

## EXAMINING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF HUNGARIAN TEACHERS IN ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** This study presents the partial results of a comprehensive research on the professional development of Hungarian teachers in Romania which were gained through adapting and complementing the questions related to the professional development of the 2018 OECD TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey). From 15 counties of Romania, 500 Hungarian primary and secondary school teachers<sup>1</sup> completed the online questionnaire. The forms and topics of professional development were studied on a 5-year research period, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic (2017–2021). The results show that the most popular forms of professional development were attending training courses, reading professional literature, and visiting online professional social networking sites. Among the topics of professional development activities subject-specific knowledge and the development of competences necessary for the teaching of the subject were dominated. Teachers found those training courses the most efficient that were coherent and provided opportunities for the practical implementation of new ideas, for active learning and cooperation. In only a few cases were found differences between the opinions of primary and secondary school teachers, and between groups according to teaching experience.

**Keywords:** professional development, Hungarian teachers in Romania, OECD TALIS, teacher training

### 1. Introduction

A fundamental feature of quality education is the support of students' efficient learning (Sági, 2011; Szivák et al., 2020; Yoon et al., 2007). Student achievement is largely determined by the quality of teaching and the level of development of teacher competences (Borg 2018; Hattie, 2011). Previous research on teachers' professional development emphasises that teachers' participation in formal and informal professional development programmes can improve their pedagogical knowledge, teaching practice, and thus the learning and development of their students (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Desimone et al., 2002; Garet et al., 2001; Kwakman, 2003; Rapos et al., 2022). Analysis of the results of international surveys may also contribute to the improvement of the quality of education. Such a survey is, for example, the OECD TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) focusing on the conditions of the teaching-learning process and on teachers' opinions.

In this paper, we present a phase of a larger research project in which we adapted questions from the 2018 OECD TALIS survey (Ainley & Carstens, 2018) to examine the professional development of teachers from Romania teaching in Hungarian language. Based on the results of our questionnaire survey we highlight the forms and topics of Hungarian teachers' professional development in Romania as well as those features of training courses that had the largest positive effect on the teachers' teaching practices.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: In Romania primary school comprises Grades 0–4, while secondary education refers to Grades 5–8, respectively 5–12. In the present study, we use the term primary school teacher (PST) for teachers in Grades 0–4, and the term secondary school teacher (SST) for those teaching in Grades 5–8 as well as in high schools, Grades 9–12.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1. The importance of professional development and training courses in the teaching practice

Continuous professional development and, as part of it, teachers' in-service training are key factors in efficient educational systems (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2015). In-service training activities provide teachers the opportunity to develop their pedagogical competences which are beneficial from the perspective of their learning, their teaching practices, and the development of their students (Desimone, 2009; Hattie, 2009), and they have a positive effect on improving students' performance (Yoon et al. 2007). Efficient training programmes have a positive effect on teachers' learning and thinking (Borko, 2004; Garet et al., 2001; Youngs, 2001), and on their in-class practices (Fischer et al., 2018). Professional development largely contributes to the prevention of teacher burnout (Kyriacou, 2001).

Research on professional development focuses on how teachers learn and apply their newly acquired knowledge in practice (Avalos, 2011). Models presenting the process of professional development, however, do not explain why some teachers easily integrate into their teaching what they have learnt at training courses, while others return to their previous teaching practices without making use of the newly acquired knowledge (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009). Meijs et al. (2016) used a questionnaire to study how teachers related to social learning and whether they considered this form adequate to promote their professional development. The results of the study showed that 30% of participants had a very positive attitude, 66.4% had a somewhat positive attitude, and 3.6% responded that learning built on collaboration with peers was not adequate for them. In a case study, Owen (2015) examined the professional development of teachers through professional collaboration in three innovative schools in Australia. According to his results, teachers emphasized the importance of teamwork and they considered that collaboration with peers, and work in professional learning communities contributed to changing their views on teaching.

