PROFESSIONAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR NEW TEACHERS

Prospects, strengths and outcomes
of the seminars organised by
the Centre international d'études pédagogiques

2006 - 2009

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Preface

These seminars reflect the desire of the key partners involved in French cooperation in education to explore, in conjunction with our foreign colleagues, the major issues of concern to managers and policy-makers in the field of education in every country.

The Centre international d'études pédagogiques (CIEP) is especially keen to organise these meetings between countries all over the world, whose education issues are different yet have much in common. Such seminars are very productive insofar as they generate suggestions (through their origins, expression and consequences) for new forms of education and alternative ways of thinking.

The CIEP is possibly one of the rare places where such an exchange of ideas between representatives of many different nations can take place to identify common challenges as well as problems specific to each country.

The seminars have been a success thanks to a combination of two approaches: the first resulting from experience in the field, in touch with the daily and often complicated realities of education, and the second coming from central administrations and institutions, where other constraints have to be tackled (political, human and budget constraints). This joint approach has provided a lucid review of the situation, acceptable proposals and realistic action plans.

The seminars organised by the CIEP thus not only entailed formal discussions but also, and above all, workshops where professional skills training programmes were developed, taking into account context specifics, transferability and operational issues.

The four seminars also ensured coherence. They created the ideal conditions to develop group discussions. The potential outcomes began to emerge as of the second seminar.

The summary below covers all the key points and highlights of the discussions. In particular, in view of the substantial influx of new teachers with extremely diverse profiles, it enables us to classify professional skills training schemes according to teachers' different situations (from teachers with no initial training to teachers who have completed long training courses at specialised teacher training institutes), leading to a series of recommendations. These recommendations, far from laying down the law, are designed to help the reader understand the implications and the guiding principles of these schemes.

Now remains the implementation of the recommendations that are relevant to each situation, by means of public policy that is and remains under the authority of the State.
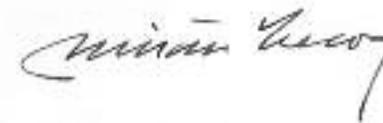
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Introduction

Between 2006 and 2009, the Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques (CIEP) coordinated a series of four seminars for which the topics and procedures were defined through group discussions in partnership with the key players in French cooperation, together with UNESCO's International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP).

The aim of these four seminars was to contribute to discussions in developing countries on how to improve their education systems and regarding the commitments they have made in terms of access to education, gender equality and the quality of teaching, which also implies the quality of teacher training.

The first two seminars were attended by participants from Africa and Asia; for the seminars held in 2008 and 2009, they were joined by representatives of Latin American countries who, in spite of different contexts and a greater degree of maturity in terms of policy, experience similar concerns.

The proceedings of each seminar have been published[1], reporting on the main points discussed and debated by the different countries, the final objective being to propose concrete solutions and recommendations for successful implementation of these solutions.

This brochure summarises the proposals, advice and recommendations described in the 2006-2009 seminar proceedings from the perspective of the three major challenges encountered by all the countries represented: a governance and coordination system more in touch with the reality in the classroom, relevant teaching, geared to local and vernacular characteristics, and training that provides newcomers to teaching, especially those recruited without any initial training, with opportunities for career development.

These proposals are primarily aimed at two types of reader: national managers in the countries in question and international financial organisations, in the perspective of enlightening decision-making and negotiations regarding their aid and support programmes.

1. "Les évaluations en éducation au niveau international : impacts, contradictions, incertitudes" [International assessments in education: impact, contradictions and uncertainty], Paris, CIEP, 2006; "Les enseignants recrutés sans formation initiale : quels enjeux ? Quelles réponses ?" [Recruiting teachers with no basic training: what are the priorities? The answers?], Paris, CIEP, 2007; "Professionnaliser les enseignants sans formation initiale : des repères pour agir" [Professional skills training for teachers with no basic training : keys to action], Paris, CIEP, 2008; Seminar held in October 2009 "L'entrée dans le métier : accompagner les nouveaux enseignants" [Learning the ropes, guiding and supporting new teachers], proceedings currently being edited.

How the seminars came into being and how they evolved

It would be difficult to understand the full extent of what these seminars have achieved without briefly mentioning their content and the discussions which ensued. Each seminar was organised around lectures given by researchers and experts[2], and on workshops where real situations were presented and debated, leading to the production of recommendations.

