

TEACHER TRAINING AMONG NEEDS, WISHES AND REQUIREMENTS

FORMAZIONE DEGLI INSEGNANTI TRA BISOGNI, DESIDERI E REQUISITI

Clorinda Sorrentino¹

Pegaso University

clorinda.sorrentino@unipegaso.it

Angelina Vivona²

Pegaso University

angelina.vivona@unipegaso.it

Abstract

The crucial role of teachers in education systems is undeniable as they are responsible for students' involvement and the promotion of their learning.

Teachers' professional growth is an important reason for promoting the widespread quality of education systems and, in its combination of poietic and ethical-social action (Pellerey, 1999), for the education of future generation also.

Based on these premises, the study made wanted to investigate the forces that move teachers to get trained, starting from the distinction made by Paparella between needs, desires, necessities (Paparella, 2012).

The research involves 442 students enrolled in masters and advanced courses in pedagogical subjects, aimed at teachers of all types of schools.

The questionnaire aims to investigate how extrinsic reasons (better earnings / career development) influence teacher training choices, to the detriment of study interests and personal inclinations.

Key-words

Needs Analysis, didactic action, continuing education for teachers

Analisi dei bisogni, azione didattica, formazione continua per gli insegnanti

Introduction

The crucial role of teachers in education systems is undeniable as they are responsible for students' involvement and the promotion of their learning.

Teachers' professional growth is an important reason for promoting the widespread quality of education systems and, in its combination of poietic and ethical-social action (Pellerey, 1999), for the education of future generation also.

Based on these premises, the study made wanted to investigate the forces that move teachers to get trained, starting from the distinction made by Paparella between needs, desires, necessities (Paparella, 2012). Piaget and Inhelder (1966) stated that it is always the need that drives the action, which ends when the request that generated it has been re-established. "In an educational context, we can speak of an educational need only when it is possible to establish a connection with personal or group identity, otherwise it is only a matter of desires or needs. For example, in the field of professional training, when the so-called needs analysis is carried out focusing the attention on issues related to career, social status, functions performed, it is important to distinguish clearly, to understand if it is a question of necessity. (we think of the

¹Author of Introduction, Research: methods, materials and results, Conclusion

² Author of 'Permanent teachers' training for the constant improvement of teaching actions

losing subject when he is oriented towards a new activity), of desires or real needs "(Paparella, 2012, p. 95).

According to Bradsaw, Burton and Merrill, there are different meanings of the term need in an educational context : it can be interpreted as a wish in a person's soul, as push coming from inside the person or from external conditioning developed by the comparison with what others have, as an anticipation of future needs (Pellerey, 1983).

Since needs cannot ignore either the person's wishes or the context restrictions, they are configured as problematic nuclei, where the subject, needs to trace his own position and plays his role in the original and unrepeatable choice of his own identity (Bochicchio , 2016, p.95).

The survey aimed to investigate how the economic and social crisis coming from the pandemic event has affected the training needs of Italian teachers, testing whether and how the economic effects have influenced training choices. The impression is that in consideration of the general condition of crisis, in an attempt to socially redefine one's identity, to achieve certain professional levels, or even just for economic stability, personal interests are secondary. The trend becomes even more marked when, from the perspective of lifelong learning, it is an adult who makes training choices. Work, which has always been used as a reference to identify and introduce oneself in society, in its current endemic precariousness, is no longer the bulwark of personal stability, ending up being characterized, just like the other areas of the life of each individual, by cyclical chasing of new consumption and new identities. (Sorrentino C., 2012).

And the teachers, while having to keep a passion in order to ensure adequate levels of professionalism, also driven by the need to update their qualifications to keep their place in the ranking, do not shy away from these mechanisms.

1. Permanent teachers' training for the constant improvement of teaching actions

The need to improve teaching-learning processes, appealing to teacher training, has characterized the Italian school for many years.

Staff training is, in fact, a fundamental element for professional growth, aimed at raising the quality level of services and activities in the community.

More specifically, it is useful to recall the change introduced in the school organization in the early 1970s when, in a period characterized by deep cultural and social changes, the delegated decrees were issued. Regarding the updating of school staff, Presidential Decree 419/1974 introduced new bodies: the IRRSAE, Regional Institutes of Research, Experimentation and Educational Updating, with the task of promoting research and leading teachers Along the long path of lifelong learning.

