# EDITORIAL
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Focus on:
Teacher Induction: what can we learn from International Practices?

The preparation to the teaching profession and the early years of teaching (Induction) are sensitive periods in the process of professionalization of the teacher. During Induction period, the school community, in the broader perspective of the term, has the task of providing a wide range of intellectual, social, emotional and material resources to support and guide the transition of new teachers in the midst of their professional practice. National and international research shows that effective models of training for newly recruited teachers should provide tools for action and reflection on professional, organizational, social and career guidance plans. The European Commission handbook for policy-makers on induction into the teaching profession emphasises the importance of three kinds of support for beginning teachers: personal, social and professional (European Commission, 2010). Induction programmes may contain different elements such as mentoring, professional training, peer review and scheduled meetings with the school head through which personal, social and professional support are provided. Among those, mentoring is a compulsory element of induction programmes in almost all European education systems where induction is regulated (Fig. 1).
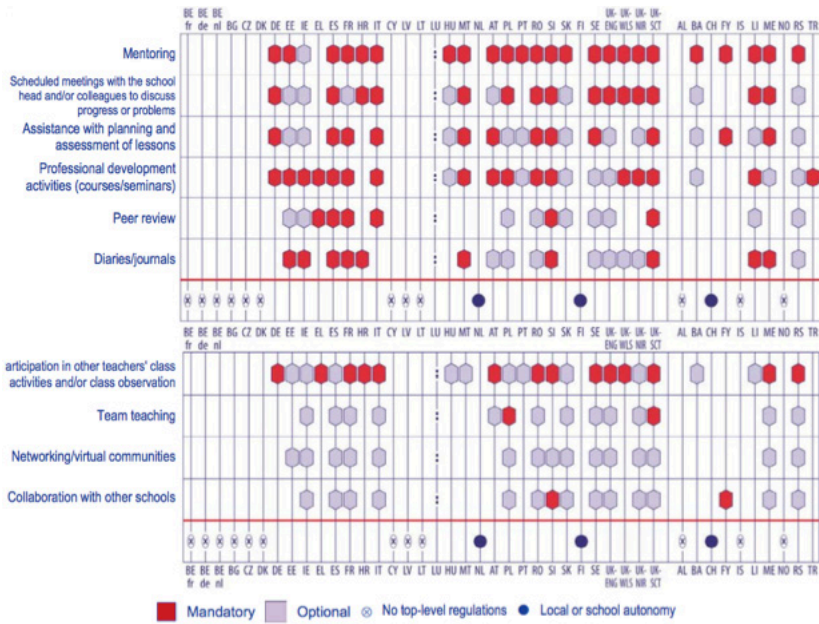
Figure1: Types of support included in the induction programme in primary and secondary general education (ISCED 1-3) according to top-level authority regulations, 2016/17. Source: European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018 Fig 3.2 pag 52

Although accompaniment and support may be provided in different ways in different countries, recent studies have identified some of the elements considered to be successful in training programmes, both in terms of teacher's professionalism and in relation to the level of satisfaction of the subjects involved (Mangione et al., 2016).

Recurring elements in the literature include:
- a supportive scholastic context for newly recruited to act in a climate of collective responsibility;
- an opportunity to observe experienced teachers;
- an accurate selection of qualified tutors;
- organization of interaction and confrontation spaces for novice and experienced teachers;
- an intensive and structured supportive curriculum as well as an opportunity for professional development;
- exclusion (or at least extreme limitation) of teacher evaluation structures;
- identification of training and self-assessment tools enabling evaluation

of teacher's practice;
- elicitation of training goals;
- content diversification;
- economic and political support.

Another aspect, subject of reflection and improvement in training programs for beginning teachers, is the opportunity to integrate face-to-face experiences with reflection and sharing spaces in online environments. In this regard, the use of online facilities is recommended to be a support to face-to-face activities, rather than a substitute, essential to ensure immediacy, which is central to the teachers' professionalism.

While sharing internationally the importance of an integrated training approach (ITE, INDUCTION, CPD) to the development of teaching profession, we witness a wide variety of implementation models of this policy. In this issue, we will focus mainly on all aspects related to design, implementation, governance and evaluation of initial teacher education and induction processes.

This issue presents international standing works that give special attention to some of the teacher training dimensions and processes, both during the initial and ongoing phases.

For what concerns initial training (ITE and *Induction*), the special issue opens up to two works focusing on induction training models and possible governance types.

The first contribution *Governing a state-wide Induction Program: Characteristics and Success Conditions of the Italian Model* (**D. D'Amico, G.R. Mangione &. M.C. Pettenati**) focuses on the Italian contest and the change of teacher education over the last years. This work takes as its reference EC Handbook conditions issued in 2010 (Conditions for successful induction Programs) with a critical reading of the induction governance model in Italy. Starting from the governance conditions, recognized as fundamental to an effective induction programme, one of the goals of this work is to understand how the conditions of success have been implemented in the Italian training model and, above all, how they have been characterized with respect to the design of network governance.

The second contribution *Management of Novice Teachers' Induction to The Profession: Modernization of the Russian School Methodological System* (**R. Valeeva, T. Baklashova & L. Latypova**) focuses on *russian induction model*. It is shown the professional followup course for newbie teachers towards school environments, a pathway that requires and that is based on educational institutions collaboration as well as research centres, Ministry and training agencies cooperation. The main purpose is to renew teachers initial training by

the adoption of reflexive technologies, in order to create high quality contents and optimized bases to support the didactical and scientific path, in pursuance of achieving the new professional standards that educational modification nowadays requires.