The starting point

The seminar held in 2006 was the starting point. It was entitled "Assessment to foster quality in education: practical experience and issues."
This seminar looked at the component parts of any type of assessment in the field of education, revealing its limits and, especially, the lack of impact on either student learning outcomes or guidelines for reform. It also identified ways to relate assessments to remedial action for any weaknesses found. Such action must take into account student assessment as well as the assessment of regional or national policy, because a country's education system makes up a whole. In addition, while many assessments have been carried out in emerging countries, often at the behest of the different funding organisations to meet diverse objectives, they have been carried out at various levels of the system, producing heterogeneous and partial results, without ever relating them to one another. As a consequence, decision-makers find themselves at a loss when it comes to analysing the purpose and significance of the results and interpreting them in terms of priority action. We should, however, mention that the assessment of teaching practices has proved to be something of a blind spot in the majority of countries. Yet it is crucial to any attempt to reform an education system, since it is the teachers who, in the classroom, enable students to learn. Furthermore, those in charge at national level sometimes have a very approximate vision of the profile of teachers in their country or they fail to take it adequately into account when implementing educational or curriculum reform[3]. One of the problems raised during this seminar was that, in developing countries, assessments in education are often promoted in line with global policies, in a context of reform where attempts to standardise the education system take precedence over the results of assessment.

This seminar, which focused largely on student skills assessment, revealing that students' learning outcomes had not improved, led to debate on teaching practice and, consequently, on teacher profiles, especially of teachers recruited in large numbers to achieve the goals of the EFA (Education for All) movement. These goals have entailed two major challenges for southern countries: to recruit large numbers of teachers to provide schooling for all children, in a context of limited budget resources, and to ensure quality of education. In the first few years of implementing the Millennium Development Goals, the quantitative requirement has taken precedence. A majority of teachers have thus been recruited as a matter of urgency, many of whom have no basic professional training.

2. An expert, as opposed to a novice, has a great deal of experience in the profession and, moreover, is able to communicate this.
3. On this subject, see the final report on the study of competency-based curriculum reforms (APC) in Africa conducted by the CIEP and funded by the French Development Agency (AFD), the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MAEE), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the International Francophone Organisation (OIF), publication of which is currently in progress.

The table below summarises the urgent requirements for teachers in public or community schools in certain African countries if they are to attain the objective of all children completing primary school by 2015[4].

For example, in the case of Benin, the last column shows that by 2015, the country will need to recruit two and a half times as many teachers as the current total; the average for all the countries in the table is three times as many.

COUNTRY	Current spending on primary education as a % of GDP	Pupil-teacher ratio	Teachers paid by parents as a %	Repeaters as a %	Gross enrolment rate	Primary completion rate	Teachers paid by the state		
	2000	2000	2002	2000	2000	2000	2000	2015[4]	RAPPORT
Benin	1,6	53	29	25	86	40	15 000	39 000	**2,6**
Burkina Faso	1,6	45	12	18	45	25	19 000	64 000	**3,4**
Cameroon	1,1	59	45	26	82	48	27 000	80 000	**3,0**
Chad	1,1	71	67	25	71	23	14 000	48 000	**3,4**
Congo	0,8	79	54	31	84	44	5 000	18 000	**3,6**
Guinea	0,8	54	18	23	62	34	12 000	42 000	**3,5**
Ivory Coast	1,7	43	13	25	77	48	39 000	80 000	**2,1**
Madagascar	1,1	51	53,9	33	90	26	28 000	70 000	**2,5**
Mali	1,0	75	21	18	49	24	11 000	63 000	**5,3**
Niger	1,8	41	4	13	34	20	14 000	64 000	**4,6**
Senegal	1,5	47	15	14	70	41	21 000	55 000	**2,6**
Togo	1,8	40	35	27	115	72	15 000	31 000	**2,1**
ENSEMBLE	**1,33**	**53,9**	**31,6**	**23,2**	**72,1**	**37,1**	**221 000**	**654 000**	**3,0**

4. Based on United Nations demographic forecasts; estimated on the basis of achieving universal primary education by 2015 and using the parameters of the Indicative Framework of the Education for All - Fast-track Initiative (pupil-teacher ratio of 40:1, 10% repeaters rate, and 10% of students enrolled in schools where teaching staff are paid by the parents). Source: Mingat, 2004.

Therefore, the subsequent three seminars focused on the issues raised by this massive teacher recruitment in order to identify potential solutions for professional skills training.

Dealing with an urgent issue

The seminar held in 2007 focused on the teachers recruited as a matter of urgency, especially those that suddenly found themselves in front of a class without any training other than their own experience as pupils. In the course of this seminar, it emerged that many young teachers had been recruited on the basis of a wide range of profiles, or even no definite profile at all, and that the discussions between the representatives of the various education systems made it possible to identify "good" practices in recruitment, starting the job and professional support[5].

One of the first questions tackled was related to initiatives that enable these teachers to receive quality training, geared to keep them on the job and bearing in mind the limited resources available to public authorities. The discussions consisted in seeking forms of effective skills training that can be implemented rapidly and cost-effectively. At this point, an alternative way of thinking training emerged, centred more on the actual professional activity and its impact than on university or academic discourse.