Educational systems throughout the world aspire to find the most efficient mechanisms for the implementation of in-service training courses (Kraft et al., 2018). Specialized policies have been continuously studying how the forms of professional development, among them participation at in-service training courses affect teachers' teaching practices, students' performance, and whether certain types of activities are more efficient than others (Desimone, 2009; Hattie, 2009; Timperley et al., 2007; Yoon et al., 2007). The OECD TALIS international survey also examines teachers' professional development by providing teachers the opportunity to express their opinions.

### 2.2. The most important features of the TALIS 2018 survey

The OECD TALIS is the largest international teacher research. It is a questionnaire-based survey asking teachers and heads of institutions about the conditions of teaching and learning, about the attitude to teaching, their teaching practices as well as about the specificities of school management. The survey population consists of teachers and administrators working at level 2 of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). This level comprises teachers in primary schools, Grades 5–8. The survey is done every five years, the first having been conducted in 2008. In the 2018 survey there participated 48 countries out of which 31 were OECD members, and 23 countries were members of the European Union. In Romania, data collection took place in March 2018 under the coordination of the National Evaluation and Examination Center (CNEE) in 200 randomly selected educational institutions, with 20 teachers per school.

The survey aims to provide internationally comparable data in areas relevant to policy development, so it focuses on the characteristics of schools, teachers, and teaching that most influence student performance. The interpretative framework of the TALIS 2018 research (Ainley & Carstens, 2018) emphasizes the effects of continuous professional development on teaching practices and on teachers' staying on their career paths. The TALIS 2018 studied teacher's preparedness to teach, the opportunities for in-service training, their types, content, the participation percentage at such training courses, demand for them and the areas to be developed during such courses. The results provide an opportunity for

international comparative analysis and interpretation of the position of countries in the international arena (OECD, 2019, 2020).

### 2.3. The Romanian results of TALIS 2018 concerning professional development

According to the results of the TALIS 2018 (Balázsi & Vadász, 2019; OECD, 2019, 2020), in Romania teachers' average age was 43 years, which did not differ significantly from the average of OECD countries (44.1 years), or that of the European Union (44.5 years). The percentage of teachers over the age of 50 was 26.2%, and a large majority of teachers were women (73%).

Among the competences assessed, the majority of teachers considered themselves well or very well prepared to manage classroom work (82.1%), to teach in such learning environments where there were students of different abilities (76.6%), to use ICT devices in teaching (69.5%), but a much lower proportion (42.6%) felt prepared to teach in a multicultural environment.

According to the results of the TALIS 2018, in the OECD countries participating in the research 94% of teachers had participated at some kind of professional training course in the course of the year preceding the questionnaire-based survey. In the case of Romania, this proportion was 89% in the case of teachers, while regarding headmasters it was 97%. The results mirror the fact that professional development has become a key factor both in the career paths of headmasters and teachers. The responses have also shown that in Romania a teacher teaching in Grades 5–8 participates in a yearly average of 4.2 activities of different types that aid professional development.

In the OECD countries, the most popular activities aiding professional development were in-person participation at training courses and seminars (76%) and reading specialized literature (72%) in the course during the year before the survey. Less than half of the teachers were involved in additional activities to support professional development mentioned in the survey. In Romania, most teachers participated in an hourly visit or counselling as part of a formal procedure (62.3%), followed by reading specialized literature (59.6%). Less than half of the teachers participated in-person at training courses or seminars (47.7%), at educational conferences (42.3%), training to obtain a professional qualification (43.9%), classroom visits to another school (40.3%) or in the activities of a professional network of teachers (43.3%). Of the forms of professional development listed, online courses (24.5%) and visits to various public and non-governmental organizations (19.4) were the least frequently mentioned.

The usefulness of in-service training was positively assessed by teachers. In Romania, 81% of participants said that in-service training has had a positive impact on their teaching practice, which is not significantly different from the OECD average.