In particular, art. 7 of the mentioned Presidential Decree 419/74, later merged into art. 282 of Legislative Decree no. 297/1994, conceived updating as a "right - duty" of the inspection, management and teaching staff, as a process capable of continuously adapting individual knowledge to scientific development, as well as promoting participation in research and educational innovations.

With the start of school autonomy and specifically with the regulation referred to in Presidential Decree 275/1999, there is a substantial change as the training of teachers is conceived as a strategic aspect of a school with large space for planning, methodological, of research, experimentation and development.

As regards the contractual sources, the CCNL of the school sector of 1995 in Article 28 considered updating a functional right to professional development but also a service obligation, aimed at promoting the effectiveness of the education and training system. The teachers, in fact, have been given the task of constantly updating their cultural and professional training, of taking part in the management of the school thanks to the activities of the Collegial Bodies and of establishing positive relationships with the pupils' families. With the CCNL 1999, the concept of the right to training and the role played by the educational institution in ensuring its effective exercise became central. This choice has given the teacher the task of combining specific professional interests with the institutional needs expressed by the school and by national indications thanks to the opportunities offered by educational institutions and providers at local, regional, national, European level.

Art. 62 of the CCNL of 24 July 2003 reaffirmed the concept of the right to be updated, as a tool that allows the full realization and development of teaching professionalism; the obligation overcoming also represents a very important institutional commitment aimed at consolidating the system of guarantees for the exercise of the right itself.

In our country, staff training is considered in all public administrations as a continuous process of professional adaptation and instrumental to change.

The training system was inspired by the European and international trends recorded in the documents of the European Commission and in international relations.

Through the examination of the main rules relating to school staff, it is possible to note, in fact, a growing attention to research and the need to achieve the European objectives, set by the Lisbon European Council, in the field of in-service and in-service training of the staff.

The 2003 OECD report, entitled "Education at a Glance" attributes to teacher training a strategic function for any hypothesis of improvement of the education and training levels of the population.

For a long time Italy was the only European country without a specific basic teacher training system. If we exclude the particularity of the institutes and teaching schools that have carried out the task of training teachers in the nursery and elementary sectors, for many years there has been no system in Italy, in the broadest sense of the word, for the training of teaching staff. In particular, for the secondary education sectors, there was no professionalizing institution. In the 1990s, following a long process of adaptation which required universities to specifically structure and define new study plans, a first, partial form of university teacher training was launched in Italy. For teachers destined for primary and elementary school, degree courses in primary education sciences have been provided while a Master Degree has been envisaged for graduate teachers destined for secondary education.

Law 53/2003 has taken a further step towards basic teacher training, defining in article 5 the rules, principles, guiding criteria for the overall training of teaching staff and providing for the first time in Italy, a real system of initial university-level training for all teachers of state and equal schools, in order to guarantee the professional retraining of those involved in the innovative process in progress.

Law no. 107 of 13 July 2015, published in the Gazzetta Ufficiale on 15 July 2015, entitled "Reform of the national education and training system and delegation for the reorganization of the legislative provisions in force" introduces substantial changes concerning numerous aspects of the education and training system.

The provisions contained in paragraphs 1- 4 of the law identify the general purposes of the law which can be summarized as follows:

- full execution of school autonomy;
- raise students' education levels and skills;
- fight inequalities;
- prevent and recover early school leaving and school dropout;
- achieve an open school;
- guarantee the right to study and equal opportunities for educational success;

To achieve the overall purposes, the law provides for the use of the following tools. One of the important aspects of the reform law concerns in-service training, which is a mandatory, structural and permanent activity for teachers. The activities are linked to the three-year plan of the training offer and the improvement objectives identified in the RAV.

In detail, paragraph 124 reads: "in the context of the obligations connected with the teaching function, in-service training for permanent teachers is compulsory, permanent and structural".

The construction of new knowledge, the use of information technology in teaching, the complex relational dynamics, inside and outside the school, are just some of the issues that teachers have to know and manage. The national priorities pointed out in the National Training Plan, adopted every three years by decree of the MIUR, must also be taken into account.

According to the 2016-2019 Teacher Training Plan "Training freely entrusted to the initiative of individual teachers contributes to the growth of the entire professional community and becomes a collaborative working style. For this purpose, it is possible for teachers to self-manage and self-finance research groups, communities of practice and laboratories, accordingly to what the school plans in its training plan ". The new teacher training system has showed new methods for training, more operational, laboratory, giving more attention to the educational relationship and professional exchange, has identified new national priorities: skills, autonomy, inclusion, foreign languages, digital citizenship and introduced a digital ecosystem to support the match between training supply and demand.