Thirty-six participants from twelve countries, mainly from Africa with the exception of Haiti and Lebanon, took part in these debates.

The debates resulted in identifying a number of major points:

● **this type of recruitment,** given the immense scale of the teacher requirement[6], is unavoidable and expected to be long-term, implying a need to focus on the quality of these teachers' practices;

● **the partial and local training programmes** presented by the participants revealed new modes of training, as opposed to traditional training models;

● although **the concept of professional** skills training embraces various meanings, it emerged as reflecting the training mode appropriate to the situation in which these teachers find themselves.

The table below shows the specific nature of professional skills training compared to education and training:

	Education	**Training**	**Professional skills training**
Main reference	Knowledge	Ability	Skill
Form of acquisition	Appropriation	Transfer	Combined transformation of actor and action
Role	Teacher	Organises learning	Accompanies the development of each individual, the role of experience
Relationship with environment	Conceptualisation-application	Decontextualization Recontextualization	Transformation of the action and the environment

In other words, professional skills' training is based on the development of skills (drawing on abilities, together with managing emotions and representations on the job while performing the activity) in a constantly-changing professional environment. At the individual level, this tends to develop situational intelligence and a personal attitude that will form the base for lifelong learning.

The seminar held in 2008, entitled "Professionnaliser les enseignants sans formation initiale : des repères pour agir" (Professional skills training for teachers with no basic training: keys to action), worked on this concept of professional skills training and the conditions required to implement it more systematically.

In addition to the previously present countries, this seminar included Latin American and Southeast Asian countries, where, albeit it on a smaller scale in quantitative terms, the issue requires particular attention due to its localisation in areas in difficulty.

Based on a description for each country of the procedures employed to recruit teachers with no basic training and the programmes set up to enable them to "teach a class", an examination of the skills to be developed and the initiatives that can be implemented to improve the professional skills of these new teachers was developed.

Two key characteristics were identified in all the training programmes examined:

● the role and the place of **teaching practice and professional experience;**

● the role and the place of **groups within and external to the school.**

For example, the table below shows the proportion and the training level of teachers not on permanent contracts in French-speaking Africa:

Country	Year	National Data			Sample Data (PASEC)			
		Contract Teachers as a percentage of total teachers			Teachers with no training or less than one month training (%)		Average experience (in years)	
		Contract with the State	Contract with local community	Total Contracts	Permanent staff	Contract staff	Permanent staff	Contract staff
Benin	2004	24	26	49				
Burkina Faso	2002	24	12	36				
Cameroon	2002	20	45	65				
Chad	2003		61	61	0	79	10	6
Congo	2003	4	54	58				
Guinea	2004	59		59	1	0	11	4
Ivory Coast	2001		13	13				
Madagascar	2004		54	54				
Mali	2004			69	0	14	20	4
Mauritania	2003				6	67	9	7
Niger	2003	50	4	54	4	38	11	2
Senegal	2003	42	15	57				
Togo	2001	31	35	65	31	82	16	6

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007, UNESCO, Paris, 2007

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5. This identification of good practice, effective forms of professional skills training and new training paths is covered in more detail in the "Recommendations" section below.

6. See article by Jean-Marc Bernard: "En Afrique subsaharienne, il faudra 2,3 millions d'enseignants d'ici à 2015" [2.3 million teachers needed in sub-Saharan Africa by 2015], *Le Monde,* 9 December 2009.

The 2009 seminar

The work accomplished during the 2007 and 2008 seminars led to questioning professional skills training, on a broader level, within the framework of career entry. The seminar held in 2009, entitled "L'entrée dans le métier, accompagner les nouveaux enseignants – acteurs et ressources de proximité" (Learning the ropes: guiding and supporting new teachers - front-line players and resources), drew on the findings of the previous seminar, especially the two common characteristics that had been identified: professional practice and experience as providing leverage for such training, and local resources, whether material or human. Since experience alone will not spontaneously help career development, certain conditions are necessary, especially insofar as regards the forms of support provided.

During this seminar, a special attention was given to testimonies of experience focusing on problems involved on entering the teaching profession and the need to support all newly-recruited teachers in dealing with the diversity of forms and aspects of the profession s/he has entered. Providing support emerged as the specific form of professional skills training, centred on the needs of the individual teacher in the thick of professional action, linking these needs to the individual's career path and his/her strengths and difficulties, as well as to the specific nature of the teaching environment.

This type of support is different from the one pertaining to formal follow-up and training which are rather centred on the common needs of an entire category of teachers and defined by those in charge of the education system.