On average, teachers in OECD countries tended to participate in subject- or content-oriented in-service training activities focusing on specific subject areas, subject pedagogy, and general pedagogical topics. More seldom did they participate in such training programmes that focused on practical skills and tools for handling concrete in-classroom situations. The topics of professional development activities in Romania were also mostly related to the teaching of subjects: knowledge linked to subject areas (71.1%), teacher competences related to teaching a given subject (72.9%), familiarity with the curriculum and the subject material (66.3%). At least half of the teachers participated in activities that focused on different teacher competences: ICT skills in teaching (51.8%), developing cross-curricular skills (52.0%), assessing students' performance (73.9%), analysis and use of student's performance assessment (59.1%), learning management (61.3%), individual education (51.9%), cooperation with parents (53.7%). They were least concerned with teaching pupils with special educational needs (32.2%), communicating with people from other cultures (28.0%), teaching in a multicultural or multilingual environment (22.3%), and school organization and administration (19.4%).

The survey has also shown that concerning the average of OECD countries teachers would most need professional development in teaching pupils with special educational needs, using ICT tools in teaching, teaching in multicultural or multilingual environments, and communicating with people from other cultures or countries. The opinion of teachers from Romania was also similar, a third of them expressed their need for professional development in these areas.

The results of the TALIS 2018 provided useful information for the Romanian educational policy and may serve as starting points for further national surveys which could provide a more detailed image of the situation of teachers and teaching and about the areas to be developed.

### 3. Presentation of the research

#### 3.1. Aims, research questions

In our research, we investigate the professional development of teachers teaching in Hungarian language in Romania and the factors determining it, the opportunities for in-service training in Hungarian language in Romania, the participation rate in in-service training courses, and the content of such courses for the period 2017–2021. In this study, we focus on that part of the conducted questionnaire-based research that refers to teachers' professional development.

The aim was to explore the forms of professional development before and during the COVID-19 pandemic and to examine what topics were included in professional development activities and what characterized training that teachers found useful. We formulated the following research questions:

RQ1: To develop professionally, what kind of professional activities did teachers participate in between 2017 and 2021?

RQ2: Are there any differences between these activities before and during the COVID-19 pandemic?

RQ3: Is there a difference in professional development activities by type of training or professional experience?

RQ4: What were the topics of teachers' professional activities?

RQ5: What were the topics of teachers' professional activities?

Based on previous research (Sági, 2015), and the results of the TALIS 2018 (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2020; Balázs & Vadász, 2019) we hypothesize that teachers teaching in the Hungarian language in Romania will rather identify participation at in-service training courses and reading specialized literature as main activities aiding their professional development. We further hypothesize that out of the different forms of in-service training, they would prioritize in-person activities, while online courses and seminars tend to gain ground during the pandemic due to their easier accessibility. We also assume that respondents would rate the practical applicability and active learning as the most positive of the characteristics of in-service training programmes.

#### 3.2. Methods

##### 3.2.1. Sample

Participants in the survey were those teachers – primary and secondary school teachers – who were registered in the database of the Hungarian Teacher's Association of Romania as teachers teaching in Hungarian language. As compared to the TALIS, we surveyed a larger group, the teachers constituting the sample working on the ISCED 1 (primary school, Grades 0–4), ISCED 2 (secondary school, Grades 5–8), and the ISCED 3 (high school, Grades 9–12) levels.

The questionnaire was filled in by 500 teachers which constitutes 12% of the invited teachers. Gender ratio: 433 females (86.6%) and 67 males (13.4%). The average age of the sample was 45.43 years, and the average teaching experience was 22.13 years. In terms of didactic classification, the sample was made up of 182 primary school teachers (36.4%) and 318 secondary school teachers (63.6%). The majority of the respondents had been teaching for more than 10 years and had a Didactic Degree I (Table 1). In Romania, the “continuous training of teaching staff includes professional development and career development according to art. 242, para. (1) from the National Education Law no. 1/1011, with subsequent amendments and additions. The evolution in the teaching career is achieved through the Didactic Degree II and the Didactic Degree I, certification exams of different levels of didactic competence” (Ministry of Education, n.d., para 2–3.).

