



EDITORIAL

Reflections on the importance of teacher's training

Reflexión sobre la importancia de la formación de los docentes

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Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers, Vol. 9 (2)

<http://www.ugr.es/~jett/index.php>

Date of reception: 15 December 2018

Date of revision: 23 December de 2018

Date of acceptance: 26 December 2018

Madarova, S. (2018). Editorial. Reflections on the importance of teachers' training. *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*, Vol. 9(2), pp. 6–9.



Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers, Vol. 9 (2)

ISSN 1989 – 9572

<http://www.ugr.es/~jett/index.php>

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Reflexión sobre la importancia de la formación del profesorado

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Teachers' training have been under examination for the past decades, with the aim of establishing the most suitable educational program to train the future educators. The critique of the process, as mentioned by Darling-Hammond et al. (2005), pointed out that it was "*being overly theoretical, having little connection to practice, offering fragmented and incoherent courses*" (p. 391). However, the area of teachers' education is constantly undergoing modifications and strives for improvement aimed at raising the quality of the training provided to the future teachers. In order to provide primary, secondary and tertiary education students with competent and well-prepared teachers, it is necessary to focus on certain elements of teachers' training. This notion is supported by Ben-Peretz et al. (2013) who states that "*the single most important factor in improving the quality of education is linked to the increased general and professional education of teachers*" (p. 1). In line with this, several factors will be mentioned below, all contributing to the advancement of teachers' training.

One of the elements that add to the improvement are surveys conducted with both pre-service and in-service teachers. Learning about opinions of teachers related to various parts of their own teachers' training as well as their work experience allows for suggestions of improvements and modifications of the curriculum. Moreover, being able to reflect on their own teaching practice helps the future educators with addressing their main areas of concern. Another feature in the teachers' training –incrementation of digital competence of the pre-service and in-service teachers– presents the answer to the question on the use of new technologies, such as social networking sites and mobile phone applications. By successfully implementing this element, the teachers can increase the active participation of their students in the learning process.

Even though it cannot be denied that technological devices and programs are increasingly used in education, either for teaching or for test taking, it is not only technology that can make difference to the quality of teachers' training. The implementation of teaching strategies such as the cooperative learning is on the rise, which in turn facilitates more interaction in the classrooms. Beside the teaching strategies, teachers should be also aware of and trained in procedures that would contribute to mediation process between the students. Finally, yet importantly, a significant area represented by evaluation should be mentioned as well. When evaluating students, teachers should not only take into consideration the exam results, but rather look at how much the students improved on their journey towards the results.

The same notions can be applied to the teachers' training in the area of special education and working with gifted children. Finally, we cannot leave out yet another vital element – parents of

the students who also play a certain role in the teaching/learning process. Teacher-parent communication is very important in order to maintain a healthy and well-working relationship between both sides, ensuring that the best is being done for the student's sake. Overall, reflecting on all these elements would help the pre-service teachers in their preparation for their role in the classroom and would presents a path to increased effectivity of teaching for the in-service teachers.

Following fourteen submissions that were made to this issue are constructed around the above-mentioned ideas. Each submission constitutes an addition to the theme that unites the articles – the view on and perception of the teachers' training.

First article by Uzunboylu and Kinik looks into the area of cooperative learning. Based on the research carried out using questionnaires with 1978 teachers working in secondary schools, high schools and colleges the authors reached various conclusion. First, this quantitative study has showed that the teachers across all observed groups shared positive attitude towards cooperative learning and agreed that it is beneficial for students; and second, it was established that the in-service teachers would benefit from training focused on cooperative learning techniques.

Next, Dürüst discusses the situation of parents who are caring for children with special needs. The study addressed this issue by carrying out 240 interviews with parents, 120 of them parents of a child with special needs. The main benefit of the study is in the comparative analysis of the social skills and personal well-being of both groups of parents. What the author has also shown is the need for further research on this subject.