As these four seminars evolved, the importance and the role of international debate pursued over the long-term became clear. It has provided:

● Arguments showing the importance of taking account of the complexity of any education system; to this end, it is essential not to base work on rumours and representations that may or may not be reliable, but to use tools that provide a certain degree of objectivity, i.e. assessment tools. Thus, at the first seminar, work on the assessments that were available, on their strengths and their limitations, led to defining as a priority for the majority of education systems in the countries represented, the urgent need for professional training for teachers in face of a massive increase in the numbers of schoolchildren, especially in rural areas.

● In connection with the point above, a thought through decision not to divide up the education system into isolated subsystems but rather to link the different levels together in a bid to give more weight and consistency to skills training, especially in the case of training through support, in other words, to organise it as a system.

● Monitoring and implementing concrete solutions regarding the quality of professional training or support for teachers and the resources required to achieve this in current situations thanks to policy decisions. The seminars thus began with the issue of assessment and evolved to look first at the issue of recruiting teaching staff and then that of training teachers who have no basic professional training, finally leading to a discussion of the forms of support.

● A place to hold discussions between very different countries that are each trying to resolve their problems in varied yet interrelated contexts thanks to an intercultural approach.

What the seminars achieved

The seminars have revealed the characteristics of a phenomenon that has not been thought through thoroughly and is generally considered as a provisional measure: namely, the mass recruitment of teachers with no basic professional training. This phenomenon also reflects the crisis and challenges that all education and training systems are undergoing, acting as a magnifying mirror. One of the salient points brought up in the course of the discussions was related to the place of basic training in the professional skills development process, together with a questioning of the often overly "academic" forms this takes and the assertion that it is essential to link it into the continuing training process.

Different situations, same characteristics

Very different situations

In the African countries represented at the seminars, the percentage of primary teachers who have no basic professional training varies a great deal: it can be as high as 70% or more, or, on the contrary, quite limited. This difference is related to national contexts: in some countries, teacher training colleges have been closed, by political choice, following international injunctions to rationalise expenditure and reduce budgets; in other countries, all teachers have taken short basic training courses. Others continue to provide traditional training through medium-term or long cycles. In Latin America, as in Asia, the phenomenon of teachers with no basic professional training remains limited to specific geographical areas or population groups. Such diversity can also be seen in the academic levels attained by newly-recruited teachers. Generally speaking, the levels are below standard. And this diversity is magnified by differences in status related to the recruitment method employed, whether organised by the local community, by parents associations, or by the regional authorities or the Education Ministry, which all results in very different training, support and career prospects.

Same characteristics

These situations have a great deal in common, given that they all relate to allocation processes: either in the very poorest and most isolated regions with the least cultural development; or insofar as regards students in difficulty; or in the lowest priority subjects; or a combination of all these characteristics. These new teachers are paid derisory wages compared to those of their civil service colleagues, pointing to poor social status. In addition, these teachers often choose to become teachers for want of any other option. All these situations lead to express them more consideration, out of a concern for equity and for social cohesion.

An alternative approach to training

Based on the requirements of the job

Training for teachers with no basic professional training implies a radical change in our conception of teacher training as a whole. This is no longer centred on knowledge that must be acquired but rather on personal development and entails a switch from knowledge content to professional requirements and from programmes to skills baselines. It calls upon the teachers' responsibility as actors in their own career development and places them at the heart of the social issues implicated in education.

Openness to another culture

These seminars resulted in a new concept of training, from a culture of judgement and correcting error to a culture of listening and understanding in support of professional skills

development. Supervision, training and support have emerged as three different but necessary functions that involve complementary positions.

Drawing on local resources

Throughout all the seminars, the following question was raised repeatedly: how can developing countries deal with the increasing level of expectations addressed to education? In spite of such restrictive social, economic and structural conditions, solutions can be found through[7] :
● **local management,**
● **experiential learning,**
● **local support** by heads and local authorities to improve working conditions and encourage inventiveness on the part of the teachers.

Contract teachers

Although it is difficult to see any clear outcome of the impact that contract teachers may have on the quality of education, there is an agreement on the fact that this policy enables each country to enrol thousands of children in school, who would otherwise possibly never attend school, thus increasing enrolment rates.

Two points should be emphasized:
● **First,** although, faced with the need to bring education to new population groups, these teacher recruitment methods are necessary and result in greater access to education services (school for all children in the same age category), improving the quality of these services must also be taken into consideration in comparison with normal school production channels. One outcome of the PASEC[8] assessments may be highlighted here, demonstrating the relatively higher performance levels of contract and community school teachers in classes at the beginning of schooling, i.e. basic learning, compared with teachers trained at official training centres.
Bearing in mind the broad variety and the profiles of the public that will attend school due to the Education For All process, it is only logical that an improvement will be seen in pupil learning in terms of the teaching provided, provided that there is good integration at local level and, above all, that schooling is adapted to the local society. This is the case with community teachers. Nonetheless, this advantage nonetheless tends to become less marked at higher levels, where teaching must go beyond the local environment for the student to open up to other contexts, and for the teacher to implement more sophisticated practices.

