IN-SCHOOL TRAINING OF NON-UNIVERSITY TEACHERS: FUNDAMENTAL MODALITY IN THEIR LIFELONG LEARNING

La formación en centro del profesorado no universitario: modalidad fundamental en su formación permanente

Mariana ALONSO-BRIALES & Julio VERA-VILA
University of Málaga. Spain.
mariana@uma.es; juliovera@uma.es
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6804-6791; http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6785-7645

ABSTRACT

Lifelong learning involves a constant learning process throughout a teacher's lifespan. It is aimed to meet the real needs and problems that teachers have in their practice by developing professional competences in a continuously changing environment. In-School training is one of the basic forms of lifelong learning for non-university teachers, since it begins from, becomes adjusted in, and reflects on, the immediate environment, thus facilitating analysis, reflection, and improvement of teaching practice.

This paper presents a qualitative project focused on five case studies. They are set in four early childhood and primary education public schools, and in the Hospital and Home Educational Care Service in Málaga, which are involved in developing

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in-school training that is intended to address teachers' training needs when it comes to dealing with the problems encountered in their professional practice.

The results show that in-school training projects aimed at personal, professional, and institutional improvement have high potential for lifelong learning and teachers' professional development. They are projects than can be easily adapted to each setting and to teachers' real needs. In this way, they help prevent teacher discomfort, avoiding inhibition and falling into a repetitive pattern by introducing a renewed interest in searching for new educational ideas. We therefore conclude that in-school training is regarded as the main means of delivering lifelong learning for teachers in Andalusia, as it considers the school to be the focus of training and the basic unit of educational change and innovation. In addition, it encourages the creation of spaces for reflection and participation and proposals for change, as well as promoting teamwork as a major development for the educational institution and the teaching staff.

Keywords: in-school training; lifelong learning; teachers' professional development; professional identity; professional competences.

RESUMEN

La formación permanente supone un proceso de aprendizaje que se desarrolla a lo largo de toda la trayectoria vital del docente, dando respuesta a las necesidades y problemas reales que el profesorado tiene en su práctica para desarrollar sus propias competencias profesionales en un contexto de cambio continuo. Una de las modalidades fundamentales de formación permanente del profesorado no universitario es la Formación en Centro, dado que parte, se ajusta y revierte en el propio contexto, facilitando de esta manera el análisis, la reflexión y la mejora de la práctica docente.

En este trabajo se presenta una investigación de corte cualitativo, centrada en cinco estudios de casos, cuatro centros educativos públicos de Infantil y Primaria y el Servicio de Atención Educativa Hospitalaria y Domiciliaria de Málaga, que se implican en el desarrollo de una Formación en Centro como iniciativa para dar respuesta a sus necesidades formativas, a los problemas que el profesorado encuentra en su práctica.

Como demuestran los resultados, estos Proyectos de Formación en Centro, orientados hacia la mejora personal, profesional e institucional, tienen un enorme potencial para la formación permanente y el desarrollo profesional del profesorado. Son proyectos con gran capacidad para adaptarse al contexto y a las necesidades reales del profesorado, que ayudan a prevenir el malestar docente, a evitar la inhibición y la rutina, y a incrementar el interés por la búsqueda de nuevas propuestas educativas. Por tanto, concluimos que la Formación en Centro es valorada como una modalidad prioritaria dentro de los planes de formación permanente del profesorado en Andalucía, puesto que considera al centro educativo como el foco de formación y la unidad básica de cambio e innovación educativa. Además, favorece espacios de reflexión y participación, propuestas de cambio y de trabajo en equipo como desarrollo fundamental de la institución educativa y del profesorado.

Palabras clave: formación en centro; formación continua; desarrollo profesional docente; identidad profesional; competencia profesional.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Schools are no longer what they were years ago, nor are teachers' tasks the same. We live in a constantly changing environment in terms of many of the variables that affect the school system. It is not surprising, therefore, that many studies have focused on analysing their impact on schools and on the disorientation of education professionals (Esteve, 2011; Esteve, Franco & Vera, 1995; Gimeno, 2010; Ortega, 2016; Vera, 1992; 1995). The profession of teaching has become increasingly complex and difficult, and a new outlook on professional culture and lifelong learning is needed (Imbernón, 2011; 2017). As Colén (2012) argued, in the face of these uncertain and changing contexts, lifelong learning appears not as a necessity, but as 'a way of approaching the profession' (p. 49). The right to inclusive quality education in democratic societies certainly demands that lifelong learning be incorporated into the habits of teachers' professional practice as a salient aspect of how to take the correct approach to teaching, as a hallmark of professional identity.

