

PROFESSIONAL VALUES TRAINING IN NORMAL SCHOOLS IN MEXICO IN AN UNCERTAINTY CONTEXT¹

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Abstract: In Mexico, teachers that instruct in primary and secondary levels of education are increasingly being evaluated by international and national policies and are being harshly judged by different social agents, such as mass communication media, public opinion, parents and entrepreneurs. Our country is continually evaluated and compared with other countries and has been located with very low levels of educational achievement. To attend this problem the government has proposed continual educational reforms that include diverse types of evaluation of schools, students, teachers and the institutions that are in charge of the preparation of the future teachers. However, these processes of actualization and reform haven't been articulated and there have been important changes in the labor conditions of these professionals, which has created great uncertainty. With an interview guide applied to 43 teachers, we found that teachers are interested in: a better cognitive knowledge and actualization; an approach to norms, rules and codes about values and ethical themes; the consequences of their professional

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decisions; the importance of team work and personal relations and communication. They consider themselves a behavioral model for their students and propose several ways to face the increasing uncertainty.

Keywords: basic education teachers, uncertainty, strategies to improve professional practices, professional values.

Resumen: En México, los profesores de educación básica están sometidos a crecientes procesos de evaluación que responden a políticas internacionales y nacionales y son duramente juzgados por diferentes actores sociales, tales como: medios de comunicación, opinión pública, padres de familia y empresarios. Nuestro país ha sido evaluado y comparado con otras naciones y ha sido calificado con bajos niveles educativos. Para responder a este problema, el gobierno ha propuesto reformas para la formación continua de los maestros y para la evaluación de escuelas, estudiantes, profesores e instituciones educativas responsables de la formación de nuevos profesores. Sin embargo, no ha habido una adecuada articulación de los procesos de actualización y se han producido cambios importantes en las condiciones laborales de los maestros, generando mayor incertidumbre. Con la aplicación de una guía de entrevista a 43 maestros, encontramos que están interesados en: profundizar sus conocimientos y en actualizarse, conocer las normas, reglas y códigos que se relacionan con valores y asuntos éticos; consecuencias de sus decisiones profesionales; la importancia del trabajo en equipo y la mejora de las relaciones personales y formas de comunicación. Se consideran modelos de comportamiento para sus estudiantes y proponen diversas maneras de enfrentar la creciente incertidumbre.

Palabras clave: profesores de educación básica, incertidumbre, estrategias para mejorar la práctica profesional, valores profesionales.

INTRODUCTION

In Mexico there are two parallel educational systems that train two types of teachers. One is in the universities and the other is in “Normal Schools”. In this article we will center our analysis in the second type.

We want to understand the preparation that teachers – that instruct in primary and secondary schools in Mexico – receive about professional ethics. We realize that this type of learning is developed in a complex context, in which there is an enormous influence and important changes from different sectors, such as: educational, social, cultural and political.



To research this theme, we applied a questionnaire and an attitude scale to find out the opinion on professional ethics of a sample of teachers that work in institutions in different Mexican regions.

As in other countries, in ours there is a tendency to evaluate teachers' practices following national and international guidelines. In international measurements, we have continuously obtained very low outcomes. The wide diffusion of these results has triggered several critiques from the social agents, such as: mass communication media, entrepreneurs and organizations that represent the students' families. This abundant and diversified criticism has contributed to deteriorate the social image of teachers from public schools. To face this problem, the Mexican educational system has implemented a set of actions and reforms oriented to improve the preparation of teachers in "Normal Schools".

We will present some theoretical elements about the uncertainty of the professional practice of teachers in Mexico and the classification of the answers given by the sample of the teachers that studied² the graduate program: "Specialization in Basic Tools for Educational Research" offered by the Autonomous University of the State of Morelos (UAEM) to two open questions: Obstacles that Normal Schools educators confront to train future teachers in professional values and Action proposals in professional values training.

1. SOME THEORETICAL ASPECTS

Globalization conceives the world as a unity and has imposed itself in all the areas of human life development. At the same time, the crisis of modernity, the growing uncertainty in the social and individual life and the weakening of most institutions has generated an important impact in the professional ethical behavior of teachers.