● **The second point,** related to the first, reflects inefficiency in centralised measures: these may be redirected or counter-effective precisely because of the variety of types of schools and modes of action at local level. On the contrary, teacher quality is dependent on taking account of each individual situation "in the classroom"; quality is undoubtedly related to the teacher's knowledge, but it is also manifested in his/her ability to lead a group, be well-integrated and deploy appropriate teaching methods.
It would be useful to look at how the jobs of the teachers recruited as a matter of urgency may develop in the future. This goes hand-in-hand with a central question: will such diversification of status result in long-lasting divergence in the structure of basic education in Africa? Or, on the contrary, once the turmoil of the EFA process has settled down, will there be convergence toward similar systems?

Typology of professional skills training programmes

Various programmes were presented and analysed at the last three seminars on teacher training. The 2009 seminar, focusing on career entry, extended the target to include teachers who have had basic training. It is during the first few years of teaching that teachers have to rise to challenges which, if they have no support in this, risk causing them to give up or to feel powerless, rather than generating an inventive and dynamic approach to tackling the problems.
Based on field experience, papers given by experts and discussions in the workshops, a schematic typology of professional training systems was drawn up.
This typology, however simplistic, relates types of teacher recruitment to training and skills training procedures and processes. Thus, it helps build up a clear picture of the training programmes set up in each country and then to plan improvements.

This typology is divided into two main categories of teachers entering the profession:
● first, teachers without or with very little basic professional training,
● second, teachers that have received basic training in a recognised institution.

For each of these categories, professional skills' training is seen in relation to three aspects:
● **Improving knowledge,** the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to translate it into teaching practices;
● **Professional skills training,** a training provided by the educational institution, enabling the acquisition of basic professional skills, as well as responding to policy guidelines;
● **Professional career development,** which is rooted in the concept of lifelong learning and is based on the pathways that teachers take to consolidate their professional expertise.

Each aspect is characterised according to its content, the place where it occurs, the timeframe and the players involved.

Last, the various procedures proposed may give rise to discussions regarding the notions used to characterise these training processes: needs analysis, work/study programmes (teaching practice), the role of support and studies on teaching practice.

Needs analysis: "In the strict sense of the term, needs analysis consists (…) mainly in the explicit production of objectives that support training[9]" This definition informs us of a fundamental aspect of this activity prior to organising a training programme: it is a production and, therefore, it involves people that use methods and tools. This operation implies taking account the available information, contacting the players who, at different levels, are familiar with the institution's policy, programmes and directives, as well as of teachers' difficulties and demands, and yet it must not become excessively technical, in which case procedure tends to take precedence over an understanding of the actual situation.

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7. These points are developed further in the "Recommendations" section below, p.17.
8. Analysis program of educational systems in Sub-Saharan Africa French-speaking countries.

9. Barbier, J.-M. et Lesne, M. (1977), *L'analyse des besoins en formation* [Needs analysis in training]*, Paris, Belin.

CATEGORIES		WITH NO BASIC TRAINING	WITH BASIC TRAINING
Improving knowledge	**Content**	Education programmes that the teacher must master and teaching methods	Development of disciplinary and teaching skills, factoring in changes in programmes and document resources
	Location	Training centre or distance learning	Training centre or University
	Time	School holidays	During work hours
	Players	Inspectors, trainers, university teaching staff	Inspectors, trainers, university teachers staff
Professional skills training	**Content**	Modules developed in liaison with training centres and supervision staff (knowledge of the education system, assessment procedures, class management techniques, teaching sequences, etc.)	Themed modules, based on analysis of the school's and the teachers' needs (various educational approaches, specific student profiles, training in interpersonal relations, new assessment procedures, responses to social problems such as violence and drugs, etc.)
	Location	Proximity to place where one exercises one's profession: school, local education initiative area	Either at a regional training centre or at the school itself
	Time	During the year, through consecutive work/study periods	During the year, on a one-off basis
	Players	Trainers, educational advisors and supervisory personnel	Trainers, inspectors and educational advisors
Professional career development	**Content**	Career entry: knowledge of the environment, settling in at the school, developing local contacts (parents, local authorities, etc.) Mid-career: new teaching approaches, information technology, reflexivity with regard to practices, setting up projects, etc.	Career entry: adapting to the professional environment thanks to individual support (tutor, buddy system) Mid-career: constructing teaching projects as part of the school plan, groups set up to analyse practices on request, case studies, etc.
	Location	Inter- and intra-school	School and class, the immediate environment
	Time	Continuously and often initiated by the school	Continuously, initiated by the teacher
	Players	Colleagues (peers or elders), school heads, educational advisors, official or occasional support counsellors	Colleagues (peers or elders), school heads, parents' associations, training instructors specialised in analysing practice
Warnings		Take account of: • Any constraints related to geographical distance, (Senegal: associations of head teachers; Mali: teacher network, etc.) hence the need to network local resources training community; Argentina: rural schools • The adult status of these teachers, even if they are not qualified • The danger of wanting to go back on a conventional training course in a much shorter time	A need to: • Provide support from the moment a teacher starts teaching and institutionalise this support (as, for example, in Latin America) • Relate, without fail, the basic training received with professional training and career development schemes available • Rethink the role of training centres in light of support provision

