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# A Professional Development Program for Beginning High School Teachers

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## Abstract

This paper presents a professional development program for beginning high school teachers. The program was designed after identifying, characterizing and evaluating the professional training needs of beginning teachers, using quantitative and qualitative methodologies via interviews and surveys. With a framework in personalized education and in constructivist theory—both related to professional development for such teachers—and in adult transformative learning theory, the program promotes personal pedagogy which guides teachers to clarify the meaning of their role in the twenty-first century. The program fosters a model of formative learning that is more related to the knowledge of the beginning teacher regarding the reality of teaching and learning, the pedagogical subject, the school environment and capacity to act on the educational situation, than to specific disciplinary contents. The contents on which the program is structured are oriented to the systematic observation of pedagogical practice, to the knowledge of adolescents and their learning as a reason for it, to teaching in diversity and to the significance of being a teacher of secondary education.

**Keywords:** secondary school teachers, professional training, teacher education curriculum

## 1. Introduction

Secondary education initial training for teachers in Uruguay is developed in a 4-year period, and is led by a learning model that is simultaneous to three fields of knowledge, i.e., knowledge regarding the subject to be taught, pedagogical knowledge and educational knowledge [1].

As a teacher of initial teaching training courses in this country, I perceived that teachers who graduated from training courses aimed at teaching at high schools feel and state their professional needs when performing their jobs.

Uruguay education system offers free updates and continuous education, provided in different formats (conferences, courses, sessions, seminars, lectures and workshops.) Such instances are independent from each other and attendance is optional for teachers. There is no specific program for the enhancement of theoretical and practical training for high school teachers in their first 5 years of activity.

This results in a problematic situation currently being researched in the framework of a doctoral thesis on education, led by EdD. Ramón Pérez Juste, UNED, Madrid, Spain [2].

The aim is to contribute in the improvement of initial teacher training for high school teachers, by means of supporting the authorities of the CFE with a professional development program which addresses the professional needs of such teachers. In this sense, there are two specific objectives: 1. To design a pedagogical professional development program, aimed at enhancing beginning teachers who perform tasks at national public secondary education centers. 2. To perform an initial evaluation of the program in terms of appropriateness, adaptation, sufficiency and realism as regards its objectives, quality and viability.

The accomplishment of the first objective presumes prior identification of professional training needs of target teachers. The second objective will be reached via the submission of the program to expert opinions and by means of interviews to recently graduated teachers. Due to extension matters, this section presents a summarized explanation of the objective.

## **2. A professional development program for beginning high school teachers**

The making of the process starts with a collection of background and study of bases; it continues with research on the professional needs of target beginning teachers; it continues with its design and ends with its pre-evaluation, which resulted in the reformulation of the program.

### **2.1 Background**

There are four study areas to the research on beginning teachers. One of the areas is related to the characteristics of such teachers, which shows no previous publications in Latin America before 2006, when the international workshop “Policies for Insertion of Beginning Teachers into the Teaching Profession: the Latin America experience and the Colombian case.” The second area is related to accompanying experiences in the United States, Europe (England, North Ireland, Scotland) and Israel and in countries from other continents, such as New Zealand and Japan. The third area relates to difficulties faced by beginning teachers, emerging from research done by Vonk (1983) [20] and Veenman [16]. The fourth area involves research on the socialization of participants. Such research includes influential factors, the different stages identified during the first year of activity, the strategies applied by teachers and potential changes of perspective in their teaching [3].

International research, written in English, on the development of professional teachers states the importance of teachers taking part of professional development instances, due to the positive impact that such instances have on their beliefs and habits, the students’ learning and of the implementation of education reforms [4].

With reference to programs that enable professional opportunities and enhance training for beginning teachers, their institutionalization is recent in Latin America, when compared to the policies and support structures featured in European and Asian countries, such as Japan, where a compulsory training program has been active for graduated teachers since 1988.

Until now, induction programs designed and structured to offer additional training and personalized assistance to beginning teachers are compulsory in 17 countries or regions (Germany, Estonia, Ireland, France, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, Austria, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden, the UK, Croatia

and Turkey.) Some of these programs focus on individual assistance and others on training. However, all of them aim at assisting teachers in their adapting to the profession and reducing the possibilities of early dropout [5]. Accompanying projects for beginning teachers started being developed in Spain and Latin America (Argentina, Colombia, Chile and Uruguay) in the first decade of this century.

