

Habilitation thesis

Abstract

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The influence of the human capital consisting of teachers over the students' achievement is supported by numerous studies over time (ex.: [Marzano, 2003](#); [Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004](#)). Thus, the existence of a dedicated, distinct and relatively well-defined domain in the area of educational studies is not only a natural presence, but an imperatively needed one. Therefore, psycho-pedagogical teacher training is a central and highly complex field within educational sciences, a field that gradually took a major growth in the last 100 years. Teacher psycho-pedagogical training has two relatively distinct subdomains¹: *a) teacher training in primary and secondary education* and *b) teacher training in higher education*. In both these subdomains there are two major complementary dimensions: *initial training* – for those preparing to become teachers and *continuous training* – for those that already are established as teachers and are continuously better themselves during their career progress.

Even though interactions and exchanges between theoretical frameworks and practical training are not excluded, the two subdomains have developed rather parallel to each other than interdependent (most of all at international level). This is mostly due to the major differences between the characteristics of the two educational levels (primary and secondary education and higher education): desired outcomes, operational structure, content, learners' characteristics in the different levels etc.

In this context, numerous funds are allocated by ministers and/or other institutions for the development and implementation of training programs. The need of streamlining training

¹ three subdomains can be distinguished: primary, secondary, and higher education, but for methodological reasons (as it can be seen in the thesis) it was chosen a framework distinction only between higher education and primary and secondary education together.

practices in regard to their impact over educational quality entailed the development of more and more complex studies and researches in the area. The beginning of studies on this subject can be found in the USA for more than 100 years back for primary and secondary education (Cuban, 1992; Hechinger, 1993) and for more than 60 years back for higher education (Hodgson & Wilkerson, 2014). Unfortunately, in our country, studies aiming at empirical analysis (revealing evidence based data) about the efficiency of training programs are almost completely absent. This context has sustained and is still sustaining a fierce public debate (most of the times inconsistent, lacking scientific background and empiric evidence) over the issues of teacher training programs in primary and secondary education. In regard to psychopedagogical training of higher education teacher, professor Dan Potolea (University of Bucharest) made a recent remark, in an interview with professor Ioan Neacșu (University of Bucharest), that the national level approach is still in an incipient phase even if there are a few mentionable initiatives (continuous training programs and/or centres of academic development) (Neacșu, 2017). Among there initiatives, we were honoured that an extensive project built and coordinated by us and implemented together with national international experts (*Universitaria - școală de didactică universitară și cercetare științifică avansată*. POSDRU/157/1.3/S/135590, West University of Timișoara) was mentioned.

In the national and international described context, our activity was focused towards developing theoretical frameworks for psycho-pedagogical training for teaching staff (in primary and secondary and/or higher education), that are theoretically grounded on educational design models (curricular and/or instructional) and supported by empirical evidence reported in field research (based especially on research at the classroom level). Our actions have materialized into training practices through programs and/or concrete training activities, for both primary and secondary education teacher and higher education teachers.

The present thesis is structured in the three classic sections proposed by the current methodology for elaborating habilitation thesis (Section I: *Scientific, professional and academic achievements*; Section II: *Evolution and career, professional, scientific and academic development* and Section III: *References*). **In the first section**, the personal contributions towards the two main subdomain of the teaching training are displayed, more precisely: a) *teacher training for primary and secondary education* and b) *teacher training for higher education*. For each subdomain three aspects are presented: a) a short review of *the current state of knowledge* and practices (national and international references), b) *scientific contributions and empirical evidence* as a result of personal activities contributing to the development of knowledge in the field and c) *research and/or institutional development projects* implemented in order to support teacher training activities. **In the second section**, personal professional objectives on medium and long term are presented, together with some activities and projects that are in our perspectives to be taken. **In the third section** bibliographical references of the thesis are displayed. These are presented in two different subsections: a) *references that display personal publication* and b) *relevant references for the current state of knowledge in the field*.

Throughout the entire thesis, two basic concepts transcend the three sections: a) *educational design* based on curriculum development models and/or instructional design models and b) grounding of the theoretical and practical proposals made by highlighting of the *empirical evidence*. These two base concepts (*instructional and curriculum design*; and *evidence based*) were, are and will be the burdens of our professional activity.

Key words

teacher training, curriculum development models, instructional design models, empirical evidences.