A work/study programme links together two places that operate according to different and even contradictory systems. On the one side, the school operates according to a system of "efficient" production of student learning outcomes. On the other side, there is the training system for the trainer that supports the teacher. An interface between the two systems must therefore be structured in order to organise a rich, complex, integrated work/study programme that does not separate the two systems. Such a programme involves four major aspects:
● **a structural aspect** (a partnership between the professional career and the training programme, through a common project),
● **a didactic aspect** (reverse learning process: first you do something, then you study the activity),
● **a pedagogic aspect** (combined tutoring: trainer and tutor),
● **a personal aspect** (to structure knowledge through work experience).

According to Maela Paul[10], support is a necessary consequence of a new way of thinking of the Other. This Other is no longer seen as the object of attention but as the active subject of his or her own career. The role of support is thus to provide the individual with the freedom to make a choice, a decision and be empowered, contributing to his or her status as a subject. Paul's approach to support is divided into four aspects:
● **the role** corresponds to a mandate, an institutionally-defined responsibility,
● **the "position",** is the result of a choice on the part of the support provider, whose position at the Other's side is one of equality, not of control,
● **the approach** assumes that the support professional is capable of making this approach objectifiable,
● **the relation** can only be developed at the request of the Other.

Reflexivity with regard to practice, analysis of practice and case studies are notions developed on the basis of research into teachers' thought processes while teaching, research results leading to alternative approaches to training in which everyone recognises the role of reflecting on practice and self-assessment as part of the learning process.[11] However, a number of conditions must be met: a calm climate of confidence and freedom in which the assessment aspect is absent to the benefit of an attempt of understanding, and the impossibility for the same person to act both as an assessor (i.e. inspector) and as a trainer (the person that leads discussion sessions on practice).

Recommandations

By comparing the different situations in different countries, the discussions, debates and proposals developed in the course of these four seminars on professional skills training for teachers enabled us to draw up relevant recommendations regarding professional skills training for teachers which take in account of the common principles discussed and the specific features of each country and even each region in a country. These recommendations are defined on three levels.

Macroscopic, at the level of decision-takers and policy-makers

Follow a guideline
This involves using the existing system as a basis for development, rather than imposing models from somewhere else.
Generally-speaking, the form of globalisation that, for example, compares the results attained by students in different countries, via surveys such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, tends toward an alignment or even homogenisation of the education system requirements, neglecting the specific nature of each. These seminars contributed to highlight the influence of the national and local context while, at the same time, the demands of globalisation mean that decision-makers change their education policy according to the recommendations of the institutions of globalisation (the World Bank, UNESCO, the International Monetary Fund, etc.)
Basing development on what exists already means to take time to define the desired changes, taking in account the country's real situation and issues, to analyse resources and obstacles, to decide on the material and human resources to be allocated and, above all, to take time to change things in stages and ensure the committed involvement of everyone concerned.

Two pitfalls to avoid
● **The first** pitfall involves the belief that basic teacher training at a recognised training institute is the only valid form of training.
● **The second** is related to the misconception that practice and experience alone are sufficient.
It may seem as if these two pitfalls create tension in a paradoxical situation of successful mass school enrolment.
There was a time when it seemed that teacher training, provided solely at teacher training colleges, was the key to a professional career in teaching. But societies change, and it has become essential to rethink career-long learning and, at the same time, to establish this learning culture at the point of career entry.
Basic training, career entry and career development should be thought of as a continuing process rather than separate periods or stages that bear no relation to one another. In particular, it is absolutely crucial to incorporate an awareness of changes in the system and ongoing reforms into basic training. The aforementioned study on curriculum reform demonstrated that, in many of the countries surveyed, these reforms were not covered during basic teacher training[11].