Regarding issues related to continuous training for active beginning high school teachers, who are the subject matter at an international level, within the 2010–2014 period, the subject matter mainly spotlights the requirements of society towards teaching. This involves: (a) assessment and reformulation of teaching training and practice and quality improvement; (b) training for the development of practices founded on respect for human rights and principles of inclusive education to respect diversity and (c) changes caused by the use of new information and communication technologies when teaching and learning. Furthermore, there is the resulting impact that such training has on teaching beliefs, which are exposed in the performance of the job and in the training of future teachers.

Acknowledging the importance of continuous teacher training is recognized by multiple international authors and organizations. It is characterized as a key process to teaching professionalization [5], in order to think of pedagogical practices and adapt to changes [6] and, as a need [7], it has been analyzed internationally, mainly in America and in the UK [8]. The existing offer and organization of continuous training in the countries which belong to MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay) have been analyzed, as well [9].

Continuous training involves understanding the development process of the profession [10]. Within such process, the transition from being a trainee teacher to having a first job usually causes a shock or “reality shower” to some, resulting from becoming aware of the differences between the reality and the ideals created throughout the initial training period [11]. This usually causes helplessness feelings and fear before failure. As to the cognitive aspect, this shock provokes aversion towards the theory that was learned, which seems useless when applied in practice. With reference to behavior, this shock blocks sensitive actions and reactions, therefore preventing teachers from identifying possibilities the situation presents [12]. Some others believe the phrase “reality shower” however eloquent is inappropriate, as it implies that there is an unavoidable short period of commotion to be faced [13].

For some authors, this socialization stage, at which beginning teachers enter a professional group [14], takes place during the first 3 years of the course of their careers. However, some others extend such period to the first 5 years.

This study calls this first stage the *initial acquisition of the teaching role*. It is undoubtedly an initial phase [15], a reality check [16], starting a career and socializing [17], initiating or inducting teaching [18], in which all teachers need to develop survival strategies [19] to enter a gap period between initial and permanent training due to their lack of familiarity with the initial specific teaching situation [20], which serves as an argument for continuous professional development [21].

These statements describe this first stage considering the role such phase plays in the continuum of the professional development process and the difficulties with which it confronts teachers. As a conclusion from critical inferential reading performed in relation to the characterization of this initial stage, the essence of such professional development phase seems to rely on the fact of acquiring the teaching role and the meaning of the profession and applying it in every instance in which teaching performance is required in a practical manner or in the being and feeling as a teacher in a specific context.

This is considered a key period as well, provided that it is that in which teachers build their work culture and therefore acknowledge the importance of its being considered by professional teacher training proposals in Latin America [21].



## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

The aim of the program subject to this paper is the development of professional beginning teachers. The Day conception of professional development is adopted, as it is a “broad view of professional learning,” before other conceptions which are led by the acquisition of knowledge on the subject or teaching strategies [11]. This author adds informal learning to formal learning through experience, the former enabling teachers to overcome classroom situations and to improve their professional expertise.

In this sense, the three main theories on which the proposal is based are: the conception of personalized education, a constructivist theory—both regarding teacher professional development—and adult transformative learning theory.

Personalized education transforms the learning procedure into a personal training element, as conceived by García Hoz [22]. This is a type of education which addresses human needs and the present technological society conditions in which we live [23, 24]. Its pertinence is confirmed by the acknowledgment of a present need for personalized learning in pursue of more effective results, and by the current challenge of understanding how to adapt teaching methods in order to universalize learning [25].

This educational conception is understood broadly, thus not linked to any specific philosophical, psychological or pedagogical current, but open to all lines of thinking which may contribute to the perfecting of the person—as a whole—with no reductionism whatsoever [23]. Notwithstanding any political powers or pressure groups, educational personalization accepts sociocultural and scientific progress.

From this point of view, it is understood that teachers may find the reasons for their profession in the nature of their own selves, if that serves as support [26].

Personalized education, when related to aptitudes for evaluation and performance rather than to content learning, enhances training as a means for professional development. Therefore, the program aims at enabling a type of formative learning related more to beginning teachers’ understanding of the reality of teaching and learning, the pedagogical subject and school contexts, as well as to their ability to act upon an educative situation, rather than to specific disciplinary contents.

In this sense, the educative style presents two main significances: teachers’ teaching styles and students’ learning styles within a person-forming teaching and learning model.

Teaching and learning are conceived as constitutive parts of a unique process, as teaching makes sense only when it provokes learning. The learning model related to personalized education is conditioned by how human cognitive activity is conceived, mainly when referred to intelligence and knowledge functions in a strict sense and to expression functions.

