

Sofia Cramerotti, 2020

Volume 4 Issue 2, pp. 146-156

Date of Publication: 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020

DOI- <https://doi.org/10.20319/pijtel.2020.42.146156>

This paper can be cited as: Cramerotti, S., (2020). *Promoting Teachers' Professional Competencies: Proposal of a Framework-Syllabus*. PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning, 4(2), 146-156.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

## **PROMOTING TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES: PROPOSAL OF A FRAMEWORK-SYLLABUS**

**Sofia Cramerotti**

*Department of Human Sciences, University of Verona, Verona, Italy*  
[sofia.cramerotti@univr.it](mailto:sofia.cramerotti@univr.it)

---

### **Abstract**

*The aim of this research is the proposal of a framework-syllabus of teachers' professional skills and competencies. It involved 207 Italian school teachers. The methodology used was based on different focus groups interspersed by individual moments of self-inquire and self-reflection carry out by the teachers. The methodology included the use of an online survey, too. The survey was used to determine the grade of importance assigned by the participants to the different competencies. The outcome of this study is a framework-syllabus composed of several skills and competencies that characterize the expert teaching profession. The framework-syllabus is structured in 3 macro-areas (professional, teaching and organizing) and 16 competencies expressed in 77 different behavioral indicators. These different competencies delineate four teacher's profiles of "middle management" in the school's context. The research also demonstrates the main important and relevant competencies for being an expert teacher.*

### **Keywords**

Teachers' Professional Competencies, Skills, Framework-Syllabus, Self-reflection

---

## **1. Introduction**

To become and to be a good teacher requires not only knowledge but, in particular, the developments of a variety of cross skills and specific professional competencies (Avalos, 2011; Danielson, 2016). Focusing on the core competencies is a helpful occasion for re-thinking, well structuring, and organizing teachers' professional training and to further foster school efficiency and effectiveness. This means teachers attaining the recommended standards in teacher qualifications (Darling-Hammond, 2013; 2015; Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Perrenoud, 2002).

This is a necessary field of work and area of reflection to guarantee a real efficient classroom environment and provide successful support to all learners, nobody excluded, in a collaborative way (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005).

The school is experiencing a very particular change in these years, where the traditional school's vision, processes and teachers' roles are rapidly changing more innovatively (Call, 2018).

On the base of these preliminary reflections, this research started from a pilot study, because it was first necessary to examine teachers' opinions in different areas, that teachers recognize as useful in their daily practice.

The meaning of "syllabus" in this research is a framework where the different skills and competencies that characterize an expert teacher are identified and described (Danielson, 2007; Evans, Willis, & Moretti, 2015). The importance of having a clear syllabus-framework is a reference for guiding the implementation of teacher training courses to promote teaching competence development in an effective, efficient, meaningful, and functional way. This is a fundamental process for trainee teachers entering in service, but also to provide the in-service teachers with a "palette" of self-perception practices of their skills (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Some official documents, referring to Italian (MIUR, 2015; 2016; INDIRE, 2018) and international teaching standards (OECD, 2009; 2014; Danielson, 2007; UNESCO, 2005; Commission of the European Communities, 2005) were examined.

Firstly, we used these standards for aggregating, in a specific framework-syllabus, the more suitable skills and competencies for the Italian school context.

Secondly, we focused our attention on teachers' opinions about professional skills and competencies of this framework-syllabus; this point was investigated using a tool based on a self-reflection/evaluation approach (Cramerotti, Tacconi & Perini, 2019).

This part of the research was an unexpected particular occasion of introspective self-evaluation and, at the same time, reflecting on the effectiveness of their teaching practices.

These moments help the teacher to "stop and reflect" and, at the same time, monitor the quality of their work and the activities they propose to the students.

This helps to identify more clearly strengths, areas of growth, (Darling-Hammond, 1986; 2013; 2015), and expectations (Simsek, Turan, & Simsek, 2017).

This work presents some preliminary results of the pilot study that has investigated the perception of the importance of a group of teachers referring to a framework-syllabus of skills and competencies that define an "expert teacher".