The authors of third article, García Laborda and Alcalde Peñalver, present the issue of language testing performed by the use of internet-based oral tests. 67 university students were observed during the test taking and several conclusions were derived from the observation. Majority of the students experienced anxiety due to various factors such as time pressure, while other students could interact without any problem – an information useful for elaboration of training material and teaching approach geared towards students who will be taking online tests.

Ugurel and Ozcan in their article point out the need for creativity in the classroom environment, implemented by both teachers and students. Using semi-structured interviews allowed the authors to seek answers about creativity development. By analysing the perception of in-service teachers, the authors discovered that in-service teachers understand creativity as a different way of thinking and that the material used in class can influence the perspective of students.

Demirok explores the notion of giftedness, through the opinions the in-service teachers hold about the gifted students. The author uses survey method with 490 teachers in the primary education. After analysing the results from implanting the 'Perceptions Scale Towards Gifted Students', it can be established that the perception of gifted students by in-service teachers was higher related to their teaching experience. Demirok also suggests further research on the topic and expansion of training courses for pre-service teachers.

Following article by Baglama, Yucesoy, Miralay and Demirok focuses on the pre-service teachers training for the area of special education, and in particular, on their opinion about teaching visual arts such as painting or drawing. The authors explored various elements of influence such as age, gender, and class and possible previous education about visual arts. The survey of 206 pre-service teachers has shown that teaching arts was well received and considered enriching.

Gunduz and Ozcan in their article examine the role mediation has in the teachers' training. 40 in-service teachers took part in the ten module peer mediation in-service training program with total of 40 hours and then responded to the question posed to them in a semi-structured interview. The major findings have shown that the teachers who went through the program became aware of strategies that can be used in mediating of students' disputes, improved their

communication with students and colleagues, and turned from reactive to proactive methods of interventions.

Caliskan, Uzunboylu and Tugun observe how the pre-service teachers perceive the use of social networks for instructional purposes. 108 pre-service teachers from different departments took part in the study and responded to the questionnaires, which revealed their habits of internet use. Results were compared and analysed in order to obtain answer to the question about their intentions of using social networks in their future workplace, based on their department at the time of their pre-service training.

The next article by Amirova, Buzaubakova, Kashkynbayeva, Yelubayeva, Kumisbekova, Uaidullakzy, and Genc deals with evolution of teachers' creative competence during their training. In their reflection, the authors focus on the characteristics of a creative person, the need of modernizing the education and the role of the educator within it, with added emphasis on the model of competence-oriented education.

Kanbul addresses the issue of pre-service teachers mobile devices use for educational purposes. A quantitative study with 391 pre-service teachers was conducted online and analysed data revealed the purpose for which the participants used the mobile device and communication applications. What the author has shown is that the use of mobile devices and applications can increase the communications with lecturers, awareness of web tools and instant access to the information – elements that contribute to the improvement of the educational environment.

In their article, Sucuoğlu and Peter talk about the evaluation of students in the primary education. First, the authors explored the concept of teacher effectiveness; they looked into performance evaluation, education administration, learning performance and curriculum. Then, the questionnaire was administered to 200 teachers, evaluating each of these areas, revealing that schools should adopt a viable curriculum, be involved in its planning, focus on student-centred learning and involve collaboration with parents.

Communication between parents and school is the theme of the article by Topaloglu and Celikoz. The authors focused on cooperation between the two with the help of a web-based model, as opposed to the traditional activities including home visits and parent/teacher visits. 31 parents and 32 pre-school teacher have participated in the study, evaluating the school website and its contribution to the communication between the two entities. The main benefit of this study is in showing that the use of ICT can facilitate an active involvement of parents in the educative process of their children.

The closing article by Allahkaram and Ozcan comments upon effective teaching methods used by teachers in the tertiary education. The purpose of the study was to examine perception and methods used by the lecturers in the field of agricultural education and see if a difference exists based on the gender and working experience. 121 lecturers in filled out a 42 item questionnaire, which was consequently analysed and variations were discover, confirming the assumptions presented by the authors.

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