

Teacher Education Policies in the Republic of Moldova

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This article reveals basic conceptions of the standards for continuous training of teachers in the Republic of Moldova elaborated by Cara Angela, PhD, (coordinator), Prof. Gutu Vladimir, PhD, Prof. Gremalschi Anatol, PhD, Solovei Rodica, PhD, Baciú Sergiu, PhD.

It is also concerned with the Teacher Education Policies in the Republic of Moldova from the perspective of changes that are going to take place in the Moldovan system of teachers' continuous training:

- Transition from a system governed by offers (institutions offer a certain type of continuous training, while teachers, having no other alternative, accept the offer) to a system adjusted to teachers' real demands, interests and needs;
- Increasing accessibility of the system for a wide range of training providers and, consequently, increasing the number of offers of training;
- Encouraging free competition, but also partnership between various training providers, which will lead to the improvement of the general quality of offers;
- Encouraging teachers to assume and create their own continuous training itinerary.

Taking into account the above mentioned points here are presented national strategies concerning teachers' continuous training in the Republic of Moldova, general objectives of the continuous professional training, reference framework of the standards elaboration for the continuous training of general secondary education teachers of the Republic of Moldova.

Key words: teacher education policies, permanent education, continuous training, professional credits, professional skills, ensuring education quality, standards for the continuous training.

Reorganization of Moldovan system of education has involved the following changes: restructuring of the legislative frame, reform of the school Curriculum and textbooks, modification of the evaluation system and the teachers' training system. A vitally important stage of the above mentioned reform was The Project of Reorganization of Moldovan System of General Education, which was

initiated and financed by the World Bank and the government of the Republic of Moldova.

The teachers' continuous training was aimed at preparing teachers for fulfilling new objectives of the Curriculum and employing new textbooks and system of evaluation, thus promoting quality, competence and efficiency of the educational process.

The Project of the Reorganization of Moldovan System of General Education put forward an integral structure "Curriculum – evaluation – continuous training". The advantages of this approach are the following:

1. Ensuring coherence at the level of teacher education policies, standards and implementation;
2. Ensuring correlation "Curriculum – evaluation – teachers' continuous training";
3. Employing material, human and didactic resources in an efficient way.

Nowadays continuous professional training in the Republic of Moldova is integrated into the essence of permanent education or education across lifetime, thus reconsidering the relation between initial and continuous training. Continuous training is focused on four fundamental types of learning, which are pillars of professional knowledge:

- *Learn to be*, which means acquiring tools for educational knowledge;
- *Learn to do*, which means that an individual interrelates with educational environment;
- *Learn to live together with others*, which means to be able to cooperate with others while participating in educational activities;
- *Learn to be and learn to become*, this being the element of value resulting from all those three pillars mentioned above.

The general objectives of the continuous professional training in the Republic of Moldova are:

- Modernization and development of the teachers' continuous training system according to the needs of modern society and international tendencies;

- Integration of the system of teachers' continuous training into a single educational system;
- Integration of the system of teachers' continuous training into the context of the educational reform in the Republic of Moldova;
- Establishment of a motivation frame for continuous training of teachers;
- Facilitation of social integration of people according to their professional aspirations and educational system needs;
- Establishment of favorable conditions for the development and maximal realization of teachers' intellectual and creative potential;
- Update of knowledge and competences, as well as improvement of professional qualifications in educational field;
- Re-qualification, re-conversion determined by the educational system restructuring;
- Guaranteeing full use and design of national curricula;
- Guaranteeing the implementation of new educational and informational technologies;
- Professionalizing teachers' career in the Republic of Moldova;
- Development of a "continuous training programs' market" based on a loyal competition system, by means of which teachers can benefit from a diversified offer coming from the continuous training providers;
- Modification of the management through continuous training of teaching staff;
- Ensuring continuity between initial and continuous training and re-qualification of teachers.

With a view to improving and insuring the quality of teachers' continuous training there has been elaborated the **Strategy for professional continuous training in the educational system of the Republic of Moldova (draft)**.

