogeneousness of the groups of trainees, the high/low number of trainees who attend certain courses.

Teacher training in Germany

In Europe, students who wish to pursue a career in education generally study 4 or 5 years. To teach in primary and secondary school it is enough to have a Bachelor's Degree, as well as for those who want to teach in pre-primary education. In Germany, however, one can teach at pre-primary level only if qualified at upper secondary level or post-secondary (European Commission, 2013).

Aspects of teacher training in Germany

Teacher training is basically divided into two stages, a course of higher education, including internships, and a second stage of a practical approach to teacher training.

Training courses are offered by universities, Technische Hochschulen / Technische Universitäten, Pädagogische Hochschulen (colleges of education) and Colleges of art and music. Pedagogical practice as a Vorbereitungsdienst (preparatory service) takes place in teacher training institutes (Studienseminare) and training schools.

Through the reform of teacher training, the share of practical training courses in schools of higher education has increased substantially in recent years (KMK, Bonn, 2013).

In Germany the necessary training for teaching of the future teachers includes a general component which presupposes the knowledge of the subject that they will teach, as well as a professional component offering them the ability to relate and to make themselves understood among students.

In the initial teacher training, the vocational component is offered at the same time as the general component, the simultaneous model being the only way to accede to a teaching career at all levels of education and the only selection method is general admission exam in higher education. Students are

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involved in specific professional training for teachers from the start of their tertiary education (Eurydice, 2013).

The institutions providing lifelong education offer a variety of courses and fields covering general academic education, vocational, political; however, the objectives, the content and the duration of courses are variable.

The pedagogical staff working in early childhood education and care are trained at Fachschulen (vocational school for youth and community workers), training area attributed to the tertiary level. In recent years, the number of courses leading to a first degree and additional courses for teaching staff has increased.

The subsequent courses are available to qualified pedagogical staff with the cooperation between Fachschulen and Fachhochschulen (polytechnics), in particular at levels of administration, management and guidance at elementary level.

Some of the staff (especially those in management positions) have a degree from a University of Science as Social Workers (youth and community workers). This training either comprises a three-year course of study at a higher education institution and one year of practical training, either a four-year course of study with two integrated semesters of work experience.

The auxiliary staff, especially nursery assistants, are employed in the primary sector alongside pedagogical staff, young graduates and community workers. In most states, this staff attenda a two-year training course at Berufsfachschulen (full-time vocational schools).

The reform of teacher training includes the implementation of the consecutive structure of study with Bachelor's and Master's Degrees (BA / MA). In the so-called Quedlinburger Beschluss from June 2005 were drawn guidelines for mutual recognition of the bachelor's and master's degrees in training teachers, which mention that: diplomas and educational careers based on Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in teacher training will be recognized if they meet the following requirements:

• integrative study at universities or equivalent institutions of higher education in at least two areas and educational sciences at the undergraduate and master's level (the states are free to specify exceptions in the fields of art and music);

• practical study in schools starting with the undergraduate studies;

• no extension of existing standard periods (no practical sections);

• differentiation of curricula and diplomas by teaching position.

Due to various areas that they choose, teachers are trained differently, according to the level and type of school in the state. Thus there are six types of teaching careers:

Type 1 – teaching careers in primary school or at primary level;

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

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Type 3 - teaching careers at all secondary school level;

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

Type 5 - teaching careers in vocational disciplines at upper secondary or vocational schools;

Type 6 - teaching careers in special education.

In all states, training is divided into studies at a university or the equivalent higher education institutions, including periods of practical training and teaching practice. The preparatory service concludes with the second state examination; a pass in this exam confers a teaching qualification. The two stages of training must be closely related in terms of education and training provided, and should take into account the specific requirements of each type of teaching career.

The first stage of teacher training: Studies at a higher education institution

The characteristic elements of the courses of the six types of teaching careers are described below in generalized form:

Career Type 1: primary level training. This type of teaching career consists of a course of study lasting at least seven semesters, which pays particular attention to Science Education and practical teaching components. The teacher obtains a total of at least 210 credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

Career Type 2: for teaching at primary level and all lower levels of a secondary school. Training for this type of teaching career consists of a course of study lasting at least seven semesters. The teacher obtains at least 210 credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

Career Type 3 - teaching careers at all secondary school levels. Training for this type of teaching career consists of a course of study lasting at least seven semesters. The teacher obtains at least 210 credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

Career Type 4 - teaching careers for the general education disciplines at upper secondary level or high school. Regelstudienzeit (standard period of study) for this type of career includes a minimum of six semesters during the undergraduate studies and a minimum of two semesters during the master's. This includes 10 semesters including practical training periods in schools and it is rated with 300 credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The standard period of study for teacher training courses ends with Erste Staatsprüfung (First State Examination) and it comprises a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 10 semesters and amounts to a volume of at least 270 ECTS credits.

