

Teacher-to-Teacher Training, an Intergenerational Perspective

La formación entre profesores, una perspectiva intergeneracional

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Abstract

Teacher training has been the subject of educational research since the regulation of teaching practices and training programs. Nowadays, however, we live in a changing environment that heavily influences these programs, underlining the need for lifelong learning as a central element to the teachers' professional development. This study aims to explore how teachers perceive training as a relevant source of intergenerational exchange, assessing its influence on their own professional development and as a shaper of intergenerational relationships. The study presents a qualitative analysis that collects data through focus groups and interviews, with a total of 147 participating teachers. The main results indicate that an intergenerational exchange of knowledge exists, benefiting both younger and elder educators. Results also show that both groups' weak spots are balanced by the potential of the other group. Thus, they naturally develop strategies for working together in solving daily challenges and difficulties.

Keywords: professional development; teacher training, intergenerational development; teaching exchange.

Resumen

La formación del profesorado ha sido objeto de investigación educativa desde que la práctica docente y la formación del profesorado están reguladas. En la actualidad, vivimos una serie de

cambios vertiginosos que afectan a l profesorado y a su formación De este modo, el aprendizaje permanente se ha convertido en un elemento central del desarrollo profesional. Este estudio pretende explorar cómo percibe el profesorado la importancia de la formación como fuente de intercambio intergeneracional, cómo ha influido en su propio desarrollo profesional y cómo se configuran las relaciones entre las generaciones docentes. Se trata de un estudio cualitativo que recoge datos a través de grupos de discusión y entrevistas con un total de 147 profesores. Los principales resultados obtenidos indican que existe un intercambio de conocimientos entre el profesorado que beneficia tanto a los más jóvenes como a los de más edad. Ambos grupos tienen una serie de puntos débiles que se compensan con el potencial del otro grupo. Así, desarrollan de forma natural estrategias de trabajo conjunto para resolver las dificultades que encuentran las y los profesores en su trabajo diario.

Palabras clave: desarrollo profesional; formación del profesorado; desarrollo intergeneracional; intercambio de profesorado.

Introduction and objectives

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the weakness of education systems in dealing with school continuity became apparent. It was during this period that teachers were implementing new teaching methods based on online learning. In many cases, teachers were confronted with the digital divide that existed in schools and homes (Zhou & Li, 2020). On the other hand, the pandemic introduced other limiting factors that could undermine the quality of teaching. These factors include access to technological resources, the lack of school infrastructure to handle online learning, teacher-student communication, student evaluation processes, and teacher training in this area (Negrín-Medina et al., 2022; Puspitasari et al., 2021).

Some of these factors, related to the new teaching approach developed during and after the COVID-19 pandemic (Cabero-Almenara, 2020; Del Río, 2022), may be strongly influenced by the digital skills of teachers (Negrín-Medina et al., 2022). The lack of digital skills and training in ICTs may have resulted in the older generation of teachers being left behind during the pandemic compared to the rest of their colleagues (Cabero-Almenara, 2020).

Several authors, such as Cabero-Almenara (2020) and Petalla (2022), pointed out that mandatory online learning to maintain school continuity was a difficult challenge for teachers of the so-called baby boomer generation (teachers born between 1965 and 1980, as defined by Dimock, 2019). Belonging to a generation that preceded the advent of the information and communication technology (ICT), baby boomers were forced to become “digital immigrants” when they were already over forty. Born and raised in an analog technology environment, boomer educators had to quickly adapt to digital technologies. As a result, a considerable percentage of these teachers showed resistance to ICT due to the complexity in their use and learning, the loss of intimacy of human contact during communication and the formative difficulty of using ICT with multiple tasks and often unstructured processes (Puspitasari et al., 2021).

Although the so-called ‘millennials’ (born between 1981 and 1996, as defined by Dimock, 2019) have been considered the first ‘digital natives’ (Prensky, 2001a, 2001b),

some authors consider that not all its members have had technological training (Cerezo, 2016). This became apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic, when deficits related to digital technologies and online learning emerged among teachers, forcing European countries to take decisions related to the continuous ICT teacher training (Zancajo et al., 2022) which became a post-pandemic educational policy. To make a meaningful contribution to strengthening the resilience of education systems, this new policy is based on the fact that teachers should acquire new skills (including digital ones) during their professional development (European Commission, 2022; Zancajo et al., 2022). Accordingly, in Spain, in the school year 2020/2021, refresher courses for teachers on dealing with online teaching, designing learning situations, assessing remote learning and tutoring in these conditions were implemented (European Commission, 2022).