In this new scenario, the certainties in which we felt secure in the past, especially in relation to the "Benefactor State", are being displaced to a world without clear frontiers. Edgar Morin (2000) called this process the "loss of future". Like in many other sectors these days, professionals face uncertainty and insecurity in a future that is not predictable, especially regarding the possibility to obtain and preserve good jobs. The author considers that the actual knowledge must be questioned, because its construction depends on the cultural framework and in beliefs that are based on rationalities that have to be continually tested.

² These graduate students are also teachers in several "Normal Schools" across the country.



Professionals take important decisions in terms of knowledge and abilities as well as in practical and ethical issues. Different types of ethical conflicts and dilemmas may arise. Some of them are related to the promotion of innovations that can have negative consequences, such as the possibility to risk collective achievements (Morin, 2000).

The problem of uncertainty also refers to the “society at risk” expressed by Ulrich Beck (1998) in relation to the destruction of nature and the weakening of social life. This context has provoked new adscription forms articulated by the “sign of fear” that are constructed to be able to face real threats that risk human life in our planet. Dangers are real, but politicians tend to exaggerate them to impose issues that suppress liberty or to minimize them when they need to calm people down. Both types of actions can produce a lack of protection measures.

Sigmund Bauman (2001) also affirms that there is a process that diminishes the socialization of citizens and increases the weakening of the institutions. Professionals are affected by flexibility, distrust and loneliness. According to Bauman, the professional uncertainty is originated by new control mechanisms of work regulation that affect labor stability. One of these mechanisms is the “synoptic” vigilance, which places people in a situation of observing and copying good and bad behavior from ideal persons (for instance, successful artists, entrepreneurs and politicians), who are unreachable. An example of this process is the continuous reference in the educational discourse in Mexico to ideal professionals from other countries, in opposition to local teachers, who are always underestimated.

Alain Ehrenberg (2000) refers to a permanent state of conflict and depression. The ideal professional has to generate his own responsibility norms and the continuous improvement of his aptitudes. The institutions do not recognize these efforts “provoking a society signaled by neurosis to a society signaled by depression”.

We also agree with Mexican author Mario Rueda (2014), who recently published an article in which he refers to the uncertainty in the training of teachers in Mexico and the urgent need to consider the complexity of the socioeconomic problems that are emerging, that are forcing the educational institutions to take into account the present scenario of growing uncertainty and social pressure.

These ideas are not restricted to schools, because they are also relevant for teachers and their role in the institutions and communities where they work. This is very important for them because they will need to redefine the significance of their work and the limits and possibilities of their profession.

All these theoretical elements allow us to understand how the professional practices and the principles and norms of each profession have also been affected by this context of uncertainty in our country.



In Mexico, the educational reforms that are created to improve the professional practice of teachers in primary and secondary levels of education and also the initial and continuous training, have generated changes in their professional ethics.

In this article we are especially interested in analyzing the concerns and ethical proposals of teachers, taking into account the context of uncertainty that - as we indicated before - affects their work.

We consider that these concerns and proposals emerge as discursive practices that are present in institutions characterized by processes of increasing weakness. In these institutions there is a tendency to regulate the behavior of all their subjects and to restrict their freedom spaces. Even though we are all conditioned by the social context, in some institutions there are diverse possibilities to act in a non-regulated way. These possibilities promote initiative and responsibility.

We are interested in identifying in the teachers' discourse of some Mexican "Normal Schools", the obstacles and ethical proposals that they expressed in the training of new professionals.

The growing role of education in the current knowledge society, has forced institutions to perform a detailed and constant evaluation of teachers' practices. The low results obtained in national and international evaluations have generated strong criticism of the work of these professionals. This type of evaluation opposes the increasing demand of the subjects to take charge of their own preparation (Navia, 2013).

2. MEXICAN CONTEXT REGARDING THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS

In Mexico, school teachers' training was regulated for many years by the State and it was exclusively a function of "Normal Schools" and the Pedagogical National University. In our days, the educational offer for them is open to other alternatives, including private universities. This type of training has developed because of the increasing number of pre-school, primary and secondary schools. This expansion (that also includes the private "Normal Schools") has been disordered and unplanned. This situation has generated important problems in the material conditions and in its academic quality. As the actual teachers studied in this same type of institutions, the professional practice became inbreeding. The academic workers became very conservative and resistant to innovation. They are generally against educational reforms.