In this way, training becomes an unescapable systematic strategy that should be programmed to enable teachers to carry out progressively more complex and shifting tasks. Similarly, it helps to update the professional competences required by changes in the environment and to improve personal competences, thus making work a source of learning and satisfaction (Ezquerra, Argos, Fernández-Salinero & González-Geraldo, 2016; Fernández-Salinero, 2004). The very concept of professional development involves considering teachers to be 'subjects in constant learning and development' (Sarramona, Noguera & Vera, 1998, p. 126).

This educational action takes place within educational institutions shared by students, teachers and families. Hence, in order to improve the quality of education, it is very important to change the culture and ways of working in the institution itself; the institution is the main axis around which a large part of the proposals for change take place (Escudero, 1992; 1993; Escudero, González & Rodríguez, 2018). In this way, the professional development of teachers and the improvement of the institution can be seen as mutually reinforcing, as two sides of the same coin.

The acceptance of this close relationship between school development and teachers' professional development leads to an understanding of the school as the basic unit for training and change (Alonso & Vila, 2019). Some forms of lifelong learning are becoming more and more widespread in Spain that are known by different names: in-school training, school-centred training, school-centred review, etc.

The Education Authorities have reflected the importance of training activities that focus on the analysis, reflection and improvement of teaching practice in various procedures and regulations. These notably include Decree 93/2013, of 27 August, which regulates initial and ongoing teacher training in the Autonomous Region of Andalusia and in the Andalusian System of Ongoing Teacher Training. In this way, the classroom and the school have become the ordinary training settings, promoting collaborative work between teachers, self-training methods, and the

implementation of in-school training projects or specific in-school training projects linked to educational programmes.

> In Andalusia, education policies related to teacher training tend to prioritise self-training over face-to-face training, arguing that self-training involves overcoming the enormous dependence on face-to-face training that teachers are required to surmount in search of universal answers to individual problems, and that teachers should be the ones to generate their own learning and provide solutions to their own specific needs (Aneas, 2019, p. 15).

In-school training is closely linked to the educational project of schools, as it is aimed at meeting teachers' training needs and concerns as they arise from in-depth diagnosis, resulting from shared analysis, and reflection on the improvement of the school (Alonso, 2012). As Barredo (2012) stated, 'the autonomous school, as an intelligent, and improvement-seeking unit, must be able to lead processes of change by redesigning the course of events' (p. 43). The aim is to move from a teacher-centred approach to a more global one that revolves around the whole school (Barquín and Fernández, 2002; García-Ruíz and Castro, 2012; Pineda, Moreno, Úcar and Belvis, 2008). In-school training undoubtedly seeks to meet specific demands by proposing practices designed for enhancing both teaching practice and student performance. This is only possible by relying on collective involvement and commitment to the proposed goals, the completion of tasks, their implementation in the classroom and in the school, and the use of teamwork strategies.

Santos (2010) and Elliot (2010) highlighted that the cooperative nature of teacher training processes is closely linked to real situations and scenarios, which they called 'learning to learn as part of a community', as learning communities or learning organisations. Palos, Martínez and Albaladejo (2012, p. 30) also stated that participatory processes are needed in certain aspects: in identifying needs, in training design, and in the monitoring and evaluation of projects.

Therefore, teachers support in-school training, as opposed to the traditional courses delivered in specific teachers training institutions (Ramirez, 2015, p. 209). The school and the community should be the focus of lifelong learning. Villar (1998, p. 51) stressed the social importance of training activities as a mechanism for change in schools. He emphasised the use of training to turn theory into specific actions and translate them into professional competences and the transfer potential that goes beyond training actions themselves.