According to TALIS 2013 and TALIS 2018 reports (OECD, 2014, 2019), demand for continuous teacher training in ICT skills increased markedly prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This need for training increased with age: According to TALIS 2013, teachers over 60 were more likely to need training in ICT teaching skills. However, older teachers' interest in training decreased when it came to learning about the types of technology needed in educational establishments, while interest increased for the other age groups. TALIS 2013 also showed that there is a generational gap between teachers regarding ICT.

TALIS 2013 and 2018 reports also identified other training needs in relation to the subjects taught. Teachers expressed a need for training in the pedagogical competences of the subject they teach, transversal competences for teaching and methods for individualized learning, in addition to those related to ICT and students with special educational needs. Interest in these training needs declines after the age of 50, in line with the trend by age group. According to the Eurydice 2015 report (European Commission, 2015), this trend reflects a decline in formative interest in said topics with age.

The data from these reports indicated that the generational gap among teachers is a conditioning factor that must be considered when designing continuous training plans for the professional development of teachers (Bravo Echevarría et al., 2017). There are a few research works about how to make continuing training a requirement for the professional development of the new generations of post-baby boomer teachers. Intergenerational learning among teachers has been analysed by Brücknerová and Novotný (2017) stating that the type of learning that takes place in the interaction between different generations of teachers in schools (perception, transfer, experience, imitation and participation) depends on how the professional development of teachers is planned. Schools should have institutional mechanisms to promote interaction between different generations of teachers, according to Alugar (2021). This can have a positive impact on the integration and professional engagement of young millennial teachers.

Similarly, ageism should not be a factor in the planning and organizing teacher professional development For Portela Pruaño et al. (2022), ageism is a distorting element in the interaction between teachers of different generations. Conversely, Bartz et al. (2017) suggest that properly considering the different perspectives that generational differences

among teachers bring to professional development is an asset in addressing diversity and problem-solving in school environments.

The research project 'Intergenerational Professional Development in Education: Implications for Initial Teacher Training' (known in Spanish as DePrInEd) (Portela Pruaño et al., 2022) aimed to identify the generational characteristics of Spanish teachers and how they interact during their professional practice. At a time when Spanish schools are beginning to experience a significant generational change in the teacher workforce, which will become more pronounced in the coming years, learning how baby boomers and millennial teachers interact could condition the training needs in teachers' professional development (both at the school level and in the planning of educational authorities).

Two important questions arise in relation to this interaction: Do teachers perceive their continuous training throughout their professional careers as an opportunity for cross-generational learning? How can teacher professional development training contribute to the improvement of intergenerational relationships?

Methods

This research followed a qualitative approach that allows researchers to reach a comprehensive understanding, facilitated by the participants, of the experiences in a real-world setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In particular, the study followed a constructivist-interpretivist approach so that research participants can construct meaning by interacting with their environment (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The study design adheres to what is known as a basic qualitative study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), with the focus on comparing subjects or groups of subjects at specific intervals. As with similar studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018), this one combines both focus group techniques and interviews. The different techniques are applied sequentially with the focus groups, followed by the interviews. This has two benefits - it contributes to the robustness of the research through data triangulation, and also indicates that the phenomena are approached in greater depth and in a differentiated manner (Maxwell, 2013).

Participants, sampling, and recruitment

The total number of participants consisted of a variety of teachers, sorted by their generational stage ($n=147$). To select the participants, two criteria were chosen: age and teaching experience. Table 1 shows the abovementioned criteria. In Spain, teaching as a career has a high level of stability between entry and exit. Therefore, as age increases, the teaching profession stabilises and the number of years of teaching experience increases (Umpstead et al., 2016). We tried to convey the difference among young beginner teachers, mature and older veteran teachers and, retired teachers. The intention was to accentuate the degree of similarity or distance regarding age-related aspects felt by participants, since, according to the literature, this influences how generational diversity is usually understood and experienced (Biggs & Lowenstein, 2011).