10. Paul, M. (2004), *L'accompagnement : une posture professionnelle spécifique* [Support: a specific professional position], Paris, L'Harmattan.
11. Tochon, F.V. (1995), *L'enseignant expert* [The teacher as expert], Paris, Nathan, Pédagogie.

11. Cf. op. cit. Study on competency-based curriculum reform in Africa.

Move forward from a hierarchical system to a network system

Most education systems are built on a hierarchical structure based more on dependency and infantilization than on autonomy. With a view to improving quality in education, it would seem appropriate to give this structure a new way of operating. Within the system, each person has a role and a status defined according to specified training and assessment tasks. This frequent dual role is difficult to manage, but this obstacle can be overcome by thinking of each individual as both a resource and a source of skills, rather than a dispenser of sanctions. In another words, each player in the system, from education minister to teacher, works for the overall interest of the school, i.e. the students, and by no means constitutes a system in and of itself. This move from a hierarchical and compartmentalised system to a system of mutual support and relations requires that the players within the system become aware of their interdependence. Usually, a hierarchy serves to consolidate the construction of instable identities; impermeable compartmentalisation between roles then produces withdrawal and a lack of trust between inspectors and teachers, for example. Some countries have developed an intermediate level, that of the educational advisor, who comes from the classroom and is invested as a trainer, with no direct assessment role. However, these advisors themselves take up a position of control from above. Rather than developing an infinite number of intermediate corps, whose role is designed to ease the weight of hierarchy, the latter ought to be thought of as giving a functional and organising structure to the system, rather than as a normalising force that embodies some intangible orthodoxy and metes out sanctions. This "network" system puts the subject in a situation where s/he has training capabilities, given that any professional activity has two functions: a productive function (in this case, to develop students' learning processes) and a function consisting in creating skills (in this case, professional training), at every level of the education system. This second function has, until now, been ignored and needs to be developed with a view to improving professional training for all the players in school education. Here, moving forward from a hierarchical to a network system is not required by any law, but should be developed through various forms of information-sharing, organising meetings between players involved to improve teaching quality at different levels of the education system to develop relationships and a sense of belonging, and to combat compartmentalisation between different roles (pedagogic, educational, administrative and technical, etc.)

At intermediate, regional management level

Develop a "support culture" at all levels

As a result of the discussions during the four seminars held at the CIEP between 2006 and 2009, awareness has grown of the fact that professional skills training for teachers happens throughout their entire careers and that the first and most delicate steps cannot be planned behind closed walls, by means of advice, injunctions or inappropriate recipes. Every new teacher, regardless of whether or not s/he has been trained at a teacher training centre, has to deal with difficult issues and uncertainties on a daily basis and would gladly have the benefit of someone there to fulfil two roles: to reassure and enable the teacher to find his/her own solutions. Since these roles cannot be fulfilled to order, it is up to the young teacher who experiences the situation and raises questions. Where is s/he to find any answers or reassurance if they are not available locally, at the very moment that s/he raises a question? When the seminar participants spoke of support at the "frontline", they really meant this in terms of access to the resource.

So, it might come in the form of a colleague, a peer group, a school head or an inspector, etc., or thanks to digital resources, provided the technical resources are available, for example, the IFADEM (Initiative Francophone pour la Formation à Distance des Maîtres - remote teacher training project) organised by the International Francophone Organisation

(OIF). This then implies that every player in the system can be positioned as both supported and support provider which, occasionally by informal means, allows the teacher to resolve a complicated situation on his/her own. We speak here of a "culture" to the extent that this action is undertaken by everyone, in acts and attentions that are not regulated or set down in law, but are a "position" in the sense of a way of thinking.

Therefore, it implies making the most of all the existing structures and promoting local networking. Depending on the situation, support will come in various forms and organisational procedures, but the most important thing is to establish a genuine concern for cohesiveness and complementarity.

Define complementarity between roles and responsibilities relative to supervision and support

This recommendation takes into account the current reality of the education systems examined during the seminars. For example, how can an inspector change from his/her role as assessor to that of trainer and support provider? The debate between the participants was lively, with some saying that this dual role could be fulfilled without any complications provided that the level on which the inspector acts is made clear. Others took a different view, rejecting the possibility of being able to take on both these roles as they would constantly be in conflict and thus counter-productive. The inspector is the link between training activities, performance assessment activities and compliance with Institutional standards. Supervising teachers is not the same as providing them with support, as illustrated by the paradoxical injunctions frequently heard in the world of school education, for example: "Be independent!" or "Be free!" What is most important are the links between roles and how they are mutually understood. The specific nature of the inspector's role lies in this dual identity, as the hinge between assessment and training: so, why not exploit this to the full and invite inspectors to let go of their training responsibilities and negotiate a role in encouraging teachers to improve their skills? None of the seminar participants talked of doing away with the inspectors' status, but rather of repositioning them clearly in relation to their responsibilities. Their position as an interface means that they can give an opinion of the quality of training (one component of which is support), without being directly involved in the latter, which is the role of other players.

