

# Preparatory work for the Workshops VET Teacher

## Definition, competencies, challenges,....:

### Initial teacher training: the Flemish Community (Belgium)

- In Flanders, there are 5 types of initial teacher training: nursery education, primary education, secondary education group 1, secondary education group 2, secondary education group 3.

Initial training VET teacher = secondary education group 3.

This is teacher training in Social Advancement Education (one of the forms of adult education)

These people generally are skilled and experienced in a certain profession and obtain a teaching certificate in order to teach vocational courses in TSO (technical secondary education) and BSO (Vocational secondary education)<sup>1</sup>.

- Basic competencies: legal context

The training programme of teachers is based on a list of basic competencies. The basic competencies are derived from the occupational profile. The occupational profile and the basic competencies are formulated by the Department for Educational Development and have to be confirmed by the Flemish Parliament and government.

This innovation of the initial teacher training has to be situated in the context of the Initial and In Service Teacher Training Decree of 16 april 1996. There was an evolution of the profession (more and more is expected from teachers,...) an evolution of educational policy (e.g. more participation of pupils, parents, teachers in the schools' policy,...), a changing social context (learning society, society seeks solution for problems –e.g. drugs,...- in education), new conception of learning (e.g. constructivism). All these evolutions require changes in-service teacher training as well.

The Flemish government confirmed in 1998 the following description of the occupational profile of a teacher:

A teacher is not only responsible for his own teaching but also for the school as an organisation. (He is also responsible for some educational aspects to the society.)

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<sup>1</sup> TSO: technical secondary education:

Attention us concerned on general and technical-theoretical subjects. After TSO, the youngster can hold an occupation or continue his/ her studies in higher education. Practical classes are also part of the training.

BSO: vocational secondary education

This is a practical education form in which the youngster learns a specific occupation, whereas he/ she is also given general training. If he/ she chooses to do so, he/ she can attend a 3rd year in the 2nd grade of BSO. The 3rd grade follows the 2nd grade. In this 3rd grade, specific training is fined down aiming at the eventual choice of occupation or the possible plans to study in higher education. Some lines of study only start in the 3rd grade. It is possible to attend a 3rd year in the 3rd grade, in order to prepare for higher education or to specialise. For certain specialisations in vocational training, there is also a 4rd grade.

A lot of educational qualities are typical of the occupational profile of a teacher:

Responsible for his own teaching:

the teacher as

1. a facilitator in learning and development processes
2. an educator
3. an expert in content
4. an organiser
5. an innovator/ researcher

Responsible for the school as organisation:

the teacher as

6. a partner of parents
7. a member of the school team
8. a partner of external actors
9. a partner of the 'educational community'

Responsible for some educational aspects to the society:

10. the teacher as a member of society

The description of the basic competencies is based on this description of the occupational profile.

Some examples:

- 1.1 determining the entry level of the students
- 1.2 choosing and formulating objectives
- 2.2 stimulating the emancipation of students
- 2.5 dealing adequately with pupils that have social, emotional and/or behaviour problems
- 3.1 using content knowledge and skills to develop an adequate teaching strategy
- 4.1 stimulating a structured working environment
- 4.4 creating a stimulating and save learning and working environment
- 5.1 reflecting on and changing his own teaching behaviour
- 5.3 using new teaching strategies
- 6.1 dealing with the information about the pupils in a discrete manner
- 7.1 participating in different cooperation structures
- 7.2 reaching and observe an allocation of duties for the team of teachers
- 9.2 reflecting on the teaching profession and its place in society

## **The in -service training in the Flemish Community**

The Initial and In-service Teacher Training decree of 16 April 1996 introduced a three-part system of in-service-training.

- in-service training on the initiative of schools (the so-called demand-based in-service training):

the schools are allocated financial means to meet the in-service training needs. Schools can 'shop' freely in the free market of in-service training. The idea is that the 'supply' of the in-service trainers should meet the needs ('demand') of the schools better.

- in-service training by the representative associations

that are given means to establish in-service training. This training is meant for the different teachers and school management teams as well as for the members of staff of guidance centres, the educational monitoring services and boarding schools

-in-service training on the initiative of the Flemish government.

With the means allocated, the Flemish government organises in-service training activities to meet policy priorities (and to fill gaps in the in service training market).

One of last year's priorities was 'mentorship for starting teachers'.

Also this year the Flemish government chose to make 'mentorship for starting teachers' a policy priority. Another example is 'difficult pupils'.

Organisations that meet certain standards can apply every year for funding. It's crucial that the in-service training gives the participants enough opportunities to practice the skills they have learned. The trainer should always make sure that the training has a (measurable) effect on the 'schools'.

The most common structure is the "sandwich" model, where theory and practice are compared. During the first sessions, the participants receive theoretical training followed by specific assignments for practice in class. Later sessions are devoted to group discussions of problems or advantages of putting the theory into practice. There is an evolution in this structure. Now, there are more and more projects that provide time for coaching, care for implementation,...

The standards that are used (by the government) to evaluate the in service training projects are the following :

- the project has the intention to change the educational practical competence of teachers,.. e.g. there are a lot of training moments, coaching, care for implementation, assistance during and after the in service training,...
- the context is in correlation with these intentions (to change the educational practice)
- the teaching method is adjusted to the participants' needs
- the internal evaluation contributes to increase the professionalism (of the organisation).