Table 1

Inclusion criteria

	Young Teachers (YBT)	Mature Veteran Teachers (MVT)	Old Retired Teachers (ORT)
Age and teaching experience	Born after 1990 with extended teaching experience of no more than 6 school years.	50 years of age or older and teaching experience of 10 school years or more.	Pensioners on compulsory and voluntary retirement.
Grade level	Childhood Education (2nd cycle), Primary Education or Secondary education.		
Type of school	Publicly-funded schools		

Participants were selected using a *purposeful sampling* approach, due the wealth of information they can provide (Patton, 2015). A combined sampling strategy was used to study and compare homogeneous groups so that their maximum variation is taken into consideration, their diversity is documented, and any patterns are identified (Patton, 2015). A national teachers’ union and several other associations were involved in participant recruitment. In addition, personal networks of researchers and social networks were used. The final number of participants in each category is concordant with the sample sizes suggested in the literature and those necessary to reach the appropriate saturation level (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

The sample characteristics are shown in Table 2. This information was collected through electronic questionnaires in which participants provided their informed consent. Collected data was verified during first contact. The participants were from 13 autonomous communities of Spain, although their distribution was not even.

Table 2

Characteristics of Participants

	YBT (n=51)		MVT (n=50)		ORT (n=46)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Age ^a	28	1.9	56.6	2.9	66.9	4.6		
Teaching Experience ^b	2.8	2	27.6	6.5	35.7	6.2		
	YBT		MVT		ORT		Full sample	
	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%
School stage								
Elementary ^c	27	52.9	24	48	23	50	74	50.3
Secondary	24	47.1	26	52	23	50	73	49.7

	YBT (n=51)		MVT (n=50)		ORT (n=46)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Gender								
Female	37	72.5	38	76	23	50	98	66.7
Male	14	27.5	12	24	23	50	49	33.3

^a Years of age as of 31 December 2021.

^b Years of experience counted when answering the initial electronic questionnaire.

^c This category includes early childhood education (2nd cycle) and primary education.

Data collection

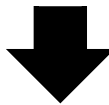
Data was collected through focus groups followed by interviews. Focus groups were conducted (n=24 x 6 participants) through exchange and discussion among participants on topics of interest from their perspective. Details emerged from the interaction of different points of view (Hennink, 2014). The aim of the focus groups was exploratory; the participants in the interviews (n=60) were selected with the intention of exploring in greater depth issues of interest and providing a more detailed overview (Patton, 2015).

Both data collection techniques were segmented (Hennink, 2014). Two participant characteristics were considered - teaching experience and school level. In both cases, an attempt was made to balance the various criteria. This facilitates access to both similar and different points of view simultaneously. Table 3 shows the segmentation that was carried out.

Table 3

Segmentation of Focus Groups and Interviews

Focus Groups (n=24)		Age and teaching experience			
		Homogeneous		Heterogeneous	
		YBT	MVT	ORT	YBT + MVT + ORT
School level	Homogeneous	Elementary Secondary		n=6	n=6
	Heterogeneous	Elementary + Secondary		n=6	n=6



Interviews (n=60)		Age and teaching experience		
		YBT	MVT	ORT
School level	Elementary	n=10	n=10	n=10
	Secondary	n=10	n=10	n=10

Both data collection techniques were semi-structured. The protocols and guidelines developed by the research group were used, tested and improved. In both cases, core

questions and follow-up questions were used to gather information more comprehensively if the initial response was poor (Patton, 2015). The core questions were designed to elicit the following points: their perspective on teaching as a profession and their career path, which generations they identify within the teaching profession and what characterises them, their teaching experience, and with whom they share their views on the profession. Participants were encouraged to focus on factors that led them to become teachers, including aspects of themselves.

Because of the various constraints imposed by the different waves of the pandemic and participants' characteristics (due to their advanced age), data collection was conducted by videoconference. Focus groups and interviews were carried out by members of the research team. Focus group duration ranged from 61 to 164 minutes, with an average duration of 93.4 minutes. Interview duration ranged from 28 to 136 minutes, with an average duration of 66.3 minutes. They took place from April to December 2021. It is important to note that data was collected by 11 researchers who were involved in the research project that resulted in this article.

Data analysis

Permission was gained from the participants to take part in the study. Then, the focus groups and interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The data was analysed reflexively, with particular attention paid to the researcher's critical reflection of his or her presuppositions and decisions. Thus, we used reflective thematic analysis, as developed by authors such as Braun and Clarke (2022). This was used together with the constant comparative analysis method (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008) which improved the analysis. These two methods were chosen because of their flexibility.