Table 1. Distribution of teachers completing the questionnaire by didactic degree and professional experience

Didactic degree	Professional experience			Total (N = 500)
	0–10 years (n = 64)	11–25 years (n = 252)	>25 years (n = 184)	
PhD degree	2	7	6	15
Didactic degree I	-	176	166	342
Didactic degree II.	19	45	4	68
No didactic degree	16	5	-	21
National final exam in education	27	19	8	54

More than half of the respondents (56.6%) lived in a village or small town (Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by settlement

Type of settlement	Respondents	
	No.	%
Village (under 5 thousand inhabitants)	174	34.8
Small town (between 5-20 thousand inhabitants)	108	21.8
Medium-sized city (under 20-100 thousand inhabitants)	139	27.8
Large city (over 100 thousand inhabitants)	79	15.8

Table 3 shows that a total of 15 counties responded, with the largest number (37.6%) coming from Harghita County.

Table 3. Distribution of responding teachers by county

County	Respondents		County	Respondents		County	Respondents	
	No.	%		No.	%		No.	%
Harghita	188	37.6	Kolozs	35	7.0	Temes	6	1.2
Szatmár	62	12.4	Szilágy	30	6.0	Hunyad	4	0.8
Kovácszna	58	11.6	Brassó	19	3.6	Beszterce-N.	2	0.4
Bihar	38	7.6	Arad	14	2.8	Szeben	1	0.1
Maros	36	7.2	Fehér	6	1.2	Bukarest	1	0.1

### 3.2.2. Measuring tool

The part of the questionnaire presented in this study contains three adapted and some additional items from the TALIS 2018 survey questionnaire:

#### *Forms of professional development*

This unit includes 9 items that assess whether teachers participated in the specified professional development activities in the five years preceding the survey. We divided the surveyed period into two parts: the period preceding the COVID-19 pandemic (2017–2019), and the one during the COVID-19 pandemic (2019–2021). In all cases, answers could be given on a dichotomous scale (yes/no).

#### *Topics of activities aiding professional development*

This 14-item part asks whether the given topics were included in teachers' professional development

activities during the survey period (2017–2021). Responses could be given on a dichotomous scale (yes/no). Besides all these, teachers could also phrase topics that were not featured in the list.

#### *Making use of in-service training in teaching*

This part contains 13 items and it focuses on the features of in-service training courses considered to have had the strongest positive impact on teachers. Responses could be given on a dichotomous scale (yes/no).

### 3.2.3. Data collection and analysis

The survey was conducted online in March 2022. Completion was voluntary and anonymous. Data were analysed using SPSS 23.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Forms of professional development

Figure 1 shows that in the examined period, almost all teachers in the total sample (86–93.6%) had attended in-person or online training, read pedagogical literature, or visited social networking sites specifically designed for teachers' professional development. More than half of the respondents (64.4%) had participated in educational conferences where teachers or researchers presented their results and questions related to education were debated.

A much smaller proportion (36.8%) had received formal training, visited other schools, and observed the work of teachers there (45.4%). They were less likely to have carried out observation visits to public institutions or non-governmental organisations (38.8%). During the examined five years a third of the teachers (32.2%) conducted peer and/or self-observation in coaching-based programmes as part of a formal school arrangement.