According to the *Strategy for professional continuous training in the educational system of the Republic of Moldova (draft)*, continuous professional training in the educational system of the Republic of Moldova is focused on achieving the following desiderata:

- develop capabilities to design, implement, evaluate/ self-evaluate educational activities;
- accumulate, innovate and produce new knowledge for continuous professional training;
- monitor the performances and the process of pupil's development;
- pedagogical communication, communication with parents and community;
- respect pupil's personal necessities and characteristics taking into consideration their age;
- develop team work and efficient communication skills, as well as create and maintain an environment of understanding and respect;
- develop professional practice, self-training, self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement capacities;
- develop capacities for designing and implementing new informational and communicational technologies.

With a view to implementing a permanent monitoring system of teaching career of each teaching/managerial employee and improvements achieved in continuous training there have been elaborated and approved by the National Council for Curriculum as part of the Ministry of Education **“Standards for Continuous Training of Teachers”**.

The Standards for continuous training of teachers form a referential framework for the continuous development of professional skills in line with the educational necessities, existing tendencies and the requested didactic degree, as well as with the motivation of self-training and motivation to perform a qualitative didactic activity.

The following Fields of Skills are included:

1. Specialty skill
2. Psycho - pedagogical skill
3. Psychosocial skill
4. Technical and technological skill

5. Managerial and career management skill

The professional skills aim at promoting an efficient policy concerning the teaching staff development, which would guarantee the professional development right of each teacher and at acknowledging teacher's role in cultivating and developing individual, social and European values.

The implementation of **The Standards for continuous training of teachers** will contribute to maintaining and developing teachers' professional skills, and their involvement in continuous training. They will also add to diversification of methods used in continuous training of teachers, promotion of an efficient policy in the view of teaching staff development, which would guarantee the professional development right of each teacher, introduction of the professional credits system in the teachers continuous training; insurance of trainers and teachers mobility.

In order to implement the standards for teachers' continuous training there have been proposed some categories of continuous training programs, types of programs, and professional credits.

Continuous training programs represent the anticipation of a group of actions made for the development of certain general and specific skills. Any continuous training program is built up on an adult learning concept and is based on practicing and developing knowledge, skills and didactic framework action schemes.

Continuous training programs will be developed on the basis of the following continuous training fields:

1. Psycho - pedagogy.
2. Didactics of Discipline and Specialty.
3. Informational and Communicational Technologies.

Continuous training program flexibility consists in the fact that each participant will create his/her own continuous training way, which implies going over a common trunk (mandatory) and choosing one or more optional packages proposed by trainers.

The professional development and the teaching staff continuous training will be accomplished by using *professional credits system*. The system of professional

credits represents a group of conventional numerical values which are used to measure and to express the normal volume of work done by people being trained to learn/develop knowledge and skills in the fields foreseen by the programs. The system of professional credits in continuous training is foreseen to have a triple role:

- As an element of internal construction of continuous training programs;
- As an evolution, promotion and obtaining didactic degrees criterion;
- As a norm for comparing training programs and the transfer of credits in the view of teaching staff mobility.

The system of professional credits supposes accumulation of a certain unitary number of credits at the whole level of continuous training system, which will be taken into consideration in obtaining didactic degrees or in obtaining a certificate of professional continuous training and also in teaching staff evaluation at the level of school institution. In this respect, each specialist will have a portfolio which will contain documents that prove the fact that he/she was involved in continuous training activities. The portfolios will be assessed by institutions competent in this field.

In order to put into service the standards for the continuous training of general secondary education teachers there has been worked out a *draft of the Regulations of the Implementation of standards for the continuous training of general secondary education teachers*.

The teaching staff involved in the pre-university education in 5 years will have **100 professional transferable credits** which will be distributed as follows:

1. Getting credits according to the categories of continuous training programs:

- **50 credits** from long term and medium term continuous training programs;
- **35 credits** from thematic and modular continuous training programs;
- **15 credits** from special continuous training programs.

We recommend the teaching staff to operate their continuous training in such a way that the process of accumulating credits takes place during those 5 years.