The main objective of this study was to assess and understand the impact that in-school training has on the development of teachers' professional competences at non-university levels. This type of training is undoubtedly a priority in the ongoing teacher training that the Department of Education and Sport of the Andalusian Regional Government has been promoting for several years now. The aim is to provide the most appropriate response possible to the educational needs of a school. This is based on the understanding that the school is the core and the

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most appropriate place for reflection, to ensure that the improvement of practice has a clear impact on the improvement of student performance and the development of their competencies. Therefore, this research focuses on two axes, namely: providing an in-depth study of the in-school training and analysing its contribution to the development of professional competences in teachers.

2. METHODOLOGY

This piece of qualitative research is focused, firstly, on the use of in-school training to describe and interpret the educational environment from within; and secondly, on change, social transformation and the emancipation of teachers, mainly framed within critical theory (Bartolomé, 1992; Boarini, 2018; Eisner, 1998; Pérez Serrano, 1994; Rivas, 2021; Sandín, 2003).

This type of research goes beyond the positivist tradition, which ignores the role of subjectivity and the interpretative frameworks of individuals, and instead analyses teachers' own words, perceptions, feelings, interpretations, and circumstances. The relationship is mainly based on listening, availability, and attention, with a view to enabling a transformative experience (Caparrós, Martín & Sierra, 2021; Sierra & Blanco, 2017).

The selected sample consists of five case studies: four early childhood and primary education public schools in different areas of the province of Malaga and in the Malaga Home and Hospital Education Care Service (SAEHD). A total of twenty-nine teachers participated in the interviews, of which 22 were female (76 %) and 7 were male (24 %). Most of the teachers interviewed (65 %) were in the 30-50 age group. All participants held a teaching degree, and in some cases, they also held a second, third or fourth degree, including Psychopedagogy (14 %), Pedagogy (10 %), Psychology (4 %) and History (2 %).

The qualitative case studies used have assessed multiple stakeholder perspectives, observation and interpretation in naturally occurring contexts (Simons, 2011, pp. 21-22). According to Muñoz and Muñoz (2010), this methodology is characterised by intensive and in-depth studies which are understood as bounded systems, unique situations or social entities that are framed in a context. According to Stake (2010) the case study is the study of 'the uniqueness and complexity of a single case, its embeddedness and interaction with its contexts' (p. 16).

Access to participants and the negotiation process in this study complied with the widely recognised requirements to ensure rigorous qualitative research. A negotiation process was carried out in all participating schools in order to provide participants with a clear explanation of the nature of the research and to ensure confidentiality.

The techniques used to collect information in this study included participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document collection.

Participant observation allowed us to become involved in the in-school training processes. In this way, we were able to participate and share the main actions carried

out by the teaching staff of each school. The instrument used was an observation journal for the training sessions.

The interviews conducted gave us an insight into how the participants developed and constructed their conceptions of lifelong learning, and more specifically, of the in-school training programme in which they participated. They express teachers' feelings and thoughts and the way they interpreted their professional reality. A total of 29 interviews were conducted, each lasting between 30 and 90 minutes. In each case study, interviews were conducted with the person who was in charge of coordinating the in-school training programme, the counsellor at the relevant teacher training centre, a member of the management team, and early childhood and primary education teachers. A basic script was used that included questions about the elements involved in in-school- training. Therefore, we took a highly subjective perspective, in which we mainly sought to record the teachers' explanations and evaluations of their experience of in-school training, as they interpreted it.

Documents were also collected in which teachers described their actions, experiences and opinions about in-school training, such as projects, minutes of the sessions, progress and final reports, evidence of the tasks carried out, etc.

Once the data collection process was completed, they were categorised in an attempt to establish a sufficiently broad and flexible system. 'The cardinal rule of coding in qualitative analysis is to make the codes fit the data and not vice versa' (Taylor & Bogdan, 2010, p. 174). Therefore, the process of data collection and data analysis have been closely linked in this qualitative study. The themes that emerged from the interviews were documented by reading field notes and transcripts, which were taken as a starting point to reflect on the meaning and interpretation of the data obtained.

Computerised systems were an essential aid in this process. We used one of the most powerful computer programmes for the management of qualitative data; ATLAS.ti (version 9 for Windows).

The results presented below mainly use the language of the participating teachers and include those extracts that were most illustrative as evidence to support and justify the interpretations made. These quotations are accompanied by a reference to their location in the settings where they were produced.