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Participants**

The participants were 207 in-service school teachers (Female = 93%; Male = 7%). Table 1 shows the age's range of participants.

**Table 1:** *Age's Range of the Participants*

<b>Years</b>	<b>%</b>
25 to 34	14%
35 to 44	30%
45 to 54	37%
55 to 64	18%
> 65	1%

The years of professional service as a teacher at school is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** *Years of Professional Service*

<b>Years</b>	<b>%</b>
0-5	9%
6-10	18%
11-15	21%

16-20	17%
21-25	12,5%
26-30	11%
31-35	8%
36-40	1%
41-45	0,5%
not declared	2%

All the teachers were Italian. The distribution of the geographical provenance on the Italian territory was: North-East 19%; North-West 41%; Central 21%; South and Islands 16%; not declared 3%. Referring to the school grade, the distribution was: Primary school 60%; Middle school; 25%; High school 15%.

## **2.2 Research Design and Procedures**

A team of 15 users with complementary competencies (educational researchers, school principals-head teachers, teachers of all grades) was involved in the development of a framework based on the professional standards literature mentioned above. Then, we grouped these competencies in an online syllabus framework-tool, to better reach the participant and guarantee complete accessibility.

The framework-syllabus was structured in:

- 3 macro-areas
- 16 competencies
- 77 behavioral indicators (Cramerotti, Tacconi & Perini, 2019).

These indicators were the description of how to demonstrate and act a specific competence into daily teaching practice (see Table 3).

**Table 3:** *The 3 Macro-Areas and the 16 Competencies* (Cramerotti, Tacconi & Perini, 2019).

<b>Macro Area 1: Professional competencies</b>
1. Practice professional ethics
2. Relationship management/leadership
3. Life-long learning/continuous training/innovation
4. Problem-solving
5. ICT-digital competencies

6. Use of English language (L2) as a professional instrument.
<b>Macro Area 2: Teaching competencies</b>
7. Teaching-learning/didactic planning
8. Enhancing talent/educational guidance
9. Organizing educational resources
10. Inclusion
11. Class/group management
12. Students' observation/assessment
13. Evaluating the effectiveness of didactic interventions
<b>Macro Area 3: Organizing competencies</b>
14. Collaboration/teamwork
15. Designing/evaluating the school participation-system improvement
16. Handle/accompanying the school's change

In order to represent the whole complexity, the competencies were grouped into four different profiles representative of four “expert teachers” (see Table 2).

In each profile, the competencies were “weighted” with various criteria, according to their different relationship to the profiles.

On completion of self-evaluation employing the online tool, the user receives a report (“radar chart” or histogram) which the percentage of correspondence between the “declared” grade of competencies (self-perception) and the “expected” grade for each different profile (Cramerotti, Tacconi & Perini, 2019).

**Table 4:** *Expert Teacher's Different Profiles*

<b>Profile 1</b>	<i>Innovative and inclusive teaching</i>	She/he is an expert teacher in teaching skills, innovative methodologies (also with the use of ICT) and in promoting an inclusive culture. She/he is competent in analyzing students' needs, in didactic-methodological planning, organization and implementation of targeted activities and paths, also through the
------------------	--	--

		conception/adaptation of innovative learning environments (there is no inclusion without innovation, and vice versa).
<b>Profile 2</b>	<i>School organization: integrated learning environments and processes for quality improvement</i>	She/he is an expert teacher in the school's organization and system's evaluation, who actively collaborates with the improvement of innovative learning processes and environments and in the training necessary to pursue them. This profile represents the function that most refers to the classic figure of "middle management". It is a very widespread function, used and engaged in schools, but not yet properly trained. Therefore, the profile will deal with the evaluation of the school, according to what is provided at the national level by the Evaluation System; she/he will support the school principal in the planning and development of positive change, therefore also in the preparation of learning spaces, innovatively and appropriately for the specific school context. From this point of view, the profile must also have a great deal of flexibility, problem-solving skills, and adaptation to the situations in which it works.
<b>Profile 3</b>	<i>Continuing professional development</i>	She/he is an expert teacher in the analysis of training needs, in the design of training courses, in assisting/accompanying colleagues, in the functions of tutoring,