In 1984 this type of studies were recognized as university studies. Teachers were forced to widen their functions, to include research. They were not prepared to assume these new duties. In addition to that, the students in the "Normal Schools" before 1984 had only needed the secondary grade to access, but after this reform they required at



least a high school level. Different strategies were implemented to train teachers, but they have not been fully successful to achieve a different attitude towards higher education training.

3. PROCEDURE

In the research project, we used an instrument integrated by two strategies: an attitude scale about professional ethics (with 55 items) and five open questions with 43 teachers in 2013, at graduate level in the “Specialization in the Basic Tools for Educational Research” by the Autonomous University of the State of Morelos. The sample includes 56% women and 44% men. They are relatively young, as their age is distributed in the following ranges: 23% is less than 35; 38% is 36 to 45 and 37% between 46 and 55. Only 2% is older than 56. Many teachers already had graduate degrees when they entered the Specialization: Master (72%) and PhD (12%).

The analysis of the information obtained with the two open questions selected was developed by classifying it with the methodology of Content Analysis and generating categories and subcategories with all the answers. The categories are linked to four types of competencies: Cognitive and Technical, Ethics, Social, Affective –Emotional, and their 15 corresponding features.

4. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

4.1. *Obstacles when training future teachers*

The 194 answers that the teachers in the sample expressed about obstacles were classified in five types of competencies and 15 features (Table 1).

TABLE 1
Obstacles that teachers educators confront to train future teachers in professional values

| <i>Competencies and Features</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentages</i> | <i>Position</i> |
|--|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Social Competencies | 65 | 33.51 | |
| Problems generated with other socialization agents, especially with authorities and institutions | 38 | 19.59 | 1 |
| Lack of collaboration and communication | 15 | 7.73 | 4 |



| <i>Competencies and Features</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentages</i> | <i>Position</i> |
|---|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Conditions from the social and cultural context | 12 | 6.19 | 6 |
| Affective-Emotional Competencies | 58 | 29.90 | |
| Lack of disposition, change resistance and not feeling the necessity to improve | 35 | 18.04 | 2 |
| Uncertainty and emotional incapacity | 10 | 5.15 | 7 |
| Difficulties to acquire a professional identity | 7 | 3.61 | 10 |
| Being a negative role model | 6 | 3.09 | 11 |
| Cognitive and Technical Competencies | 38 | 19.59 | |
| Lack of knowledge and continuous training | 16 | 8.25 | 3 |
| Difficulties to research | 5 | 2.58 | 12 |
| Inadequate management processes | 9 | 4.64 | 8 |
| Insufficient didactic abilities | 8 | 4.12 | 9 |
| Ethical Competencies | 33 | 17.01 | |
| Lack of values (Respect, Honesty, Responsibility and Solidarity) and Immorality | 14 | 7.22 | 5 |
| Social Compromise | 6 | 3.09 | 11 |
| Professional ethics | 5 | 2.58 | 12 |
| Taking decisions without considering basic principles | 8 | 4.12 | 9 |
| TOTAL | 194 | 100 | |

Classification in relation to the types of competencies

Social Competencies³ (33.51% of all the answers) have the highest percentage. The main reason comes from the feature: “Problems generated with other socialization agents, especially with authorities and institutions” (19.59%). This feature appeared only in the Specialization we are analyzing. The other two in this type of competencies are: “Lack of collaboration and communication” (7.73%) and the “Conditions from the social and cultural context” (6.19%).

The next high percentage (29.90%) is part of the Affective–Emotional Competencies. The highest feature here is “Lack of disposition, change resistance and not feeling the necessity to improve” (18.04%). The other three are: “Uncertainty and emotional

³ This high percentage was a surprise, because in other research projects in Mexico, such as the *Interuniversity Project about Professional Ethics*, coordinated in the National Autonomous University of Mexico, this type of competencies obtained low scores.



incapacity (5.15%); “Difficulties to acquire a professional identity” (3.61%) and “Being a negative role model” (3.09%).