Research is usually completed when a report is submitted. However, reality always leads to new questions and opens the way for discussion and new findings. That is what this research aims to do, to become a learning process that is enriched by dialogue and joint reflection to delve deeper into the complex reality of school-based training.

3. RESULTS

Lifelong learning involves fostering a continuous attitude of enquiry, research, analysis and search. This is not merely an added aspect, but a constitutive and

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intrinsic element of teaching identity. To improve education, to feel happy and at ease in the profession, we need competent teachers, who are willing to participate in this form of training in order to transform their educational practices.

> I think it is intrinsic to our profession (...). I believe that lifelong learning is the only way to be alive in education, to feel happy in education and to feel that you are at ease in education and that this is a worthwhile profession. Otherwise, pack your bags and go somewhere else (Interview Z, 29:5, 22 and 29:7, 26).

3.1. *In-school training that contributes to the development of students' competences*

One of the reasons why the schools that took part in this study recognised the need for in-school training is because of the legislative changes that are taking place and with the introduction of key competences as an essential element in the primary school curriculum. This regulatory change becomes a first-order necessity for implementing in-school training courses. It arises from a more 'vertical' diagnosis, which looks outwards in order to grasp and understand the demands of the social environment, as the organisational context of a school cannot be separate from the social demands placed on it.

> So, in principle, let's say it wasn't something that they were thinking about, but let's say that the world around them was leading them to 'we have to know what this competence thing is about' (Interview Pm, 24:21, 134).

> To integrate key competences into the curriculum and analyse their implications for the school's educational projects (Objective 2 of School Education Project 1).

In order to meet this need, the Regional Department of Education and Sport of the Andalusian Regional Government has incorporated the 'Curriculum by competences' module into the Seneca information system. This is the application used by the Regional Department of Education and Sport to enable teachers to carry out all the management processes involved in their teaching. This module helps with the programming of the teaching and learning process and making decisions in the evaluation process. The use of this module is associated with training focused on curricular inclusion of key competences, a pyramidal or cascade training structure that we call Phase I. In order to reach as many teachers as possible, a small group of teachers from each school are initially trained and then go on to teach their own colleagues. Phase I was attended by four of the five schools participating in this research. This is how one of the participating schools describes the experience.

> This resulted from a proposal from the Government of Andalusia that some schools could provide network-based training, or rather pyramid-style. So they trained some of the teachers, and then those teachers trained the rest (...). So the first course happened at the end of the school year, it was practically rushed, because it was in April, May

and June (...). But ok, it was the first one and then we did it here in the school. As a result, an in-school training programme was proposed for the following year, and we continued what we had started to work on (Interview J, 13:9, 58-64).

Phase I was a first step. However, teachers considered it necessary to continue working on competencies, and this was the main reason why they set up an in-school training programme for the following year. As one of the teachers pointed out, it is clear that a methodological approach based on key competences entails important changes in teaching practices, in teaching and learning methods, and in school organisation and culture. In fact, in most schools, an internal debate had already started around the importance of competence-based work and project-based learning methodology, especially at the early childhood education stage. This diagnosis is clearly 'horizontal' in approach; it involves looking inwards to critically evaluate the internal organisation and the degree to which teachers are trained to foster the development of competences among their pupils. As can be seen in the following statement, teachers reflected on the importance of ensuring that high-quality methodological approaches are implemented.

> Because that debate was already here. Because fortunately in early childhood education we have some highly competent colleagues who have been working on competences, on projects, for several years, in their own way (...). So, there it was, we had our own internal debate. You would at sit down and chat with a colleague, you then with another, I think this, she says that, this is not so complicated, this is not so, and then there were some of us who were 'textbook fiends' who wouldn't do anything else. And then this came up. I guess project work was becoming fashionable. This is out there, do we do it or not? Come on, let's do it (Interview Fj, 10:17, 89).