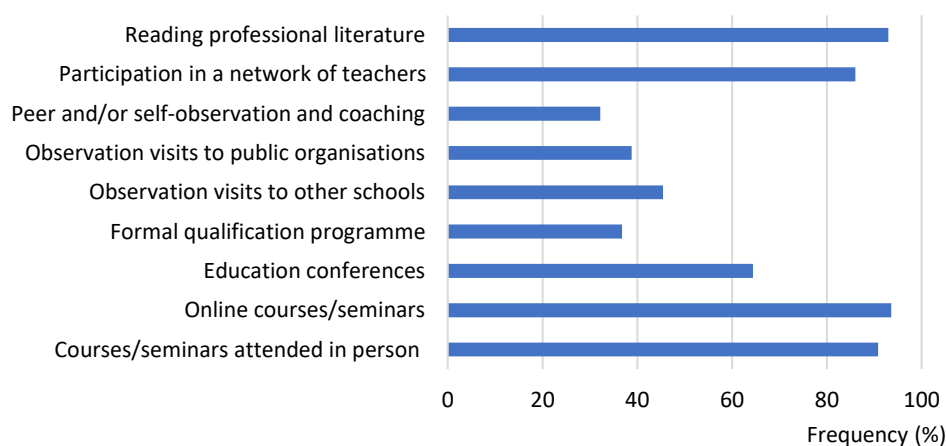


Figure 1. Frequency of professional development activities for the period 2017–2021

Figure 2 shows in more detail the results on forms of professional development, comparing a subsample of primary and secondary school teachers before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of the pandemic, the large majority of in-service training courses were implemented online and we can observe an increase in visits to educational social networking sites during this period. The occasions when teachers could carry out observations in other institutions became even rarer. Of all the forms of professional development, the pandemic had the least impact on reading specialized literature. 70.9% of primary school teachers and 65.1% of secondary school teachers said they had read educational literature before and during the pandemic as well.

Three significant differences were found between the distribution of responses of primary school teachers and secondary school teachers based on the chi-square test. Among the primary school teachers,

there was a larger number who had participated in person at training courses, but less of them had implemented peer- and self-assessment. Primary school teachers were also more likely to have visited professional social networking sites during the pandemic. No significant differences were found between the three categories of teaching experience in any of the professional development activities.

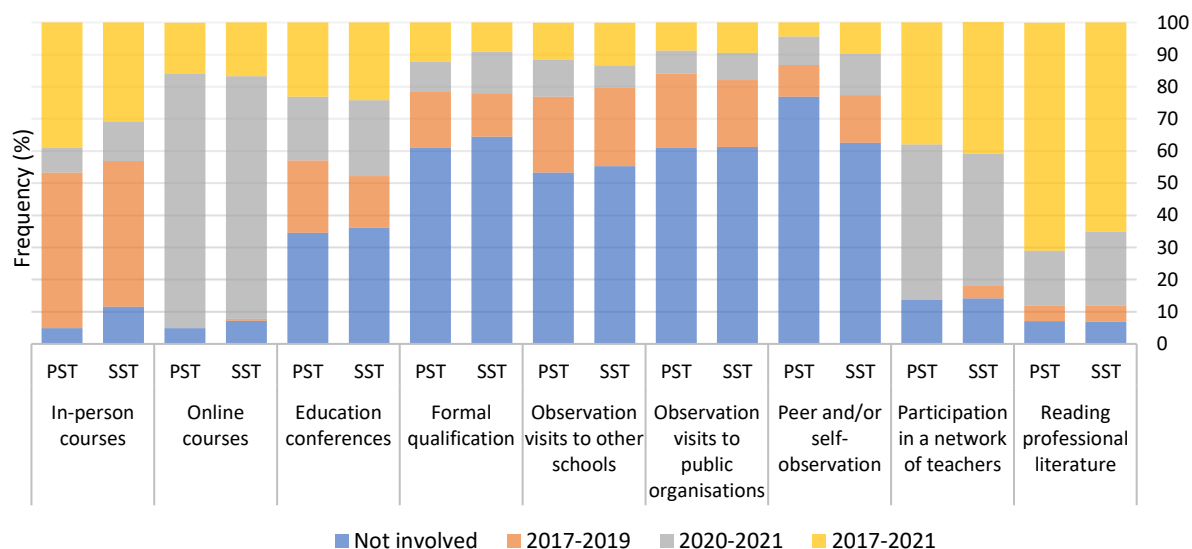


Figure 2. Frequency of professional development activities for a sub-sample of PST (primary school teachers) and SST (secondary school teachers) before and during the COVID-19 pandemic and jointly in both periods