In a lower percentage, there are the Cognitive and Technical Competencies (19.59%), which have two cognitive features: “Lack of knowledge and continuous training (8.25%) and “Research difficulties” (2.58%). The two technical features are: “Inadequate management processes” (4.64%) and “Insufficient didactic abilities” (4.12%).

In the lowest level, we found the Ethical Competencies (17.01%) that include four features: “Lack of values (respect, honesty, responsibility and solidarity) and immorality” (7.22%); Social Compromise (3.09%); “Taking decisions without considering basic principles” (4.12%) and Professional Ethics (2.58%).

Classification in relation to the 15 features

There are seven features that obtained more than 5%: “Problems generated with other socialization agents”; “Lack of disposition, change resistance and not feeling the necessity to improve”; “Lack of knowledge and continuous training”; “Lack of collaboration and communication”; “Lack of values and immorality”; “Conditions from the social and cultural context” and “Uncertainty and emotional incapability”.

With less than 5%, there are other eight features: “Inadequate management processes”; “Insufficient didactic abilities”; “Taking decisions without considering basic principles”; “Difficulties to acquire a professional identity”; “Being a negative role model”; “Social Compromise”; “Professional ethics” and “Difficulties to research”.

Some findings

We can conclude this section with the affirmation that the main obstacles when training new teachers in professional values, according to the sample from the Autonomous University of the State of Morelos, are social (“Problems generated with other socialization agents”) and affective-emotional (“Lack of disposition, change resistance and not feeling the necessity to improve”).

The teachers expressed a lack of coherence and congruence between the system and the actions that are performed by the institutional actors. This is manifested in non-ethical behavior, given the fact that norms are applied in a discretionary way, or simply, not followed.

These constraints include the existence of problems concerning educational and institutional policies among different agents of socialization, preponderantly through official, institutional and union authorities. The responses indicate “power abuse”, “non-compliance to a regulatory framework”, “unmeasured ambition over the common good”, “anti-ethical practices”, “paternalism”, “unilateral decision-making”, “system and



institutional corruption” and “apathy”, among others. At this point, some of them describe institutions as closed systems which prioritize decisions on student policies and trade union policies. In addition to these traits, a “lack of institutional compromise”, a “lack of institutional support” and “traffic of influences” was presented.

In relation to the last aspect, they refer to a non-ethical practice that is common within Normal Schools. This aspect involves situations where students are accepted in the graduate programs under a “recommendation”. This means that some students are not admitted based on their academic evaluation, but because of the pressure from authorities with a high level of influence – most regularly political. These students avoid administrative and academic selection procedures.

These non-ethical behaviors within institutional agents can be used as a model or as an example to be followed mainly by students. In this manner, the set of institutions involved in decision-making, regulation and operation of educative policies, trade union institutions and Normal Schools, configure a complex cultural context. This context favors the acquisition of certain rules and practices by the teachers, as well as the training practices that are being acquired by their students. In that sense, some of the teachers of the sample talked about an “occult curriculum” and a “difficulty to articulate personal interests with curricular interests” during the development of their professional exercise.

The feature “Lack of disposition, change resistance and not feeling the necessity to improve”-as an obstacle for the integration of values, referred to three elements: lack of disposition, the performance regarding values and the importance of the context. The lack of disposition to act in relation to values is associated to attitude problems, lack of interest, apathy, demotivation, denial, rigidity and self-regulation that is based on sufficiency.

Some responses that illustrate this last sufficiency aspect are: “ignorance or self-sufficiency”, “self-valorization of the thought that they are good people”, “the idea that their educational performance is the highest”, “the conscious and non-conscious acceptance of the fact that there is no other better way to do what has to be done”, the idea that “everything can be done” and “being arrogant”. All these factors help us to understand that a teacher may consider professional identity as an obstacle. This self-regulatory mechanism shows that some of them center their attention on the certainty in respect to themselves, more than on self-criticism and reflection.

About the importance of the context, the responses are linked to a cultural context that is an obstacle to values training. The beliefs that are transmitted generationally, e.g. the family culture, prejudices and myths, routines, etc., produce resistance forms to change and innovation. These two elements: “Problems generated with other socialization agents” and “Lack of disposition, change resistance and not feeling the necessity



to improve” may indicate a deficiency of socialization between the teachers and their articulation with educational institutions and with society.