In-service training is regarded as a strategic lever for improvement and is supported by the activities relating to the National Training Plan for teachers and by the teachers' charter which allows for the acquisition of goods, cultural services and tools.

With the term in-service training it is meant a series of activities through which teachers are led to improve and raise their skills, with the aim to make better the effectiveness of the context in which they operate and, therefore, the quality of the 'training offer. In itinere training therefore represents the way through which the school system ensures the constant adaptation of the behavior and professionalism of the teacher to the training needs expressed by the historical, social and cultural context in which it operates. More specifically, it allows to prepare the resources, in terms of skills, necessary for the success of the innovation processes. In other words, these are skills strictly connected to the working context but pertinent and immediately usable in the real work situation.

In-service training experiences therefore consist in the acquisition of knowledge (knowledge), in the construction of operational skills (knowing how to do) and in the development of attitudes (knowing how to be).

C. Scurati and E. Damiani developed two different taxonomies of updating models. Scurati's taxonomy is divided into two models: the cultural model, which uses the methodology of the

frontal lesson and the acquisition of data and content by users; the technical model, which tends to focus the attention of the participants on the problematization of situations.

Salinari's taxonomy identifies three different ways of updating: information, consisting in increasing knowledge on some aspects of teaching professionalism; simulation, characterized by the predisposition of situations similar to the real ones, with the aim of highlighting problems and solution strategies; action research, aimed at building skills and knowledge directly into action.

In-service training must be part of a strategy that selects priorities, identifies objectives and makes the organizational plan.

This goal is achieved only with continuous and permanent training, at the center of which must be experimentation and innovation. Through research, one's professionalism is increased, but the effectiveness of the action of the entire school community in each of its components is also improved.

It can be achieved through a real network at the territorial level to support the planning of schools, connected in terms of strategic objectives. Training is therefore divided into three distinct levels: the national level, referring to the general objectives of the school system; the peripheral level, relating to territorial objectives; the level of the individual institution, relating to the internal training plan.

The reform provides for the establishment at universities of specific university structures to support the in-service training of teachers. The fundamental objectives of these paths are: the exercise of the new functions associated with the reform and the consequent professional reconversion.

The structures specifically set up at the universities have the task of promoting and managing centers of excellence for permanent teacher training. These structures contribute to the continuous training of the teaching staff in service, through updating initiatives on cultural and scientific processes that can interact with the education system, on new teaching technologies and on each aspect regarding the professional qualification of teachers with a direct impact on training action.

Training from a continuous and permanent perspective is a fundamental opportunity to reflect on one's work. The reflection should be shared as much as possible, it should be able to activate all exchange strategies in such a way that quality can be ensured both in the students' training and in the teachers' educational and didactic actions in the classroom.

On the other hand, it is actually stimulating for teachers to be able to constantly get involved, to immediately access new regulations, to improve themselves in the method, teaching approach, understanding and ability to manage socio-cultural problems and conditioning or of different origins, promoting inclusive processes, growth and educational success of the new generations.

2. Research: methods, materials and results

During December 2021, a questionnaire, made of 9 items, was submitted to the attention of 445 subjects, by means of the didactic platform used in Pegaso Telematic University guaranteeing autonomous and anonymous compilation methods, to be carried out over a period of time of weeks.

The questionnaire is divided into two sections or paragraphs, namely:

1. Definition of the sample (age, educational qualification, geographical area of residence, income profile)

2. Training expenses ("education costs", the "economic gain" produced by the achievement of a particular professional specialization, "the investment of personal and financial resources in the study", the "spendability of the degree obtained", the "profiles required in the labor market").

From the items used for the sample definition, it emerged that 73% of the subjects who participated in the survey are under the age of 46 and have an average income (87%). Although mostly coming from the South, the sample is representative of the entire national territory (South 45%, Center 21%, North 21%, Islands 13%).

85% of the interviewees have a master's degree or old system degree (the remaining 15%, in consideration of the qualification, in relation to the current legislation about teaching access, consists of "ITP").

In the section about the choices and motivations that guide the training courses, it is possible to note that 53% of the interviewees declare that they have taken part, at their own expense, in training courses capable of improving their professional skills to satisfy specific ambitions ; 29% in an attempt to improve their economic position; 10% were unable to do so due to lack of financial resources and 8% did not do so due to lack of interest.