#### 4.2. Topics of professional development in the period 2017–2021

Table 4 shows that the large majority of teachers had participated in such professional activities that were focused on subject-specific knowledge and the development of competences necessary for teaching that given subject (for example, ICT skills, and methods of assessing students), as well as activities that aided the development of students' skills and thinking. Approximately half of the teachers were involved with methods of getting to know and individually develop students and with the analysis and usage of students' assessments. At the same time, less than a third of them had met tasks related to the management and administration of schools or questions concerning multicultural or multilingual teaching and communication with people coming from different cultural backgrounds.

In the distribution of subjects, the proportions between primary school teachers and secondary school teachers were similar in most cases. However, regarding two topics the differences were significant. While 70.3% of primary school teachers participated in professional activities for pupils with special educational needs, only 49.1% of secondary school teachers did the same. The situation is reversed when communicating with people from different cultures, with secondary school teachers (32.4%) encountering this issue more often than primary school teachers (15.9%).

In some cases, there were also differences when considering the categories of teaching experience. Teachers with more than 25 years of experience were most concerned with subject materials, curricula, and students with special educational needs. Those with at least 10 years of experience were more interested in methods of assessing students, class-teacher responsibilities, and teacher-parent relations. However, teachers with less experience were more often involved in activities to develop students' cross-curricular skills and to communicate with people from different cultures.

In addition to the topics identified in the TALIS 2018 survey, as shown in Table 4, teachers also identified additional topics that they had encountered in the context of in-service training. The distribution of the responses in the total sample (N = 500) is as follows: experiential education (3.2%), bullying (2.4%), play education (1.8%), drama education (1.6%), folklore (1.2%), CRED (Relevant Curriculum, Open Education for All) training (0.8%), teaching in integrated classes (0.6%).

Table 4. Frequency of training topics by training level and teaching experience categories

Topic	Training level		Teaching experience		
	Primary school teachers (%)	Secondary school teachers (%)	0-10 years (%)	11-25 years (%)	>25 years (%)
Knowledge and understanding of my subject field(s)	76.9	77.4	71.9	78.1	77.8
Pedagogical competencies in teaching my subject field(s)	89.0	89.0	89.1	89.2	88.6
Knowledge of the curriculum	72.5	63.2	60.9	62.2	74.6
Student assessment practices	84.1	79.6	76.6	81.7	82.2
ICT (information and communication technology) skills for teaching	87.4	84.3	81.3	86.9	84.9
Student behaviour and classroom management	57.1	58.5	46.9	55.8	64.9
School management and administration	22.0	27.4	9.4	28.3	27.0
Approaches to individualised learning	61.0	61.3	57.8	62.2	61.1
Teaching students with special needs	70.3	49.1	45.3	54.6	63.8
Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting	31.9	32.1	31.3	29.1	36.2
Teaching cross-curricular skills (e.g. creativity, critical thinking, problem solving)	69.8	72.02	71.9	77.7	62.2
Analysis and use of student assessments	58.2	61.0	56.3	61.4	59.5
Teacher-parent/guardian co-operation	53.8	42.1	35.9	46.6	49.7
Communicating with people from different cultures or countries	15.9	32.4	29.7	25.9	25.9

### 4.3. Making use of in-service training in teaching

Among the forms of professional development, teachers' views on in-service training were surveyed in more detail. We asked them to indicate the topic of that in-service training course that had the largest positive effect on their teaching practice in the surveyed period. Altogether there were 322 responses that we distributed into different categories (Table 5). Most teachers mentioned training about teaching methodologies, but there were also highlighted several topics linked to education. Some respondents did not mention topics but rather specific in-service training (e.g. CRED, Bolyai Summer Academy, training courses necessary for their career development).