		<p>mentoring, counselling and supervision of professional development. This profile describes a teacher as an active professional inside a community of practice. At the same time, it is the figure that manages to weave a system of positive relationships with colleagues (e.g. in particular moments such as the beginning of the career, when experiences are still lacking, or during the transition to the teaching professional role).</p>
<p><b>Profile 4</b></p>	<p><i>Guidance in education, training and relationships between school and society</i></p>	<p>She/he is an expert teacher in planning, monitoring and evaluating the experiences of school-work projects, with specific skills in the field of training orientation and students' tutoring. She/he is a teacher who looks at the students in a wider perspective more shifted towards the horizons of a future adult life project (e.g. focused on useful soft and transversal skills). For the expert in training orientation and school-work alternation, the school has no boundaries; it is a school open to the territory and to all the realities that surround it. She/he is a teacher active and grounded on the realization of concrete experiences "on the field" and open to the territorial realities around the school.</p>

### **3. Data Gathering and Analysis**

Teachers' opinions on professional competencies were investigated using a tool in the form of an online survey/questionnaire structured into 77 different items/behavior patterns, which refer to the 16 competencies. Each item was self-evaluated through a Likert frequency scale (from 1 = never to 5 = always).

At the present stage of our research, we have collected and analyzed some partial quantitative data (calculation of the percentage in terms of frequency).

### **4. Results**

The results demonstrate that the main percentage of teachers (60%) related to Profile 1, the one that refers to education and innovation in teaching-learning processes.

It is also interesting to consider the order of importance assigned to the 16 competencies (from most important = 1 to less important = 16) (Cramerotti, Tacconi & Perini, 2019):

1. Practice professional ethic
2. Life-long learning/innovation;
3. Managing relationships/leadership
4. Inclusion
5. Collaboration/team working
6. Problem-solving
7. Class/group/ management
8. Enhancing talent/educational guidance
9. Teaching-learning/didactic planning
10. Organizing educational resources
11. Evaluating the effectiveness of actions and didactic interventions
12. Designing/evaluating the school's system improvement
13. Students' observation/assessment
14. Handle/accompanying the school's change
15. ICT-digital competencies
16. Use of English language (L2).

This order illustrates a focus on specific aspects that characterize the teaching profession, and particular attention to the strategic role of relationships and collaboration; this aspect was strengthened by a specific item was the participants underlined the great importance of teamwork (62%) (Cramerotti, Tacconi & Perini, 2019).

Referring specifically to the online tool usability, the participants found the comprehensibility of items clear (35%) and extremely clear (28%) and the graphic-results representation (clears 26%; extremely clear 35%).

The completeness of competencies was evaluated as being representative (32%) and very representative (36%), the same was due for the behavioral indicators (representative 35%; very representative 36%) (Cramerotti, Tacconi & Perini, 2019).

## **5. Conclusion and Future Steps**

These preliminary results indicate that conducting self-evaluations and use the results for reflecting on their daily teaching practice is a useful practice in the process of constructing and developing the teaching profession. It is a metacognitive way to self-monitoring their professional actions and, if necessary, re-tune re-define them. This metacognitive “habit” is strictly related to their self-efficacy and self-esteem as teachers (Sahay, 2019). It can help to develop a more resilient approach to professional difficulties and problems in the teachers’ team, too (Sexe, 2020).

Our school contexts need teachers that act as a collaborative and supportive peer for being more effective colleagues to one another. It is necessary to adopt critical co-reflectivity as “a habit of mind” and a “modus operandi” (Andresen, 2000)

Teachers need to conduct self-evaluations and peer-evaluation, to use what emerges for reflecting and think critically about their daily teaching practice. Reflection is for a teacher “an intentional act of the mind” that makes teachers able to deeply investigate their practice (Lyons, 2002).

