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## Aspects of teachers' counselling in professional training programs

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### Abstract

The theme focuses on quality assurance and on the efficiency of the continuing training programmes in University of Resita. Our experience and pressures have determined to underline: the way that the teachers of the undergraduate level perceive the continuing training programmes, the identification of professional development needs and the perception of the career development from the school's management point of view. Our research is based on this three coordinates and it analyses on two perspectives: from the trainer's perspective and from the institution's one. Our main research method is qualitative (over 900 interviews and associative verbal tests). The results are presented in this paper along with our observations and recommendations.

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### 1. Introduction

The theme focuses on quality assurance and on the efficiency of the continuing training programmes for teachers of the secondary in University of Resita. Our steps were made in the line of co-works between the university's professors and the teachers of the undergraduate level. An efficient quality management of the continuing training programmes has as strong points: the marketing and the training needs accordingly to the school's policies and the methodology of the Ministry of Education.

Our experience and the pressures originated from the reform of the educational system, have determined to underline and to focus our research on: the way that the teachers of the undergraduate level perceive the continuing training programmes, the identification of professional development needs and the perception of the career development from the school's management point of view. The analyse is situated on these three coordinates. The continuing training programmes have given us the opportunity to apply several questionnaires, verbal associative tests and to have over 900 interviews.

The continuing teachers' professional training of secondary and university's levels represents a solution of the reformed and the modern educational system. The concept of continuing training defines a set of theoretical and practical activities, institutionalized in the educational system that they engage the participation of those who play the role of teaching in order to increase their psycho-pedagogical knowledge, their methods and their specialities, in the sense of developing attitudes and socio-professional skills accordingly to a quality education management.

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In Romania, the former National Centre for the Continuing Training of the Teachers from the Undergraduate Level (now Direction of the Undergraduate Level of Romanian Ministry of Education) has as main purpose to coordinate the activity of continuing training by accreditation of the continuing education programs. Our research focuses on the universities as continuing training providers these kinds of programs. During the past years, there was observed a cracked between the two main actors: the undergraduate teachers and the ones of the universities. The last one were accused of lack of practice working with pupils being more caught in academical researches than in educational practice. They didn't offer viable solutions for real educational practice. In order to avoid this type of controversy, a high quality management of continuing training programs made by universities centred on:

- the marketing and the analyse of the training needs;
- the design of the professional training accordingly to the school's policies and needs;
- the organizations of the professional training programs accordingly with the Ministry of Education's methodology and in respect of the legal procedures;
- the monitoring of the continuing training activities;
- the evaluation of the training by different evaluation procedures: portfolios, individual papers and group works.

The activity of running continuing training programs by the University of Resita have given to the trainers the possibility to create other continuing training programs on the next three directions:

- a) the perception of the continuing training education by the teachers of the undergraduate system of education;
- b) the identification of the training needs in the local region;
- c) the perception of the continuing training activities from the school's management.

## **2. The perception of the continuing training education by the teachers of the undergraduate system of education**

The concept of teachers' continuing training is often used synonymy with the one of perfection in the language of adult education. E. Paun (1999) defines the two concepts. The continuing training has a wider sense than that of the perfection. The forming is defined by the sum of all the activities realized after the initial training in order to update the professional training for the individual to adapt to the changes and to the new. The continuing training refers to two main aspects: professional training and professional recycling. At this level the professional recycling is incorrect understood due to its abusive use in the communist period. This is the reason why it is sensed a small degree of reluctance when the teachers are discussing professional training: *"I have attended several stages of professional recycling programs. I have lots of papers (diplomas). Aren't they recognised by your university?".* This example shows the semantic confusion, the perception of the programs as mandatory and the lack of information about the legal norms and methodologies. Discussing back the concept of recycling, Husen & Postlethwaite (1985) defined as an activity of deliberate assimilation, necessary when there are serious gaps in teachers' professional trainings. Others (Landsheere, 1986) considers that the process of recycling shows a general and serious gap due to a fast and profound change of knowledge or to an essential change of the school's curricula so that the initial teacher's training become insufficient. In summary, Paun (1999, 162-163) underlines that the continuing teachers' training has two main aspects:

- the process of continuous, profound and own initial professional training;
- the reconsideration and the completion of the initial professional training in the context of new challenges, totally different from the former ones.

The school plays a very important role as a supportive environment and helpful for training, along with the teacher's understanding of the concepts analysed above.

Further on we will discuss the role played by the school. During the continuing training courses of the University, we applied over 900 interviews and associative verbal tests to teachers of the undergraduate level: school teachers, primary school teachers, high school teachers. The items were represented by items like: *"For me, the continuing professional training represents..."*). An exhaustive listing of the answers allowed us to interpret

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