The development of abilities necessary for the execution of such functions is the reason for the educational labor, therefore showing the aims of learning, which in personalized education are conceived as constituted by three types of components: cognition, aptitude and evaluation.

Constructivist theory conceptualizes professional teaching development defining teachers as active, practical and reflexive apprentices able to build their own theories and practices collectively with other teachers, institutional actors, families and members of the community.

This is a long terms process which takes place in a particular context, i.e., it is centered in an educational institution and refers to daily teacher and student activities. This is not skills training but a culture building process. In this framework, teachers are conceived as practical and reflexive, and professional development aims at helping teachers to build new pedagogic theories and practices.

Learning gains a role through interaction with others in a real problem-solving context which encourages learning through reflection, experience and dialog, thus discovering the significance of happenings in a given context. It is a social rather than individual type of learning, based on specific rather than theoretical situations.

From these two viewpoints, professional development is a collaborative process that is more successful when it involves significant interactions. Regarding configuration, there is no professional development format or model better than others; institutions and educator must evaluate their needs, cultural beliefs and practices to decide which model is more appropriate for their situation [4].

Furthermore, encouraging teachers to teach for idea understanding and elaboration and diversity is essential in order to let students find productive entrance paths to knowledge at the same time they learn how to live together in a constructive manner. Teachers must combine content and student knowledge and understanding with the communities where they work, ensuring that families participate in the process as well [27].

Considering that teachers are adults who not only teach but also learn, and that such learning implies learning how to teach, the learning theory called transformative learning theory, developed by Mezirow in the late 70's, is adopted.

According to this theory, the construction of meaning is fundamental, provided that transformative learning is conceived as that which transforms reference frameworks.

Reference frameworks refers to culture and language structures through which human experiences are construed and therefore given coherence and meaning [28]. Such frameworks are conceptualized as the groups of fixed cases and expectations, i.e., significance perspectives and ways of thinking.

The author understands this theory as a type of cognitive epistemology on evidential and dialogic (instrumental and communicative, respectively) reasoning. Mezirow agrees with Habermas on the three types of learning (technical, practical and emancipatory) and names them: instrumental, dialogic and self-reflexive.

Reasoning is deemed as an advance and belief evaluation process. From this viewpoint, transformative learning is conceptualized as an adult dimension of reason evaluation, which implies validation and reformulation of meaning structures.

Transformative learning theory supposes as a grownup way to transform those reference frameworks that lead actions. Adoption of such learning theory is deemed appropriate, considering that it may promote an evaluation of the conceptions related to the teaching, learning and professional identity of the participant teachers, and an eventual reformulation, if deemed appropriate [28].

This proposal and corresponding formative on-site contextualized action is expected to achieve the following goals: a. to consider needs, demands and worries that teachers state regarding areas of improvement, especially in connection with teaching practices; b. to work on enhancing teaching skills from experience; c. to promote teacher participation and interaction; d. to establish adolescents and their learning as the observation and analysis focus for the creation of pedagogical practices; e. to provide theoretical and practical elements to develop teaching tasks that work towards citizenship education and coexistence, via the exercise of inclusion, attention to diversity and incorporation of the communities to which students belong.

### **2.3 Research on the professional needs of target beginning teachers**

In order to find inquire into the need for beginning teacher training, a study population was conformed with up to 5-year professionally experienced teachers from the 42 public high schools from the East region of the country. High school

inspectors and management teams acted as external observers, and secretaries and beginning teachers as beginning observers.

The subjects of study are: beginning teachers' profile and performance at high-schools where they work; expectations and interests in a professional enhancement program for beginning teachers; aims and contents that a program of the kind should have, and the need for training.

During a research preparation phase, a high-school board is created to collect information and form a database of the beginning teachers working in such institutions. Interviews are held with the inspectors of the East region of Secondary Education to inform them on the study to be performed and learn about their interest in the study, to request their support. The directors of the high-schools of the Region are informed via telephone about the importance that providing the information requested has for the research. Collection instruments are designed and validated by secondary education inspectors.

The techniques applied for gathering information were surveys and interviews. Interviews as a means are selected due to the geographic distances among high-schools. Interviews allow the triangulation of the information collected in the surveys.

High-school ( $n = 42$ ) teacher-secretaries are surveyed as per request of form-filling with the data about beginning teachers' profiles (age, workload, graduate certificate or lack thereof).