Career Type 5 - teaching careers in vocational disciplines at upper secondary level or at vocational schools. A course for this type of career includes a minimum of six semesters during the undergraduate studies and a

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minimum of two semesters during the master's. This includes 10 semesters including practical training periods in schools and it is rated with 300 credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The standard period of study for teacher training courses ends with Erste Staatsprüfung (First State Examination) and it comprises 9 semesters and amounts to a volume of at least 270 ECTS credits. It also requires a period of 12 months of practice within the chosen vocational area.

Career Type 6 - teaching careers in special education. Qualification as a special education teacher can be obtained either by passing the second state examination after obtaining a qualification in higher education or by passing the first state examination and by completing an additional course to qualify for another type of career in teaching.

The second stage of teacher training: preparatory services

All kinds of training studied at the university or at equivalent institutions of higher education are followed by a preparatory service, as the second stage of teacher training that can last between 1 and 2 years. The preparatory service aims to provide teaching practice in schools based on academic training. This implies, depending on the state and type of career choice, help with the homework, studies in educational and teaching theory, related to the subject they teach and a position at teacher training institutes (Studienseminare), which reevaluates and consolidates the experience gained through practical training.

"Framework Agreements" on training and examination for the six types of teaching careers have been adapted to the new training structure. The states decide whether the present study structure of the qualifying exam Staats should be maintained or whether to make a transition to the consecutive study system. In several states, the consecutive study model has already been introduced in teacher training, in others the transition is undergoing. In Länder, which has consecutive study model for teacher training, master's degree is equivalent to the first state examination as a rule. Second state examination must, however, take place after the preparatory period.

The legislative framework

Responsibility for teacher training rests with the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of the states which regulates training through study regulations and examination regulations. The first and second state examination are conducted by state authorities or examination which works at the level of the councils of the states.. The bachelor and master courses offering qualifications required for admission to preparatory service, state responsibility for content requirements in teacher training is ensured by the involvement in the procedure for accreditation of a representative of a higher educational authority in the school system. Any accreditation of individual study courses requires the approval of this representative forum (Kultusminister Konferenz, 2011).

Training of teachers at all types of schools is regulated by State law. Relevant legal provisions include laws (R88, R90, R92, R95, R99, R101, R104,

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R111, R120) and Studienordnung (study regulations) for teacher training courses, Prüfungsordnungen (examination regulations) for the Erste Staatsprüfung (first national examination) or bachelor's and master's exams, Ausbildungsordnung (training regulations) for Vorbereitungsdienst (preparatory service) and examination regulations for the second state examination (KMK, 2013, p.181). Lifelong training in Germany is regulated by the state to a lesser extent than other areas of education. The given explanation for this is that the various and continuously changing requirements in terms of lifelong education can be best met by a structure which is characterized by diversity and competition between institutions and the range of courses and services offered. A core principle of lifelong education courses is that participation should be voluntary. State activities in the field of lifelong education are mostly limited to establishing principles and issuing regulations regarding organization and financing. These principles and regulations are embodied in the legislation of the federal government and the states. State regulations are meant to establish general conditions for the optimum development of the contribution of lifelong education (KMK, 2013, p.173).

SWOT analysis

Strengths

• Teachers employed as career clerks must complete a probationary period of 24 to 36 months;

• Teachers of a certain age can benefit from reduced teaching hours;

• The highest relative proportion between the minimum wages of teachers and GDP per capita;

• National induction programs for beginner teachers in pre-primary, primary and general secondary (lower and upper) levels;

• Teachers from preschool (or qualified educational staff at this level) do not have higher education studies, but have a qualification at upper secondary level or post-secondary;

• Continuing professional development (CPD) is a professional obligation of teachers;

• The general examination for admission to higher education is the only effective method of selection;

• They do not explicitly request a training plan at any level.

Weaknesses

• The percentage of teachers in the age group under 30 is particularly low in Germany;

• They do not give teachers any explicit incentive to encourage them to participate in lifelong professional development;

• The simultaneous model is the only possible option for a teaching career.

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Opportunities

• All preschool teachers are employed on contractual status, and those who teach at other levels of education are clerks;

• The prerequisite for a teacher to be promoted to the post of director of school is to have an experience of minimum 5 years and professional training for a management position;

• The type of employment status available to teachers in pre-primary, primary and general secondary (lower and upper) level in Germany is a Career with the status of a clerk with lifetime employment;

• The program "First, to teach" as an alternative route. It is a movement of private charity, founded and financed by a variety of corporate sponsors. Its main purpose is to recruit outstanding graduates from various fields to teach in schools in disadvantaged areas. This initiative, which runs for 10 years in Great Britain, is gradually adopted in other European countries (such as Germany).