Using the data analysis method suggested by Braun and Clarke (2022), the data analysis was conducted in a series of stages that are, in turn, sequential and recursive. This means that the different phases can overlap, thanks to the reflective process inherent in the model. These phases are as follows (Figure 1):

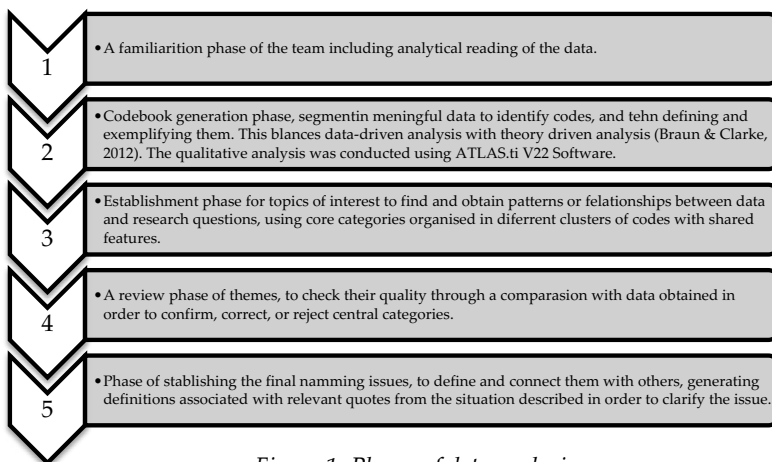


Figure 1. Phases of data analysis.

Ethics

Participants were given detailed and accessible information about the study and their participation, including their right to access, rectify or cancel the information provided, guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity, and the right to revoke their participation. Informed consent was gained from each participant via a short electronic form. This consent was confirmed during focus group and interview participation. The project of which the study is part has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Murcia (Approval identification code: 2087/2018).

Research quality

The research followed the criteria of quality and rigour typical of qualitative research. The researchers adopted the principle of trustworthiness and the elements of research criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) (Berkovich & Grinshtain, 2023). The most salient strategies for each criterion are outlined below:

- Credibility - increasing the internal validity of the research and using multiple data sources to triangulate information. Achieving a sufficient level of theoretical data saturation. Identifying negative or controversial evidence during re-examination of categories.
- Transferability - using various publications and reports to thoroughly develop the research process. Moreover, formulating context-relevant working hypotheses that provide external validity to the research.
- Dependability - data triangulation (see Portela Pruaño et al., 2022) and performing data logging using ATLAS.ti software. Research consistency is provided by the systematicity with which the data have been treated.
- Confirmability - by checking the data with the participants and discussing the information with the research group. The researcher's perception has therefore been contrasted with the sample components.

Results

Through the data analysis, a category or theme on teacher training emerged, which will be used as the central category in this paper. Code 1.02_About_Teachers: 1.02.09_Training was used to identify the quotes that mentioned aspects related to this category. Included in this category were quotes in which participants highlighted aspects of teacher preparation or training or, also, the lack of it. *"There are people who want to be trained, people who like the profession more, and people who are more knowledgeable, regardless of age"* (D27:61.MVT. In[Interview]). That is, this category included the perception of the informants regarding their own training or that of the group of teachers, both initial and in-service. This code was used a total of 458 times throughout the analysis of the interviews and focus groups.

Regarding the thematic analysis developed in the research, when assessing the themes that could be related to the central theme, teacher training, a series of categories or themes strongly linked by their concurrence were identified. Figure 3 shows these related themes and their connections.