3.2. *In-school training aimed at designing integrated teaching units*

Letting go of the textbook requires losing one's fear and insecurity and taking control of one's own personal and professional development process. When teachers stick to a textbook, they lose autonomy, creativity and decision-making power. We know that textbooks determine the activities and the teaching-learning strategies used, and they establish which cultural themes are worthwhile, and set the evaluation process. In our opinion, they de-skill teachers and impose a certain work pace on them. The strict use of textbooks turns teachers into figures who are at the opposite end of the following description: members of the teaching staff capable of identifying what happens in the classroom, making decisions, managing the curriculum, expanding the range of teaching resources used, and designing and assessing the development of student competences.

> ... it was a bit about losing your fear of that, of letting go of the traditional methodology; from following the textbook and being conditioned by what the publishing house

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wanted to say and organised in the way they preferred or thought appropriate, you have to be the one who basically takes the reins of your class and of the curriculum as such (...). And this is what you have to work on, so that you are freer, and you are not so dependent on the language sessions, the maths sessions, on the fact that I have to cover this subject and then that subject. Removing some of the anxiety that comes from the methods and to work in a way that they find much more motivating, because you can tell, it's more enriching for everyone. So that's basically where this was coming from (Interview P, 22:15, 67).

The need to design integrated teaching units, understood as planning tools, is closely linked to a more comprehensive approach to work, as competence-based learning must be approached from all areas of knowledge (schools' observation journal). This interdisciplinary and cross-cutting character requires integrated learning tasks to be designed that involve several subject areas. From our perspective, this integrated character promotes more relevant cultural contents for students and stimulates their commitment to their environment, encouraging more active, responsible and critical participation.

> Because we wanted to make it more coherent, it was like having a cross-cutting thread that would cover all the subjects and be able to do more comprehensive work (Interview Me, 19:22, 134).

> The most significant achievements they highlighted included that in-school training enabled them to provide them with some foundations for a methodology based on the development of integrated teaching units and project-based learning for future academic years. This takes into account the importance of developing all the key competences, of using contents more comprehensively for pupils to learn them in a contextualised way (Final Report of the Coordination, School 4).

3.3. *In-school training that promotes a culture of collaboration*

In addition, opting for the design of integrated teaching units helps teachers to feel that they are part of a team with common objectives, working in a cooperative and responsible manner. It breaks down the professional isolation between different teachers due to the artificial separation of subjects, as they can plan in a highly coordinated way. Therefore, as this early childhood teacher said, this in-school training project is based on the need to get to know each other professionally and on greater openness and interaction, fostering collegiality and a culture of collaboration in the school.

> Well, there was a need to get to know each other, not only as colleagues, because we knew each other, but we didn't know each other in the classroom, we didn't know how each of us worked; deep down we didn't know each other professionally. And then that meant that the rest of the pupils in the school also popped round the early

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childhood classroom, saw how they worked, and at the same time the little ones were in the classrooms of the older kids (...). It was like that, like a need to open up the classrooms, to open up the spaces (Interview El, 7:24, 141-143).

Another valuable contribution of in-school training, as highlighted by some of the teachers interviewed, is that it enables people to move from an isolated experience to institution-wide innovation, since the exchange of experiences, communication and reflection among peers fosters educational updating and innovation. This is why they call for in-school training, as it is a more participative and less individualistic process, which is clearly more connected to the problems of the institution and the education community.

At school-wide level, the most significant methodological change was teachers working in groups on a coordinated basis (Final report of the coordination, School 2).

As training is ultimately linked to the school itself, it favours a suitable climate for teachers to reflect on their practice, examining their implicit theories, conceptions and attitudes. The school as a space for continuous questioning, far from being an environment where work is done in an individualistic manner. It is a setting to generate changes that promote cooperation and participation, so that it can have a clear impact on and repercussions for the improvement of educational practice.

Look, if a teacher comes individually, takes a course on an individual basis, then that has no repercussions for that school. Things need moving, whole schools should be changed, not just one teacher. Because that changes their classroom, but what about the rest? So, I think that teacher training should take place in schools (Interview L, 14:7, 44).

3.4. *In-school training that avoids the exclusion of students with illnesses*

The fifth school that took part in this study called for in-school training to contribute to making the invisible visible; they called for an approach that helped to avoid the exclusion of pupils with illnesses. The in-school training ensured that students who were unable to attend school due to health problems (whether for reasons of chronic or transitory, serious or degenerative illness, trauma, etc.) were seen. A form of training within the institution that highlights the right of pupils to continue their educational process during their stay in hospital or convalescence at home.