For this reason, the final part of the whole research project will be focused on understanding what are the fundamental and workable elements required for a concrete implementation of a useful peer review model (with a bottom-up direction from practitioners’ experience to a theoretical model, without forgetting and mapping the already existing models in literature).

This objective will be pursued by conducting individual semi-structured interviews to “novice” and “expert-in service” teachers and by doing a content analysis of teachers’ reflective diaries for in-depth probing of peer review practices.

## REFERENCES

- Andresen, L.W. (2000). A Useable, Trans-Disciplinary Conception of Scholarship. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 19(2), 137-153.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/072943600445619>
- Avalos, B. (2011). Teacher Professional Development in «Teaching and Teacher Education» over Ten Years. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies*, 27(1), 10-20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.007>
- Call, K. (2018). Professional Teaching Standards: A Comparative Analysis of Their History, Implementation and Efficacy. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(3), 93-108.  
<https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2018v43n3.6>
- Commission of the European Communities (2005). *The Teaching Profession in Europe: Profile, Trends and Concerns. Report V: Reform of Teaching Professions*. Brussels: Eurydice.
- Cramerotti, S., Tacconi, G., & Perini M. (2019). *Self-perception And Self-evaluation Of Professional Competencies In A Group Of In-service Teachers. A Pilot Study*. Paper presented (oral presentation) at EERA-ECER 2019, Hamburg September 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>.  
<https://eera-ecer.de/ecer-programmes/conference/24/contribution/48783/>
- Danielson, C. (2007). *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Danielson, C. (2016). Creating Communities of Practice. *Educational Leadership*, 73(8), 18-23.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (1986). A Proposal for Evaluation in the Teaching Profession. *The Elementary School Journal*, 86(4), 530-551. <https://doi.org/10.1086/461466>
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2013). *Getting Teacher Evaluation Right: What Really Matters for Effectiveness and Improvement*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2015). Can Value Added Add Value to Teacher Evaluation?. *Educational Researcher*, 44(2), 132-137. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X15575346>

- Darling-Hammond, L. & Baratz-Snowden, J. (Eds.) (2005). *A Good Teacher in Every Classroom: Preparing the Highly Qualified Teachers Our Children Deserve*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Evans, B.R., Willis, F., & Moretti, M. (2015). Editor and Section Editor's Perspective Article: A Look at the Danielson Framework for Teacher Evaluation. *Journal of the National Association for Alternative Certification*, 10(1), 21-26.
- INDIRE (2018). *Indicazioni per il bilancio iniziale delle competenze*. Firenze: Indire.
- Lyons, N. (2002). The personal self in a public story: The portfolio presentation narrative. In N. Lyons, V. Kubler LaBoskey (Eds.) *Narrative inquiry in practice: Advancing the knowledge of teaching*, pp. 87-100. NY: Teachers College Press.
- MIUR (2015). DM 850 «Obiettivi, modalità di valutazione del grado di raggiungimento degli stessi, attività formative e criteri per la valutazione del personale docente ed educativo in periodo di formazione e di prova».
- MIUR (2016). DM 797 «Piano Nazionale Formazione Docenti».
- OECD (2009). *Evaluating and Rewarding the Quality of Teachers*. Paris: International Practices. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264034358-en>
- OECD (2014). *Talis 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, OECD Publishing.
- Perrenoud, P. (2002). *Dieci nuove competenze per insegnare*. Roma: Anicia.
- Sahay, M. (2019). Relationship between multiple intelligence, self-esteem and teacher competency among secondary school teachers. *People: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(1). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2019.51.460475>
- Sexe, F.S. (2020). An application of the team process capability model to team resilience factors. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2020.62.2232>
- Simsek, U., Turan, I., & Simsek, U. (2017). Social studies teachers' and teacher candidates' perceptions on prompt feedback and communicate high expectations. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(1). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2017.31.332345>
- UNESCO (2005). *Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability. Technical Paper n. 2*. Paris: Unesco.