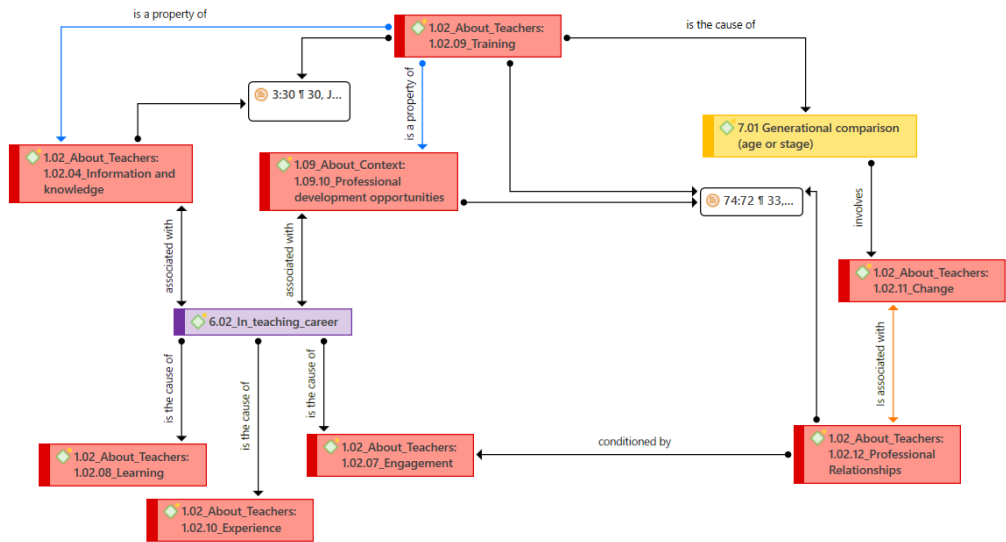


Figure 3. Semantic network of relationships between codes.

On the one hand, it can be observed that teacher training is an important component or property in the construction of information, knowledge and professional development opportunities for teachers. The existence or presence of training activities is directly linked to the professional development opportunities available to teachers. The same happens with the information and knowledge that teachers have about the subject they teach, which they associate with the training they acquire or have the possibility of acquiring. These two aspects have a singular effect on teachers' careers, influencing issues such as their teaching experience, their involvement in the task or their own learning. On the other hand, teacher training is an issue that marks differences between the generations analysed, allowing comparisons to be made. Teachers state that there has been a change because of their training, which affects their professional relationships that are, in turn, conditioned by the involvement shown by each teacher in his or her own training.

The following sections analyse each of the themes that have emerged from the analysis, to understand teachers' perspectives on each topic. First, we will present how training affects teachers individually, in their knowledge and professional development opportunities, and then as a collective in professional relationships.

Training as a source of professional exchange and development

Teachers begin their professional careers with a high level of training. They are characterized as a group that "hungers" for knowledge. Not only at the beginning of their professional career, but throughout their entire career.

All the reading I did when I studied pedagogy, and everything I learned, has given me such a hunger for knowledge and everything, regarding the importance of school, that I still have it there. And I think I will die with that appetite to keep on seeing, and to keep on giving, and to keep on teaching and transmitting... (D3:30.ORT.In)

Participating teachers are characterized by being more qualified than required. After their first degree, they pursue master's degrees or other education degrees. This is something that, as they point out, contributes to the acquisition of the knowledge they need in the teaching-learning process of the educational stage in which they are going to develop their career. However, teacher training has changed. Older teachers have a different perception of the training received compared to younger teachers. They say that they have insufficient training for the challenge that awaits them and for the needs that a school presents.

Another thing is also the cultural level of the students who are going to become teachers, this also worries me, [...], there are teachers who do not read, not just children's or young adults literature, but any sort of literature, a deficit that here has been tested with an aptitude test and such, I don't know if you have heard the news, but 50% have failed it. (D11:68.ORT.In)

The lack of training or knowledge of beginning teachers is an issue that older teachers highlight and is endorsed by their younger colleagues. When they enter the teaching profession, they start teaching in schools but they do not know where to begin, "I remember that I got out of my degree and started working at school, and I really felt very lost, I did not know how to do Individualized Work Plan, I did not know what to do with each child, I did not know... I felt very lost then" (D21:6.YBT.In). This reinforces the discourse of their older colleagues when they say that there is a lack of preparation on the part of the novice teachers, "the initial teacher training is not adequate, you are trained in one way but when you get to the classroom the reality is different" (27:120.MVT.In). The role of teacher training faculties on this deficit area is also highlighted: older teachers indicate that novice teachers leave universities with little initial training, "initial training has long left much to be desired" (D68:110.ORT.FG[Focus Group]).