Threats

• Almost half of the teachers are aged over 50 in Germany;

• It is one of the countries with the lowest percentages of teachers in the active population (approx. 1.6%).

Comparative analysis of data

Differences between Germany and Romania are both in terms of culture, civilization and mentality, organizational level, infrastructure and national strategy in education.

Firstly, Germany is recognized for exemplary organization and rigor showed over the course of time.

Each country has a related tag including one related to education. Germany is famous for its dual system. Vocational education in this country is recognized as the most developed system in the world, but at the same time due to the division of classes according to the abilities of children: a school for the weak (Hauptschule), a school for middle students (Realschule) and one for the elite (Gymnasium), especially designed to facilitate access to university; big differences are made between children with poor training, medium children and elite children.

Whatever school they choose, it finally allows the students to Matura exam (Abitur) and consequently to go to University.

As it happens in Romania, students who are choosing a teaching career should go through a teacher training program during undergraduate studies, which is really the only way to enter the teaching profession in Germany. The training required for the pedagogical activity of future teachers includes a general component which presupposes the knowledge of the subject they are going to teach and a professional component offering them the ability to relate and make themselves understood among students.

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Everywhere in Europe, admission to initial training as a qualified teacher seems to be governed by the general entry requirements in the higher and tertiary education, instead of specific criteria or examinations for the future profession. Only a third of European countries have in place specific methods of selection such as aptitude tests or interviews about the candidates' motivation to become teachers. In Romania, admission for general teachers includes a written test and an aptitude test.

Dual education takes place over a period of 3 years, after 10 years of compulsory education, and it's very popular, due to the possibility of learning a profession.

In Romania vocational school has experienced a setback after 1990 when the economic and labor market have undergone major changes, thus in 2009 became practically dead. The economy and labor market have been further affected, since the labor market provides only 10% of jobs for higher education and it is pointless that all should go to college. Productivity and attractiveness of an economy depends essentially on the quality of training and education systems, because no investor will bring their money into a country where you cannot find welders, mechanics, plumbers, masons, etc.

The difference between vocational school in Germany and the one in Romania lies in the society's perception of vocational school. While in Germany many students choose vocational school first and then go to college, in Romania there is the idea that a college degree automatically offers a higher salary, the vocational qualification being perceived as a low level professional career.

The data shows that Germany is among the countries where over 60% of all teachers at primary level are in age groups over 40.

In secondary education, the image of an aging workforce is even more pronounced, the group aged below 30 does not even represent 10% of the operating teachers. Over 40% of teachers are over 50 in Germany. Moreover, the percentage of teachers in the age group under 30 is very low and the risk of a shortage of teachers in the coming years is imminent. As a safety precaution there is the possibility that untrained students can get into teaching, and later be included in an induction program for beginner teachers.

In Romania the situation is different, having no problems in this regard, although, with the exception of job security in an uncertain economy, monetary benefits of the teaching profession are not very attractive. Unlike Germany where the relative proportion of minimum wages of teachers and GDP per capita is 141%, in Romania the minimum wage of a teacher in primary education corresponds to less than 50% of national GDP per capita (Eurydice, 2013).

Structured induction programs designed to provide additional training, help and advice to beginner teachers are in effect as obligatory both in Romania and in Germany. While these programs differ as a way of organizing, some

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offerint individual support, others being focused on lifelong training, they are all aimed at helping beginners to make corrections in their profession and reduce the likelihood of teachers leaving their careers too early.

Forms of participatory management of the school, from pre-primary to upper secondary level, introduced by the central education authorities are made: in Romania by redistributing tasks through coordinating groups formally designated, as well as through ad hoc established informal groups, and in Germany through ad hoc established informal groups.

Conclusions and openings

The establishment and operationalization of professional schools in Romania is regarded as a national priority, the education of young people in the spirit of obtaining a qualification for a profession being a short-term objective and very short, in the context of the the current socio-economic conditions.

We agree with Vasile Chiș in that we consider that the teaching profession can not be considered a semiprofession, where work is partially rational and scientific and prejudices dominate the priority of the academic character of a basic specialization. The generation of a vocational teacher is coming to an end, it is time for the professional teacher, who can scientifically adapt to a changing school, to the changes that appear in students' evolution, to their differential approach (Chiș, 2005).

Subsequently, we consider that the necessary steps are:

- developing good practice guides for teachers, with concrete and applied recommendations;

- overcoming the mentality that in education and training can operate the approach 'anything goes', and enforcement of the perspective "it goes like this";

- increase the requirement in evaluating the activity of teachers, overcoming formalism in their training;

- installation of audio-video systems in classrooms, for analyzing good and bad practices used in teaching; using images captured as study and research material for training future teachers.

The new European approach for recognizing the value of training is seen as a indispensable preamble for creating an environment for education and lifelong learning (Maciuc, 2005).

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