Because we wanted it to be about visibility, which as you know, is very much a word of mine. What is not seen, does not exist. So, the hospital and home classroom don't exist for the Regional Department because they're not seen. What we wanted is for it to be seen for training purposes are well (Interview T, 27:23, 102).

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The teachers in this school identified the need to draw up a common comprehensive care project with the aim of unifying the educational service, for in hospital and at home. In this way, the educational care received by the pupils from the time when they are admitted to hospital until they continue their care at home is consistent. Until now, the two projects were independent. The daily work with pupils with illnesses highlights the necessary interrelation between both settings to ensure their overall development, regardless of the physical space where their educational care actually takes place.

> To design a Comprehensive Project that aligns educational care in hospital and at home and makes it more visible (Objective 1 of the In-School Training Project 5).

The in-school training project brought the two services into alignment, as they formed a single team that made it possible to have greater coordination between the teaching staff of the hospital and home education care service. It also established fluid channels of communication between two very close situations: the hospital classrooms and home care.

> This need was based on the need to give consistent educational care to students who had illnesses and were in hospital, to ensure that the same teacher at the hospital could be there for them in home care when they were discharged from hospital. So, there was consistency there. Before this, they were separate jobs, so teachers only did either home care or hospital care, and the hospital teacher could not go out to the home. So, this proposal was made to ensure that there would be consistency throughout the whole process and that there would not be so many changes (Interview S, 26:36, 120).

3.5. *Ultimately, in-school training is linked to the needs of each school*

From our point of view, it is important to bear in mind that the process of in-school training is clearly linked to the needs detected in the school's self-evaluation and improvement processes. For this reason, it is essential that accurate diagnoses are carried out; this can enable participatory processes that involve the entire educational community and identify the challenges on which efforts should be focused. This means that it is necessary to prioritise, to establish what to concentrate on, based on an accurate diagnosis of the challenges in each school; and it involves trying to avoid the dispersion that comes from trying to operate on too many fronts at the same time. This is what brings harmony and coherence to the joint efforts in the in-school training project, so that they can all point in the same direction.

If we are able to understand our own needs and take them as a starting point, we will be in a better position to focus on improving what is worthwhile. Establishing a diagnostic culture is the first step for schools, identifying the main shortcomings and opportunities for improvement. A good diagnosis is needed so that in-school training can have the greatest possible impact on improving educational processes.

In this decision-making process, it is important to take into account the significance of the problem or need in question, its innovative potential, the effort required, and whether there is a leader or a team who are committed to carrying it out.

4. DISCUSSION

According to Imbernón (2017), these valuable teachers 'are the best we have ever had because of their training and dedication' (p. 107). In fact, they show an attitude of openness and motivation towards lifelong learning, and in particular, towards in-school training and the professional change in which they are immersed. 'This aspiration for professional improvement is the driving force behind the search for change that fosters breaking with self-limiting beliefs and developing professional competences' (Giner, 2012, p. 42).

To conclude, firstly, it can be stated that it is teachers themselves who demand in-school training in order to meet the new demands arising from European and Spanish legislation regarding the introduction of competency-based work in the primary school curriculum. Despite the fact that the education authorities offer training, teachers believe that it is essential to continue to study this subject in greater depth. It is clear to them that changing school culture is difficult. It takes time and consistent effort to ensure that competency-based work becomes an integral part of schools. For this reason, they see in-school training as an opportunity to enhance pupils' competences. What began as a legislative change became a need that was brought into the schools by using this type of training.

Secondly, and closely related to the previous point, we highlight the need for teachers to introduce important changes in teaching methodology in order to contribute to the development of student competences. These changes involve a different way of understanding the teaching role and the teaching and learning process as a whole. These concerns are implemented through the design of integrated teaching units, with the intention of setting textbooks aside and working in a more comprehensive manner. The design of integrated learning tasks based on different areas of knowledge fosters the use of contents that are relevant to pupils, pupils' commitment to their environment, and more active, responsible and critical participation.