Individual interviews are presented as well to the members of the board ( $n = 91$ ). They are deemed qualified informants based on their expertise and experience and are enquired on the performance of beginning teachers and expectations for a professional enhancement program aimed at beginning teachers.

Interviews with 19 directors and assistant directors (45% of the total) are held to analyze the performance of beginning teachers and know their perspective on the objectives and contents that a professional enhancing program aimed at beginning teachers should have. The selection criteria used for directors involve: representing over 30% of the total and that some of the directors work at high-schools located in departmental capitals, with over 1000 students, and others work at remote high-schools with under 500 students.

Four hundred and seventeen beginning teachers (57% of the total at reach) were personally interviewed and 21 (25% of the teachers willing to be interviewed) were telephonically interviewed on their professional needs, in order to also know their interest in a professional enhancement program.

Quantitative—by means of SPSS software- and qualitative methodologies—by means of content analysis—were applied.

## **2.4 The need for beginning teacher training**

Both beginning teachers and participants of management teams of the high schools where they perform their teaching jobs, when interviewed, stated the need for professional training and, in most cases, showed their interest in the satisfaction of said needs via a professional enhancement course.

The difference between graduated beginning teachers and non-graduated beginning teachers, when perceived, mainly resides in the strength of their initial training, theoretical or specific to a subject, and in the methodology observed in graduates.

This conclusion is relevant as it defines the option of designing a program aimed at beginning teachers who have graduated from teacher training courses. It is understood that the professional needs of those who have not fulfilled the requirements of initial training courses to perform as teachers should be broader as non-graduate teachers, in general, lack pedagogical, psychological and educational training despite their subject-related expertise.

Although there is institutional support for beginning teachers, such support is not a part of any action plan organized by the National Council for Education but created or not according to the initiatives of management teams in each high school. Such support, if any, does not seem to be efficient enough for beginning teachers, who do not recognize it as a professional support device relevant to a high school culture.

From the management teams' viewpoint, professional knowledge and especially pedagogical and psychological knowledge, the educational bond between teachers and adolescent students, groups and institutions, their colleagues and the context and the attitudes that teachers may have towards their profession must be subject to continuous training and skill development for beginning teachers.

Consistently, beginning teachers state their feeling a need for improvement and continuous professional self-training, in order to know how to deal with students and inappropriate behavior, for encouraging them to learn, contributing in the creation of a culture within the education center from a relational point of view and for strengthening general and specific didactic knowledge related to content teaching, learning orientation and student-performed tasks.

Additionally, both student diversity and inclusion raise professional training needs in beginning teachers, to encourage learning and to consider those students who present learning difficulties, special needs or other problems, such as addictions.

Consequently, it is induced that a professional strengthening program which attempts an approach to the satisfaction of such needs must aim at continuing training related to the performance of teaching roles, in consonance with the requirements of the secondary level of education and in the framework of the professional stage of acquisition of teaching roles. Moreover, studying and understanding adolescents and planning their involvement in the classroom seems to be crucial as training subject matter, as adolescents and their physical, psychological and social conditions are diverse. Enhancing systematic observation is a potential asset for planning tasks in a diverse context.

Little mention to the need for strengthening disciplinary knowledge confirms the interest in the design of a professional teaching development course with general pedagogical characteristics.

## **2.5 Design of the professional development program**

This program is expected to present a pedagogical updating and renewing nature, aimed at improving the teaching profession [29]. This is a course of action structured with pedagogical contents common to all teachers and their areas, and it includes formative assessment [30].

The program is called *SER Profesor* (being a teacher).

Being a teacher and having a personalized educational style involves a way of teaching, working and expressing oneself, featured by: being receptive and conciliatory, which is related to the reception principle; being reflexive and creative, in relation to the personal identity principle; individualizing and encouraging coexistence, considering the manifestations of the identity principle; being optimistic, in accordance with the principles and corresponding manifestations that define a person.

### *2.5.1 General objectives*

The program promotes pedagogy from the teacher as a person, aimed at the student as a person, which combines what teachers ought to do with real responsibilities of a teaching job. The following premises act as bases: (a) the initial acquisition of the teaching role, which beginning teachers experience, makes teachers prone to



making sense of their professional performance or clarifying the sense and significance of their roles; (b) beginning teachers may find a reason to their profession in their nature, if assisted.

Based on such premises, two objectives give meaning to this program: (1) to contribute to the professional development of beginning teachers and (2) to encourage improvement in the teaching quality developed by beginning teachers, within this initial stage.