Many of the teachers who are coming out of the university leave poorly prepared, in the teaching school they do not learn how to prepare what they have to prepare, perhaps because there are not enough courses. This is, for me, an important deficit in practical knowledge, perhaps they know a lot about other topic. (D11:66.ORT.In)

N teachers indicate that they are severely lacking knowledge in the practical aspects of their profession, "we teachers do not have that tool... They explain a lot, they give you a lot of theory at the university, but then you have to deal with the day-to-day reality of each classroom" (D72:125.YBT.FG). However, beginning teachers stand out in their knowledge of computers, English, active methodologies or other transversal knowledge that their older colleagues lack. A series of aspects in which older teachers are limited and which, they admit, would help them in their teaching task. Thus, they indicate the need for professional development through a strong commitment to continuous

training, either through learning with their own colleagues or with teacher training centres, “*all my life as a teacher, I have been in contact with people who have taught me, or I have gone to certain places to learn, for example, the Teacher Training College [...], in which I learned from people who had already been teaching for a longer time*” (D29:42.ORT.In). Other, however, point to the lack of continuous training, so there are different perceptions on this topic. Similarly, this is the issue that is more often cited as a limiting element in their professional development and to which they are uniquely associated.

This training aspect has improved over the years. The different groups of teachers point out how the administration has a training offer that was missing before, “*the administration has given us many more tools, they have put within our reach a lot of courses that were not available before to train us [...] now it is very rare to find a person who does not partake training courses at some point*” (D57:35.MVT.In). This, in addition to self-education, is the main source from which teachers acquire new knowledge and has helped them fill the detected gap, “*they have been concerned about learning about these topics and said: ‘Let’s see, how can I improve in this’, which is like the big black hole of our training*” (D84:57.YBT.FG).

Relationships between teachers, marked by training

The most experienced teachers are a source of knowledge for the rest. There is a constant exchange of information that benefits the formative aspects of teachers’ professional development. Some older teachers are particularly concerned about helping young people feel comfortable and adapt well to the teaching profession, “*what I do is ask young people: how are you doing, look, you don’t have to do this because you know this is going to happen to you, [...] sometimes I go to their classes to support them*” (D57:39.MVT.In). Some of them even point out how beneficial it would be to have a reference colleague within the centre to help with pressing issues or, for more complex ones, to carry out activities where peer learning is a priority. For their part, young people identified by the elders as experts in many issues of “this century”, are the ones who help them solve the problems that, otherwise, would have to be dealt with through training actions. Likewise, there is a general harmony in which teachers try to help each other to cover the needs that should be covered by training.

I am a person who is very involved in the life of the centre, and if I can help, I help. I also like to be helped, don’t I, if I say I don’t know how to do something? But I really like to get involved and participate. So, if someone avoids that by not having to work too much, by not coming home and working overtime, by not taking a training course, then the truth is that I don’t like it. Well, the truth is that I don’t like them very much, because obviously we share work, we are colleagues and there won’t be any problem if I have to help them. (D54:35.YBT.In)

Despite this, training or the acquisition of knowledge is an issue that is not always perceived as positive in teachers’ relationships. Certain discrepancies appear between teachers who are interested in training and those who do not see this issue as something primordial, “*I remember that a teacher and I, back in time, were discussing, I don’t know what topic, and one day he said to me: ‘Well, of course, you read books’, I thought ‘don’t you*

read?’ and he was the principal...” (D32:52.ORT.In). Thus, their involvement also has an influence both on the different relationships that are established and on the willingness to train, from novice teachers to members of the management team, “there are always people who continue training, who continue innovating, but then there are people who are, ‘well, I’m here, I have five years left to retire and I don’t want to complicate my life’” (D67:36.YBT.FG). However, the discrepancies that may appear among teachers are not perceived as an entirely negative issue. They stimulate debate among teachers and are seen as a need comparable to continuing education, “What do we need in the ideal school? I need ongoing training, I need debate with my colleagues” (D79:119.MVT.FG).

The debate on the needs of the teachers goes beyond intergenerational relationships. There are many who say that training can take place in areas not designed for it. Thus, training goes, and should go, beyond the classroom: *“training must take place through daily contact and the example of colleagues, and that is where you learn, not through a master’s degree” (D27:117.MVT.In). In fact, it is a recurring theme among teachers that the most effective learning of the profession is through peers, carrying out the different activities developed by a teacher who accompanies them: “a teacher cloister that was more like a university than anything else, because I have been in those cloisters, and it was a process of continuous training to agree on the educational strategies they had to apply” (D19:63.ORT.In).*

In this sense, the internship period of the training is pointed out as decisive in their learning. The need to develop this training element effectively leads the teachers interviewed to insist on its relevance: *“I think it would be very interesting that, before working, among other things, there should be a well-founded, well-founded internship, with real tutoring” (D29:79.ORT.In). This could lead to the conclusion that the internship period in initial teacher training does not follow the most appropriate approach at present. Thus, another teacher points out that emphasis should be placed on the diversity of learning during this period.*