As for the responses in the feature “Uncertainty and emotional incapability”, it can be observed that they recognize some presence of socio-affective obstacles for the formation on values that are linked to a capacity to tolerate uncertainty. Among these obstacles are: “formation of a character”, “fear to autonomy”, “avoiding freedom”, “blockage”, “burnout syndrome”, “fear to be criticized”, “low credibility” and a “lack of empathy, culture and solidarity”.

We can hypothesize that there is a relation between these obstacles and the strong resistance to change. All this affects the possibility to empower them as a significant professional sector.

4.2. *Actions proposals by teachers on professional values*

All the answers (183) that the sample of teachers expressed in the open questions about actions that should be promoted on professional values were classified in five types of competencies and 16 features⁴ (Table 2).

TABLE 2
Action proposals by teachers for professional values training, classified by types of competencies and features

| <i>Competencies and Features</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentages</i> | <i>Position</i> |
|--|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Ethical Competencies | 44 | 24.04 | |
| Values | 32 | 17.48 | 1 |
| Social compromise | 9 | 4.92 | 8 |
| Professional ethics | 3 | 1.64 | 12 |
| Affective-Emotional Competencies | 43 | 23.50 | |
| Personal identity and emotional capacity | 18 | 9.8 | 2 |
| Being a role model and experiencing values | 18 | 9.8 | 2 |
| Professional identity | 7 | 3.8 | 10 |
| Cognitive Competencies | 36 | 19.67 | |

⁴ In the open question about the obstacles to promote professional values, we put together the cognitive and technical competencies. In the open question about the action proposals, the two types of competencies remained separated.



| <i>Competencies and Features</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentages</i> | <i>Position</i> |
|---|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Continuous training | 10 | 5.46 | 6 |
| Research | 12 | 6.56 | 5 |
| Knowledge | 10 | 5.46 | 6 |
| Innovation | 5 | 2.73 | 11 |
| Social Competencies | 35 | 19.13 | |
| Link with authorities, institutions and politics in education | 15 | 8.20 | 3 |
| Collaboration actions | 13 | 7.10 | 4 |
| Communication | 7 | 3.83 | 9 |
| Technical Competencies | 25 | 13.66 | |
| Value promotion | 7 | 3.83 | 9 |
| Didactic abilities | 7 | 3.83 | 9 |
| Management processes | 6 | 5.4 | 7 |
| TOTAL | 183 | 100.00 | |

Classification in relation to the types of competencies

The higher percentage is located in the Ethical Competencies (24.04%) and then: the Affective-Emotional (23.50%), Cognitive (19.67%), Social (19.13%) and Technical (13.66).

The features of the Ethical Competencies are: “Values” (17.48%), with the following subcategories: Ethics and values in general (mentioned 12 times), Respect (8), Honesty (5), Tolerance (3), Responsibility (2) and Attachment to truth and Justice (one time each). This feature was the highest of all the frequencies. The other two features are Social Compromise (4.92%) and Professional Ethics (1.64%).

The Affective–Emotional Competencies have three features. Two of them have the same percentage: “Personal identity and emotional capacity” (9.8%), which integrates several answers such as: empathy, being conscious of mistakes and limitations, capacity to face uncertainty, personality development, assuming the profession as a life project, self recognition, coherence and motivation and “Being a role model and experiencing values” (9.8%). The third is “Professional identity” (3.8%).

In the Cognitive Competencies we located four features: “Research” (6.5%), “Continuous training” (5.4%), Knowledge (5.4%) and Innovation (2.7%).

The Social Competencies are: “Link with authorities, institutions and politics in education” (8.2%), “Collaboration actions” (7.1%) and “Communication” (3.8%).

The Technical Competencies include: “Management processes” (5.4%), which refer to students’ admission and evaluation processes, projects and programs development



and leadership and conflict management; Value promotion” (3.8%) and “Didactic abilities” (3.8%).