Therefore, the following general objectives are established: (a) to promote the development of critical thinking and participation in dialectical discourse on teaching tasks, students' learning and the context in which they meet and how they relate; (b) to enhance general pedagogical training and aptitude towards continuous training as a requirement for performing teaching roles; (c) to enable the construction of a professional identity consistent with the characteristics that conform the initial stage of the professional teaching development process; and (d) to teach values and attitudes that consider teachers as professionals who assist students in their reaching the highest level of personal autonomy as a manifestation of personalized comprehensive education.

### *2.5.2 Course duration and modality*

The program is divided in four thematic units and a total class load of four credits (i.e., 60 hours) to be taken in 4 months, obtaining one credit per unit (i.e., 15-hour coursework during class time, assisted tasks and individual studying.) This option is substantiated by the research that argues that teachers need considerable professional development of about 50 hours to improve their skills and enhance student-learning [31].

The modality proposed is blended workshop-courses. B-learning may facilitate the demands of the course, in so far as the number of hours participants need to attend the course decrease, thus encouraging home studying instead. An on-line platform is an essential resource to apply this modality.

### *2.5.3 Contents*

The general criteria used to solve issues related to content selection is the following: (a) selection of meaningful aspects and concepts that enable the acquisition of new knowledge to the participants; (b) possibility of exchanging work during class time; (c) adequation to beginners' condition regarding training and experience; (d) approach to real situations related to teaching jobs; and (e) functionality, regarding the extent to which such contents can be applied effectively to teaching practices.

It is a concentric program, organized consistently with pedagogical practice as interest center and linking core, from four analysis levels. These levels give name to each of the four units. Such units and their corresponding contents are presented in **Table 1**.

### *2.5.4 Methods*

The teaching method applied throughout the course aims at the encouragement of motivation for constructive meaningful learning, based on the interrelation of contents and participants' teaching experience. The following didactic criteria are considered for motivation: presentation of tasks with relevant contents which related to their reality and are valuable as necessary for their training and experience; student involvement in tasks, encouraging participation and providing the chance to choose topics to study in depth; concrete real work, based on experience, so as to promote understanding and raise interest in learning; recovery of main

| Unit 1  | Unit 2  | Unit 3   | Unit 4  |
|---|---|--|---|
| Being a teacher at secondary education level  | Systematic observation for knowledge and analysis of pedagogical practice   | Adolescents and their learning as a reason for pedagogical practices   | Syllabi aimed at addressing students' socio-personal diversity  |
| Contents  | Contents  | Contents   | Contents  |
| 1. The sense of being a teacher: being, acting and feeling like a teacher.<br>2. Stages of teaching experience and characteristics of professional and personal development.<br>3. Possibilities and limitations in the initial professional training stage: professional needs emerging from pedagogical practices.<br>4. Professional knowledge, attitudes and values of teachers at secondary education level. | 1. Observation concept and nature Advantages and limitations.<br>2. Techniques and procedures for recording data.<br>3. Observation planning.<br>4. Analysis and data interpretation. | 1. Characteristics of adolescents in the present society and context of the education center.<br>2. General principles of cognitive and psychosocial development in adolescents.<br>3. Learning encouragement based on theoretical diverse focuses: conductivism, humanism, cognitivism, attribution theory, achievement motivation.<br>4. Principles for the optimization of learning encouragement | 1. Needs for planning.<br>2. Annual and unit-based planning. Bases. Components.<br>3. Integration of educational technologies consistent with planning.<br>4. Syllabi aimed at addressing student socio-personal diversity. |

**Table 1.**  
*Thematic units and contents.*

meaningful codes and languages for participants, arising from their contexts, visual culture, musical expressions, sports, interactive IT culture; inclusion of emotions when teaching, thus helping participants to overcome their insecurity and enabling thought and feeling expression; personalized communication and tracking of individual progress; encouragement of teamwork, as a mediator of experiences and external perspectives to favor personal identity and socialization; use of interesting topics to participants; progress and mistakes assessment and self-assessment and commitment to learning; coherence between teacher's discourse and practices [32].

2.5.5 Assessment

Assessment is one of the most significant activities of the professional development process promoted by the course.

In this framework, assessment is conceptualized as a systematic process of collection of information on the relevant aspects of the educational situation. Assessment allows the formulation of pre-established value judgment to take improvement decisions in the training process of the teachers involved with such evaluation. Considering its social, control and certification dimensions, such value judgment is related to achievements instead of to aims.