To conclude, this delicate issue led to a consensus being reached, namely the need to clarify the roles of those in supervisory positions and the role of support providers.

At the level of system managers and trainers

Challenge self-evident truths

Many of the training systems discussed at this seminar stressed the importance of discussion between peers. They emphasized how much there is to be learned from sharing experience with another person at the same school, especially as this is most often between a new recruit and an experienced teacher.

Such a proposal raises the issue of the qualities required for the "peer" in question. Is it a colleague, a random peer who is there purely by chance, and who is above all a peer if s/he works in the same environment and, even more so, is faced with the same difficulties? In order to be truly beneficial and effective, discussion between peers, understood here as "others like oneself", nonetheless assumes that a third person should be present and involved. This in fact was the crux of the question raised, in the descriptions and discussions of the systems presented, regarding who trains these teachers. This refers back to support modes, and their regulation, whether these should be ensured by a trainer from outside, by a school head or by a teacher appointed and presented as having received training him- or herself. The presence of a third person is essential for discussion and for outside input; it is essential in order to prevent conformity and a closed attitude.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR NEW TEACHERS : PROSPECTS, STRENGTHS AND OUTCOMES OF THE SEMINARS ORGANISED BY THE CIEP

Recommandations

As such, stating the need to share practices implies defining the levels on which this can take place and where it can take place (school premises, somewhere more friendly, private or public, etc.). Dès lors, affirmer la nécessité de mutualiser des pratiques implique de réfléchir aux registres sur lesquels se réalise cette mutualisation et aux lieux où elle s'effectue (lieux institutionnels, conviviaux, privés, publics, etc.).

Challenge the primacy of practice

Throughout the seminars, the question of practice was constantly raised, with the participants tending to use the following synonyms: in the field/classroom, experience, classroom, school, in performing their work and immersion.

The opposition between theory and practice mainly seems to be aimed at prioritising the different fields and separating theoreticians from practitioners. It proves rather irrelevant since action is neither theory put into practice nor applied theory, but an undertaking that draws on various levels of theory, thought being characterised by the suspension of action. Challenging the primacy of theory does not mean substituting it by fetishizing practice. Otherwise, simply because what he does works in practice, the hands-on healer becomes known as a healthcare professional, and his practice is then a self-fulfilling prophecy[13].

So, what is needed is to promote different modes (educational meetings between teachers from different schools or who work at the same school, meetings with instructional staff, groups of several schools, setting up groups of school heads to provide aid and support and school visits by trainers, alone or as a team, etc.) of discussion and collaborative work on practices and develop trainers' skills to this end.

Develop space for professional skills training in the workplace

This involves thinking of the workplace as the central point in professional skills training. It does currently seem unthinkable to train a teacher without at some time or another coming into contact with the professional reality, not just as an observer but also as a player. In other words, the teacher training centre becomes decentralised since it requires trainers to travel to the teachers' workplace. This does not mean that training should only be "on-the-job", but that it does need to be more in touch with the school environment, through regional groups of teachers, for example. In addition, going from teacher training to professional skills training broadens the very definition of professional development both in terms of time (one never stops learning) and in terms of players (everyone needs training). So, everyone involved in the education system is a trainer without being aware of it, since they can all, at one time or another, assist young teachers. For example, this includes experienced colleagues, the school head or even the parents of students if the school is in a remote location and the teacher works alone. If we think of the school as a training centre, then professional skills training can take place there, since we can learn from any professional activity, given the right conditions, and it is these conditions that official trainers should focus on.

For the school to become a space for professional skills training, it must be a place where people can discuss practices, where teachers can sit in on lessons given by their colleagues and people can work as a team. We need to examine the ways in which school heads are recruited and trained since they are expected to facilitate this change and be able to coordinate these discussions.

During the four seminars on the central theme of professional skills training for teachers, it came to light that any improvement in this area will require developments and changes in the responsibilities held by everyone involved in the education systems in the countries in question. In particular, management roles, such as school heads, inspectors and those in charge of managing the system at regional and national level, were extensively called into question.

For the next seminar scheduled for October 2010, the CIEP and its partners will therefore initiate discussions of management and coordination roles in education systems, aimed at determining, thanks to an international and comparative approach, the influence of the school education system on the quality of education.

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13. The phrase "self-fulfilling prophecy" was coined by Robert Merton in 1948. It is "in the beginning, a false definition of the situation evoking a new behaviour which makes the original false conception come true."