As for the item relating to the importance given to the economic profit or to the spendability of the qualification obtained and, therefore, to possible career advancements or contract increases, 41% of the interviewed sample stated that they pay attention to this aspect only if it coincides with their own interests and personal inclinations, compared, on the other hand, to 10% of the sample who say they pay little attention to it and 30% who care a lot.

As for the attention paid to courses aimed at training professional skills particularly required by the labor market: 41% of the sample declared that they act in this sense only if the courses in question prove to be in line with their attitudes, while 31% of the reference group claims to aspire exclusively to the enrichment of the curriculum and the related advantage.

In case of personal investment for their own training, 62% of the total subjects questioned say they are inclined to issues that could increase their professional position; 18% are oriented in the direction of personal interests; 10% on new specializations; 10% on the achievement of the academic qualifications most required by the market.

In choosing the course of study or training, 37% of respondents said they take into account the usefulness of the final qualification; 25% who look after the quality of education provided; 20% to the possibility of attending the course in question online; 10% to the economic investment to be made; 8% the authority of the teachers.

Conclusions

Continuous school reforms, excessive workload, low pay and continuous request for updating (Bassi, Lombardi and Delle Fave, 2006; De Caroli and Sagone, 2008) are some of the stress factors reported by Italian teachers, which in recent years have increased even more following the general socio-economic crisis of current society due to the pandemic event from Covid 19 . In an attempt to socially redefine one's own identity, in order to achieve certain professional

levels or just for economic stability, personal study and research interests acquire a second position than economic or work repercussions.

The survey carried out revealed that a general attention to the economic effects of training choices has developed. A very high percentage of the sample examined showed the tendency to choose courses that offer immediate possibilities to increase salary or to consolidate one's job position. On the other hand, the positive fact is that in the variety of courses available, with the same extrinsic purposes, the most rewarding institutions and training courses from a qualitative point of view are preferred.

Today it is generally the extrinsic motivation that drives the learning of an adult, also of a teacher: the perception of an immediate advantage, the idea of placing oneself socially at higher levels, or the possibility of guaranteeing an existence for the family wealthy are the targets most felt by teachers who today access training courses.

The professional development of Italian teachers can be related to a duality of factors: extrinsic (contractual constraints and perspectives, career development, economic profits, professional awards) and intrinsic (basic motivations, differentiation of function, participation in communities of practice, meaning belonging to a local community). It is therefore connected to a reward that affects both the aspects of career progression and the gratification and satisfaction of one's work. This process surely has the advantage of encouraging teachers to study and constantly update, on the other hand, however, we can wonder how effective is a study based on extrinsic motivations, an induced and not felt training, an imposed update and not spontaneous.

References

- Bassi, M., M. Lombardi et A. Delle Fave (2006). La relazione professionale dell'insegnante, in O. Albanese (dir.), *Disabilità, integrazione e 95 formazione degli insegnanti. Esperienze e riflessioni*, Bergamo, Edizioni Junior
- Bohicchio F., 2016, *Le competenze metodologiche degli insegnanti tra analisi dei bisogni e azione didattica*, Formazione & Insegnamento XIV – 3. ISSN 1973-4 7 78 print
- Damiano E., Giammancheri E., 2004, *L'Insegnante. Identificazione di una professione*, Brescia, La Scuola.
- De Caroli, M. E., & Sagone, E. (2008). Prejudicial attitudes, levels of burnout, interpersonal adjustment, and Professional Self representation: An investigation on special needs teachers. *Life Span and Disability*
- Paparella, N. (2012). *L'agire didattico*. Napoli: Guida
- Pellerey, M., 1999, *Educare. Manuale di pedagogia come scienza pratico-progettuale*. Roma, LAS
- Rivoltella P.C. (eds.), 2017, *L'agire organizzativo. Manuali per i professionisti della formazione*. Brescia, La Scuola
- Rivoltella P.C., Rossi P. G., 2017, *L'agire didattico*. Brescia, La Scuola.
- Scurati C., Biraghi G., 2017, *L'innovazione nella scuola. Per la formazione degli insegnanti*, Brescia, La Scuola
- Scurati C., 2014, *Esperienza educativa e riflessione pedagogica. Analisi, incontri, commenti, letture*, Brescia, La Scuola
- Scurati C., 2002, *Una carta per la formazione permanente*, Rivista "Vita e Pensiero", Milano, Franco Angeli.
- Scurati C., 1997, *Gli insegnanti e la loro formazione iniziale: prolegomeni tra istituzione e sapere*, Brescia, La Scuola.