Thirdly, it can be concluded that these integrated teaching units contribute to breaking the isolation of teachers caused by the artificial separation of subjects. They also foster greater openness, collegiality, and a culture of collaboration in the schools that participated in this research project. Teachers working collaboratively, based on mutual support, shared responsibilities, systematic reflection (Krichesky and Murillo, 2018) and peer feedback (Roselló and De la Iglesia, 2021) are essential aspects for promoting innovation and improving teaching practices.

And, fourthly, the in-school training programme within the hospital and home education care service contributed to giving visibility to the right of pupils to continue

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their educational process during their stay in hospital or convalescence in their own home. The teachers in this school identified the need to draw up a common comprehensive care project with the aim of providing consistent educational care in hospital and at home. The lack of training of in-service teachers who teach in hospital classrooms and at pupils' homes has been highlighted as an aspect to be improved in some relevant studies (Lizasoáin, 2021; Muñoz, 2016; Ocampo, 2019; Ruíz, García and Ochoa, 2020).

A good diagnosis is essential in promoting that in-school training can have the greatest possible impact on educational processes. Some studies have been conducted that support the transferability of in-school training. Firstly, because it involves helping, connecting and collaborating with colleagues; and secondly, because of its ability to adjust to the needs of teachers, increasing their motivation to develop their professional competences (Aneas, 2018; Aneas, Sánchez & Sánchez, 2019; González, Alonso & Berrocal, 2017; López, Feijoo, Novel & Moral, 2017; Tomás-Folch & Duran-Bellonch, 2017).

The in-school training process was closely connected to the needs identified in the self-assessment and improvement processes carried out in schools; in other words, to a diagnostic culture that involved the entire teaching staff. As participants reported, their efforts were focused on improving any shortcomings or aspects that posed opportunities for improvement. The two diagnoses presented above are complementary and necessary. The first is outward looking and has more to do with the demands of the new educational legislation, whereas the second is inward looking and is based on a more introspective view of the school itself. Both diagnoses led the five participating schools to consider in-school training to promote their projects and identify the challenges on which to focus their efforts, as well as taking any opportunities for growth and professional development.

A greater level of teacher professionalisation can be achieved through in-school training projects where teachers decide what training they need in order to meet the unique situations they experience in the real context of their classroom and school. The starting point is addressing any questions that emerge from their practice. As Esteve, Melief and Alsina (2010) stated, 'trainees are seen as individuals with their own identity; this encourages autonomy and a self-regulated construction of professional development' (p. 35).

Undoubtedly, assuming that teacher training has to come from schools involves a commitment to the professionalisation of teachers, to recognising their ability to make their own decisions and to the autonomy of schools (Marcelo, 1995, p. 361); conversely, this entails avoiding 'training for submission', which annuls the subject in the process of creating their own professional knowledge (Martínez, 2004, pp. 130-131). Teachers are conceived as people who are able to reflect on their own teaching and implement what Schön (1992) called 'reflection-in-action'. A type of reflection that moves away from being a mere instrument for measuring effectiveness

in the classroom and leads us to moments of 'good teaching' (Brady, 2020, p. 59). It is by reflecting on their practice, making a diagnosis of real problems, transforming unconscious aspects of teaching into conscious ones, that teachers develop their professionalism further, and they enhance their essential qualities by developing a positive sense of identity and mission (Korthagen, 2004; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005; Korthagen, 2010).

In-school training links training to a work project. It is not a question of training people in order to subsequently develop a project for change, but on the contrary, of designing an innovative project and having the necessary training to carry it out (Imbernón, 2007, p. 112). As Vera (2006, p. 47) noted, the life of groups requires projects that fill it with meaning, in which the whole educational community can participate, and educational networks can be created.

To conclude, lifelong learning is an unescapable strategic tool for improving the quality of education; and within lifelong learning, in-school training is an ideal way of creating a habit of constant, dynamic and progressive learning among the whole (or a good part of) team of school professionals. This goes beyond the external, well-meaning technical guidelines which fail to take into account the specific situation and needs of each teacher's individual practice. In-school training is a form of training with great potential, as it is based on the needs of schools, involves the participation of practically the entire teaching staff, and can involve different education professionals, reaffirms the professional identity of teachers, and overcomes the individualistic approach, by addressing the educational situations in, and adapting to, each school as the main agent of educational transformation and innovation.

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