Table 5. The topic of in-service training that teachers considered to have had the greatest positive impact on their teaching practice

The topic of in-service training	Number of mentions
Teaching methods (experiential education, drama-based pedagogy, game-based learning, cooperative learning)	138
Subject-specific pedagogy (singing and music, history, Romanian language, Hungarian literature, traditions, health education)	52
Developing cognitive skills (e.g. creativity, problem solving)	14
Education, developing social skills (e.g. bullying, classroom management, team-building, emotional intelligence, burnout, self-management, communication)	40
CRED (Relevant Curriculum, Open Education for All)	51
Bolyai Summer Academy	15
Training courses necessary for the career development (for didactic degrees)	12

Table 6 shows the proportion of teachers' responses to whether they considered the listed features true for the courses they found to have had the highest positive effect. Their majority stated that the given courses were coherent in their structure, they created the opportunity for active learning, collaboration,



texting different ideas, innovation in teaching, courses that took into consideration teachers' prior knowledge, the content of given subjects, and individual development needs. These courses mainly took place during the school year, typically not in the school, and only in half of the cases they lasted several weeks or even longer. Around half of respondents indicated that some form of follow-up was carried out. There were also fewer cases where several colleagues from the same school attended the same training.

Primary and secondary school teachers' opinions were similar in most cases, but we can notice that primary school teachers considered the structure, content, and methodological features of in-service training even more positive than secondary school teachers.

In terms of professional experience, teachers with more than 10 years but less than 25 years of teaching experience (category 2) were the most positive about the structure of the training and the methods used to deliver it. More teachers with less than 25 years of teaching experience (categories 1 and 2) reported following up than the most experienced teachers.

Table 6. Characteristics of training with the highest positive impact by level of training and teaching experience

Characteristics	Educational level		Teaching experience		
	Primary school teachers (%)	Secondary school teachers (%)	0–10 years (%)	11–25 years (%)	>25 years (%)
It built on my prior knowledge.	88.5	88.4	86.5	90.4	85.9
It adapted to my personal development needs.	93.4	86.2	88.1	91.2	81.3
It had a coherent structure.	95.1	89.6	92.4	92.0	87.5
It appropriately focused on content needed to teach my subjects.	83.0	73.0	76.8	76.5	76.6
It provided opportunities for active learning.	94.0	91.5	93.5	92.4	89.1
It provided opportunities for collaborative learning.	91.2	88.1	91.4	88.4	85.9
It provided opportunities to practice/apply new ideas and knowledge in my own classroom.	91.2	88.4	88.6	91.2	84.4
It provided follow-up activities.	66.5	54.7	61.6	59.0	51.6
It took place at my school.	9.9	15.1	12.4	12.7	17.2
It involved most colleagues from my school.	20.9	20.8	23.8	18.7	20.3
It took place over an extended period of time (e.g. several weeks or longer).	62.1	50.3	53.5	56.6	50.0
It focused on innovation in my teaching.	76.9	78.3	74.1	81.3	75.0
It was implemented during the school year.	80.2	75.5	77.3	76.1	81.3

## 5. Discussion, summary

The survey presented in this study is part of a comprehensive research concerning the professional development, in-service training opportunities and the opinions about such training courses of teachers teaching in Hungarian language in Romania (Hégető & Korom, 2023a,b). We have focused on that phase of the research in which we surveyed the features of teachers' professional development through the adaptation of questions taken from the OECD TALIS 2018 international survey.

According to our results, the most frequent form of professional development is the in-person or online training course, reading specialized literature, as well as visiting professional online media networks. Less frequent were visiting classes, and professional observation in one's own or other schools or institutions. This, partially, may be explained by the pandemic, similar to the fact that online training courses dominated mostly in the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of the different forms of professional development, the pandemic affected the least reading specialized literature.

