Abstract

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Learning the job of being a teacher

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How can we ensure that teacher training is carried out successfully?

By learning on the job, helped by experienced colleagues, because is it only on the chalk face that one gets to grips with the realities of the job?

By solid grounding in a subject, because one can only teach well what one masters?

The results of French and international research show, however, that learning to be a teacher is far from being reduced to this alternative alone and that the move from academic and didactic knowledge to professional and educational practice is not at all a natural one.

Most countries have expressed the desire to bring teacher training closer to the university, to provide a more scientific basis for this training, thereby gaining knowledge for practice backed up by research.

They all also note the need for a contribution from teachers in the field, who provide their knowledge of the practice.

Attempts at standardisation have shown their limits, whether by defining models of training content or technical skills, supposed to meet with all teaching situations.

Consequently, international research agrees on the importance of a living presence, by the side of academics, of trainers who are both practitioners and researchers, and tutors who act as models to the future teachers while maintaining an outdistanced relationship with experience.

This implies that training should be run, as far as possible, as an integrated sandwich course alternating between teaching practice and the teacher-training institution (learning knowledge), so that the future teacher develops reflexive practices which are not a mere succession of disembodied theory followed by practice in the field with no retrospect.

What is at issue is the construction of a form of teaching professionalism which combines disciplinary knowledge, professional knowledge, competencies and even an ethical, cultural, institutional and organisational dimension, for which the need is felt today more than ever before.

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