Gained knowledge, developed attitudes and developed and acquired procedures quality are subject to evaluation. Components of the program aimed at improving its execution by the leading teacher are subject to evaluation as well.

3. Conclusions

The research performed on beginning teacher professional training needs was essential for the accomplishment of the objective: designing a professional development program aimed at enhancing beginning teacher training for teachers who

work at national public high-schools. Apart from identifying the main common needs of the population that acted as the study subject, this research allows the deduction a first conclusion: the needs recognized for both beginning teachers and the directors of educative centers where the former work relate to general pedagogical update rather than to specific-discipline related analysis. This observation has enabled two important decisions to adopt in order to define the nature of the program. On the one hand, there is the need for a pedagogical program. On the second hand, the update strategy is the most appropriate and viable framework for the design of the program, provided that the target teachers have already received basic training provided by their initial training studies. Moreover, the educative system currently offers specializations based on the analysis of specific, disciplinary areas or institution management.

The state-of-the-art study performed in the field of teacher training reveals the interest that the policies of education ministries from numerous countries express, and the interest of educative research on teacher preparation via training, updating or specialization, as means for continuous professional training. Consequentially, there is a second conclusion: it is necessary to define the objective of the training proposal to be presented. The decision adopted for the purpose of the pedagogical program to be designed to be teacher personal and professional growth acknowledges the value of people working as professional teachers who assume the responsible task of collaborating in the development of other people, i.e., the students. Therefore, their human condition and social responsibility are emphasized in the name of the program: *SER Profesor* (being a teacher) and personalized education fundamentals are adopted.

A pedagogical program aimed at teachers in their first professional stage must be coherent with the current challenges the society offers and with the demands of this teaching training. Within such demands social inclusion is emphasized.

The third conclusion is that a pedagogical program of this kind should be structured on the following bases: teachers' needs, demands and concerns regarding areas to improve, mainly in relation to teaching practices, teaching-skill enhancement, teacher participation and interaction; teenagers and their learning as the observation focus, pedagogical practice analysis and construction; practical and theoretical elements to develop teaching tasks addressed to citizenship education and coexistence by means of execution of inclusion, attention to diversity and involvement of the communities to which the students belong.

From a constructivist viewpoint, teachers are conceived as practical, reflexive and active learners who must be helped in their building new pedagogical theories and practices. In this sense, the fourth conclusion is related to the conditions a professional development program should present. Three conditions are highlighted: firstly, professional development conceived as a collaborative, culture-building process which will become more effective depending on significant interactions among teachers, members of the educative institution, students' families and members of the community in general. Secondly, a professional development program must promote relevant teaching knowledge addressing the concerns resulting from teaching practices expressed by teachers. Thirdly, transformative learning may be the appropriate type of learning for a program that encourages the transformation of teachers' reference frameworks through the development of critical thinking skills and participation in dialectical discourse in order to validate better reflective opinions.

The fifth conclusion implies the general objectives of the course. These objectives must be aimed at promoting four critical aspects of a professional development program. Such objectives are: (a) development of critical thinking and participation in dialectical discourse on teaching tasks, student learning, the context where such

learning takes place and student interaction; (b) general pedagogical training and aptitude for continuous training as requirements for practice teaching roles; (c) building a professional identities that match the characteristics which conform the initial stage of the teaching-profession development process; and (d) training in values and positive attitudes for the conception of teachers as professionals who provide assistance to students for them to achieve the highest possible level of personal autonomy as a result of personalized comprehensive education.

Considering the national institutional context related to public teacher training and the comments of the researchers on teacher professional development, the sixth conclusion lays on the convenience of the program presenting the following characteristics: (a) being defined as an induction program; (b) being taken during the first year of career simultaneously with performing teaching tasks; (c) having a four-credit classload equivalent to 60 hours in a class/workshop b-learning modality; (d) certification upon passing the course; and (e) having national reach as far as budget, infrastructure and human resources needs are met.

Once at program-design stage, the program is conceptualized as an action plan constituted by objectives, contents, means and resources and a system conformed via formative assessment, which is also influenced by external components, such as context and technical, practical and ethical requirements, according to the nature of the program.

The seventh conclusion relates to the contents of each component of the program and consists of structuring them on four units articulated as per level of knowledge of pedagogical practice in relation to the following matters: (1) being a teacher at a secondary level, (2) teenagers and their learning as a reason for pedagogical practice, (3) systematic observation in pursue of knowledge and analysis of pedagogical practice, and (4) planning aimed at student socio-personal diversity.

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