Among the topics addressed in professional development knowledge and skills linked to the taught subject dominated. Approximately 80% of teachers were involved with such topics in the surveyed

period. At the same time, only half of the respondents participated in activities concerning familiarization with pupils, their assessment, and individual development. The least frequent topics were tasks linked to school administration, multicultural or multilingual teaching, and communication with people coming from different cultural backgrounds. One important finding is that primary school teachers in our study were much more likely to be involved in activities related to the education of pupils with special educational needs. Whether this can be explained by differences in opportunities or needs and motivations requires further research.

Teachers found the most useful trainings linked to teaching methodologies, highlighting for example experiential pedagogy, drama pedagogy, game-based learning, and cooperative learning. Trainings that had a positive impact were said to be characterized by active learning, encouraging innovation, collaboration, also considering prior knowledge and personal development needs. These in-service training courses were mostly implemented in the course of the school year but not in the school and they were relatively short. From the perspective of elaborating further training courses a further important finding is also the fact that only half of the sample mentioned any feedback activity having been conducted, and mostly those with less teaching experience.

Only in a few cases did we find differences when concerning categories by level of training and by professional experience. For example, the most experienced teachers tended to be most involved with teaching a given subject and with the teaching of pupils with special educational needs, while those with less than 10 years of experience were least involved with topics linked to a class teacher's duties. The differences may be related to the age group taught or to the characteristics of the particular stage in the teacher's career.

Overall, the survey results confirmed our hypotheses based on preliminary research and the results of TALIS 2018. However, when evaluating the results, it should be considered that our sample is not representative, as about 10% of Hungarian teachers in Romania participated in the survey. As the survey was voluntary, it can be assumed that the sample was over-represented by teachers who considered the topic of the survey and professional development important. Another important factor is that our study covered a much longer period of five years before the survey, part of which fell during the COVID-19 epidemic, while the TALIS survey focused on the year before the data were collected. Our sample included both primary and secondary school teachers, not just teachers in Grades 5–8. A direct comparison with the results of TALIS 2018 is therefore not possible, but it is worth highlighting some phenomena that could stimulate further research.

Similarly, to the OECD average, among Hungarian teachers in Romania, the most frequent professional development form is in-service training (in person and online) and reading the specialized literature. However, in the case of teachers from Romania, the official class visit was the most frequent form, followed by reading the specialized literature. According to the date of the TALIS 2018, less than half of teachers from Romania participated in in-service training courses and professional conferences. Regarding in-service training with a positive impact, Hungarian teachers from Romania were seldom to mention (13.2%) training that took place in their schools (OECD-average 67%, Romanian average 47.4%), and that several teachers from their school would have been involved (20.8%) (OECD-average 47.8%, Romanian average 39.8%). Hungarian teachers in Romania, more than the OECD average and the Romanian results, highlighted the coherent structure of the training and the opportunities for active learning, application of new ideas and knowledge, and collaboration as characteristics of courses they considered effective. This latter result is consistent with the results of a large sample survey in Hungary, which also used the TALIS 2018 questionnaire (MoTeL, 2021). On a scale of five, teachers were asked how much the listed characteristics of different learning situations would help teachers' learning. Two features were rated most positively by respondents: practical applicability (62.7%) and active learning (59.6%). In their opinion, these features fully support teachers' learning. They also considered it important for courses to build on prior knowledge (55.3%), to consider individual needs (55.4%), and to build on cooperation (54.9%), and less so in what concerns the length of the course being several weeks or longer (20.3%).

The results of our research have shown that in the professional development of Hungarian teachers from Romania in-person or online in-service courses implemented outside the school are featured on a

prominent place. Besides this, individual research, reading the specialized literature and online professional networks also play a significant role. When planning in-service training courses, it is important to take into consideration teachers' preferences and needs, as well as contemporary challenges and opportunities. Digital training is likely to continue to play an important role, but it is essential that traditional, face-to-face training remains on offer. In addition, increased attention should be paid to areas such as activities focusing on peer and self-observation, the development of pupils with special educational needs, the development of ICT skills that can be used in teaching, or teaching in a multicultural environment.

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