2. Getting credits according to the continuous training field:

Continuous training field	Duration	Credits
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Psycho-pedagogy	18 hours	9
Didactics of Discipline	70 hours	35
Informational and communicational technologies	20 hours	10
Total	108 hours	54 credits

3. Allocation of transferable professional credits to mandatory subjects:

Program type	Category of disciplines	No. of transferable professional credits			Total
		Module I	Module II	Module III	
Long (I+II+III)	Mandatory	20	34	6	60
Medium (I+II)	Mandatory	20	34	-	54
Medium (I+III)		20	-	6	26
Medium (II+III)		-	34	6	40
Short (I)	Mandatory	20	-	-	20
Short (II)		-	34	-	34
Short (III)		-	-	6	6

Allocation of transferable professional credits to optional subjects

Program type	Category of disciplines	No. of transferable professional credits			Total
		Module I	Module II	Module III	
Long (I+II+III)	Optional	14	22	4	40
Medium (I+II)	Optional	14	22	-	36
Medium (I+III)	Optional	14	-	4	18
Medium (II+III)	Optional	-	22	4	26
Short (I)	Optional	14	-	-	14
Short (II)	Optional	-	22	-	22
Short (III)	Optional	-	-	4	4

Allocation of transferable professional credits to mandatory and optional subjects:

Program type	Category of disciplines	No. of transferable professional credits			Total	
		Module I	Module II	Module III		
Long (I+II+III)	Mandatory	20	34	6	60	100
	Optional	14	22	4	40	
Medium (I+II)	Mandatory	20	34	-	54	90
	Optional	14	22	-	36	
Medium (I+III)	Mandatory	20	-	6	26	44
	Optional	14	-	4	18	
Medium (II+III)	Mandatory	-	34	6	40	66
	Optional	-	22	4	26	
Short (I)	Mandatory	20	-	-	20	34
	Optional	14	-	-	14	
Short (II)	Mandatory	-	34	-	56	56
	Optional	-	22	-	22	
Short (III)	Mandatory	-	-	6	10	10
	Optional	-	-	4	4	

4. Getting credits reported to the local – national dimension:

On the completion of continuous training courses at the national level the specialist will get – **70 credits**, and at the local level – **30 credits**.

5. Getting credits according to the carried out professional activities/actions:

- Delivering 2-4 demonstrative lessons which show the use of some innovations;
- Having 2 - 4 extracurricular activities aiming at professional and social integration;
- Teacher has pupils with very good results – prize – winning places at competitions and olympiads;
- Participation in the „Teacher of the Year“ contest;
- The publication of an article in a scientific – methodical collection;
- The publication of a scientific-didactic article in a specialty magazine;

- Presentation of communications at profile manifestations/ seminars, conferences, symposiums;
- Acting as trainer/performer/coordinator within the framework of an educational project;
- Designing and publishing a textbook approved by the Ministry of Education and Youth,
- Taking a PhD.

Recommendations

- Realization of decentralization principles as part of the system of teachers' continuous training in the Republic of Moldova;
 - Necessity to efficiently apply the research results in the field;
 - Improvement and insurance of the quality of teachers' continuous training;
 - Professionalization of educational field;
 - Insurance of continuity between the systems of teachers' initial and continuous training;
 - Increase of personal responsibility of each teacher for his/her own professional career;
 - Promotion of an efficient policy in the view of teaching staff development, which would guarantee the professional development right of each teacher;
 - Design of some mechanisms/procedures, which would guarantee an agreement between the staff development policy and the needs of teaching/managerial staff;
 - Design of continuous training programs from the perspective of ensuring education quality;
 - Broadening international and trans–border cooperation with institutions of continuous training of teachers;
 - Motivation of teachers to learn all their life.

The following aspects are to be taken into consideration during the process of professional continuous training:

- Professional continuous training programs' accrediting and evaluation;
- Periodic updating of professional continuous training programs;
- Establishing the informative and documentation system for the professional continuous development;
- Accreditation of the institutions competent in professional continuous training;
- Cooperation with schools, institutions and organizations;
- Coordinating the demand and the offer at the national level;
- Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach of the professional continuous training programs;
- Professional continuous training in the base of professional credits;
- Continuous training quality monitoring and insurance.

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