Further works in this issue related to induction training are concentrated on the specific actions and target skills of the modern teacher.

The role of the teacher must be rethought and new teaching skills have to be developed in order to design innovative learning activities and use of ICT in education. Two paper connect the teaching induction process and the develop¬ment of a digital culture at school.The first paper *Initial Teacher Training And The National Plan For Digital Education* (**S. Calzone, R. Di Gioa & V. Pappalardo**), seen from a national perspective trough the feedback given by 1,324 new teachers, tries to understand the additional value of training actions as proposed via NPDE training courses between 2015 and 2017 funded by the 2014-2020 National Operational Programme for the School (NOP). The paper describes how new teachers approach ICT related issues and the concrete use of the devices in the classroom.The training needs expressed in the two different contexts under observation, namely the Local training Hubs and the new Staff Training provisions show a positive perception of its usefulness in terms of motivation to implement teaching innovation through ICT and the learning of digital skills to be concretely used in the classroom, confirming the importance of training in this field.

In second work *Teachers Induction and Digital Culture. The Case of Southern Italy Teachers attending TFA* (**F.F. Loperfido, A. Dipace, R. Caposeno, A. Scarinci & J. Vitele**) the authors try to understand how Italian teachers participating in the induction process as burgeoning experts in special educational needs perceive the use of ICT in education. In a first step the researchers analyse which factors are associated with the digital culture at scho¬ol in Italian participants in a TFA course for teachers of students with special educational needs, and in a second moment define how those factors differentiate in relation to some demographics, like both participants' gender and teaching experience.

Approached from a more international perspective the work *Education for Diversity in Initial Teacher Preparation Programmes: a Comparative International Study* (M.C. Cardona Moltò, R. Tichà & B. Arbery) focuses on teacher training on inclusive classes management. The essay, supported by a grant from the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport (Secretary of State of Education, Professional Training and Universities) within the

framework of the Programme "State Programme for the Promotion of Talent and its Employability" I+D+i 2013- 2016 (Ref. PRX16/00530), and by the University of Alicante, Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Planning (Ref. 2015/00003670) reports an international case of study investigating what do new teachers perceive about the opportunity of learning and teaching in an inclusive school. The confrontation between the Spanish and American reality shows a substantial international gap existing in terms of the training expectations as the opportunity to learn theoretical aspects of teaching for diversity (e.g., know intervention strategies to meet student diverse educational needs), opportunity to learning to teach inclusively (e.g., for learn how to develop an inclusive curriculum), and opportunity to observe and analyse practical aspects of diversity teaching (e.g., conduct diversity-related field-work), all these differences favouring US respondents. The article highlights the need for increased attention to teaching diversity and specific implications for ongoing development of initial teacher preparation are discussed within the context of improving educators and student teachers' training for diversity.

In the second part of this special issue there will be a section entirely dedicated to ongoing formation (CPD), which is always strictly connected with the initial one.

The ongoing training requires innovative environments able to support the upgrading of skills as well as competences development. In particular, within a constructivist and connectionist perspective, it's necessary to ensure the right balance between autonomy and socialization, while stimulating reflection upon experience and generating further meaningful experiences. The contribute *Designing an effective and scientifically grounded e-learning environment for Initial Teacher Education: the Italian University Line Model* (**F. Benedetti**) presents the educational model of the Italian University Line as an example of online didactics meeting the above defined requirements, also in the case of ITE – Initial Teacher Education, and looks at *gamification* as a strategic way to support learners' motivation and engagement.

In-service teacher training calls also for attention to key competences that must be promoted and developed in teachers. The work *Promoting Digital and Media Competences of pre- and in-Service Teachers. Research Findings of a Project from six European Countries* (**M. Ranieri & I. Bruni**) resumes the teachers digital competence topic, and presents the results of e-MEL, a European project aiming at promoting the development, implementation and testing of training scenarios for pre- and in-service teachers' training in the field of digital and media literacy education. The essay reinforces the importance of a vertical action on digital competence and the need to detect sustainable models of media and digital skills training, both in terms of teacher education

and teachers' professional development.

In *Heritage Education and Initial Teacher Training: an International Experience* (**A. Poce, F. Agrusti & M.R. Re**) it is reprised the digital competence issue because of it's evidence as a functional solution for a didactical purpose of museum resources. Through the DICHE project (Digital Innovation in Cultural Heritage Education) we observe an effort to inform primary school teachers of new education practices in cultural heritage fruition which employ technologies and also include the evaluation of their effectiveness in learning in terms of competences development.

Teachers foreign language competences are also to be accounted for in in-service training experiences. Finding innovative ways of in-service training is the main goal of two specific papers of this issue. In the first one *Initial Teacher Education and Learning English at Primary School in Tuscany: Creative Perspectives, Current Challenges, and Possible Approaches* (**E. Guerin**) we can identify the current challenges and issues related to initial teacher education in the preparation of trainee Primary School teachers to teach English in Primary School. It then examines the role of the English Language Learning-Teaching Methodology Workshops in initial teacher education.

The second paper *Online TESOL Teacher Education: outcome of a Pilot Project* (**S. Filice & D. Bardetti**) presents the outcome of a teacher-training courses pilot project delivered via some form of technology, that gives the teachers-to-be the opportunity to practice, experiment with technology as students.

This issue means to give not only a time for reflection but also a chance to resume innovative and quality practices, in order to innovate teachers training.

Both from educational templates and target skills point of view, the changing trajectories leave us a way of reading which encourages the reader to have a more critical thinking and identify the possible improvements in professional training actions along several dimensions.

Giuseppina Rita Mangione, Maria Chiara Pettenati
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