Training is very important for young people and especially for them to get to know different realities and to be close to good professionals, to people who go there. I always advise the internship students: ‘this year you have come to a charter school and the next year go to a public school’ Why? because well... They have to see all the realities and they have to do it all by themselves, what they learn from other teachers might not work for them, what works for me will not work for them, so they have to adapt themselves. (D27:1MVT.In)

Discussion

The main proposals of this paper have been to explore how teachers perceive the importance of training as a source of intergenerational exchange among them, how it has influenced their own professional development and how it shapes relationships between the teaching generations. Teacher education is constituted as a first-order construct within the professional career, not only because of its importance in terms of training or preparing teachers to exercise their profession in a reflective way (Alugar,

2021), but also because of the interpersonal relationships it generates (Rodríguez et al., 2020). In other words, professional learning is a complex activity with multiple aspects that interact (Opfer & Pedder, 2011), in which generational differences are a factor to consider.

The results obtained in this study showed that teachers believe that the existence or presence of training activities is directly related to the professional development opportunities available to them, as shown in previous studies (Faria et al., 2016). However, Luft and Hewson, (2014) and Solbes et al. (2018) have expressed doubts about the real impact of specific courses. A broader approach to training, linked to the teaching experience itself and, even more, to the actual implementation in the classroom of the knowledge acquired during training, are more important for these authors. The evolution of the teaching career is based on the training needs that arise in teachers as they gain experience to innovate in teaching practice, to achieve educational excellence and to develop professional competences related to school management or educational supervision.

According to Lourenco and Cronan (2017), this approach could help millennial teachers cope with teaching changes by incorporating what they have learned, while for veteran teachers acting as mentors or tutors, it allows them to assess and recognize younger teachers' progress. For Johnson (2014), this recognition seems to be more necessary and important for millennials than for boomers. In this sense, a lack of recognition may lead to deficiencies in the professional engagement of millennial teachers, which may make it easier for them to leave the profession.

Following Lieberman (1995), regarding professional learning, the teachers interviewed believe that their knowledge of the subject they teach comes from their training, their experience on teaching practice, the engagement with the task and, finally, from the individual learning or learning from peers. However, teacher training is a topic which marks differences between the generations analysed and, based on it, different comparisons can be made. For example, with clear differences between what is learned at university and what happens in the classroom, novice teachers feel that they are better prepared than they need to be, while experienced teachers feel that new teachers are not well prepared for what they will find in the classroom. According to Marrero Galván et al. (2023), this discrepancy in training is also evident in the perception of experienced teachers: to them, young teachers seem to have less procedural and relational competences in the classroom.

Clearly, these discrepancies lead to the need for reflection on initial teacher training, as well as exploring the new alternative paths that are emerging (Prats, 2016). There does seem to be a consensus among teachers on the importance of modifying this initial training and, given the heterogeneity of the teaching staff, the measures cannot be homogeneous (Manso & Garrido-Martos, 2021). However, it is not clear in what sense, since there are generic proposals that are difficult to fit into the current regulations, and which, in any case, depend on political decisions rather than on the teachers themselves to be developed. Meanwhile, it is clear that novice teachers help veterans in the use of ICTs and that veterans provide the experience that new teachers lack (Negrín-Medina et al., 2022), thus stimulating intergenerational relationships.

Conclusions

In summary, the following conclusions can be drawn about teacher relations and their professional development training regarding the questions proposed in this study and the results obtained:

a) New teachers are aware of their weaknesses, particularly on the practical level, but also of their strengths: technology, languages and active methods. And it is precisely these strengths that are perceived by the veteran teachers as their weaknesses.

b) The relations between teachers are a source of knowledge. There is a constant exchange of information that benefits the professional development of teachers; the different generations often establish a symbiotic relationship in which the participants improve their preparation and mitigate the difficulties they encounter.

c) One aspect on which there is consensus among teachers reflects the need to improve initial teacher education. Despite the great changes that have taken place following the implementation of the Bologna Process, voices continue to be raised calling for training that is relevant to the realities of the classroom.

These conclusions, in our opinion, can be of interest to the teaching profession. Therefore, we suggest that future research should focus on the relationships established between novice and veteran teachers, especially those related to the support provided during the incorporation of new people into the teaching profession and the synergies that are created during this process, as a source of lifelong learning.

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