Classification in relation to the features

The nine features that obtained more than 5% are: “Values” (17.48%); “Personal identity and emotional capacity”; “Relation with authorities, institutions and educational policies”; “Collaboration”; “Research”; “Being a role model and experiencing values”, “Continuous training”; “Knowledge” and “Management processes”.

The seven features that have less than 5% are: “Social compromise”, “Communication” “Value promotion”, “Didactic abilities”; “Professional identity”, “Innovation” and “Professional ethics”.

Some findings

Even though the open question was about proposals of professional values, the feature of professional identity obtained a low percentage. Values in general were the highest.

To promote the interiorization of values, the teachers of the sample proposed the development of strategies that include the knowledge of values that are part of the professional practice and the form in which these values were constructed. In the same fashion, they proposed to “recognize the vital values of the professional exercise”, as well as the profile that is intended in Normal Schools. This entails the opportunity “to favor the moral development of students” and the “training of ethic competencies”. The most mentioned values are: “respect to the rules without any preferential decisions” and “respect for other people’s opinions”.

On a second level, the features “Personal identity and emotional capability” and “Being a role model and experiencing values” were also expressed by the teachers in the sample. In relation to personal identity, they indicated that in order to promote the values training within the Normal Schools, it is important to assume teaching as a “life project” or as a “life career”. This implies that they should develop self-regulation forms that could orient them towards a path that involves self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-consciousness of their own limitations, and in this way, work out how to solve these limitations.

Other aspects that need to be considered are “critical judgment” and “being coherent with one’s words and one’s actions”. They said that a teacher who is motivated is able to transmit the “love for work”, “appreciate that people think differently” and “foster empathy with students and other individuals”. In a dimension that is linked to the context, they also indicated the need to develop actions that enable to “face adverse realities” and to “transform the environment”.



Another feature that is commonly mentioned is “Being a role model and experiencing values”. The experience – according to what some of the individuals interviewed responded – cannot be separated from the promotion of values. They proposed “to experience values in personal and professional life”, “to practice values”, “to live values”, “to reflect on the importance of values in society” and “relate them with our professional and personal existence”.

The relevance of values as an experience was associated to the ideal of the teacher as a model. They gave the following responses: “to be the example of the values that we promote”, “to apply them day-by-day”, “to set an example with our actions”, “to be an example to trainers”, “to be a personal and professional example”, “to become a role model” and “to be a model as a professional and a citizen”.

It seems that the teachers in our sample were not able to identify the central values of their own profession. They preferred ethical competencies in general and characteristics of personal identity and emotional capability. It would be interesting to further research this outcome, which is probably related to the uncertainty conditions in which they develop their work.

The teachers studied placed the training of professional values in the variety of institutional links. This probably explains the dependence that teachers in basic education (pre-school, primary and secondary) have to the centralized educational politics by the Public Education Ministry and the Teachers’ Union. These national institutions have strongly restricted the autonomy of educational professionals.

4.3. Comparative findings between the two open questions

The features that were similar in the answers to the two open questions were in the highest percentages: “Link with authorities and institutions”, “Values in general”, “Knowledge and continuous training”, “Personal identity and emotional capacity” and “Collaboration”. In the lowest percentages are “Professional ethics”, “Social compromise”, “Professional identity” and “Didactic abilities”.

We found some differences between the answers. “Communication” obtained high scores in the question about obstacles. In the item about proposals it has a low level. The opposite occurs in “Management processes” and “Research”, which have a high percentage in proposals and a low one in obstacles. Research is the lowest in the first question.

The feature “Lack of disposition, change resistance and not feeling the necessity to improve” appeared as an important concern, but it is not mentioned in the proposals. The same thing happens with “Conditions from the cultural and social context” and “Taking decisions without considering basic principles”.



“Being a model” in the obstacles question is in a low level and it is in a high position in the proposals. The teachers of the sample didn’t recognize the feature “Innovation” as an obstacle.

5. CONCLUSION

In Mexico, teachers in “Normal Schools” have been subjected to contradictory measures. On the one hand, they have to fulfill duties that were designed for the universities. Besides, the present conditions of the organizational structure and the training system force them to reproduce old teaching practices. These situations have provoked uneasiness and uncertainty, weakened their personal and professional identity and have pushed the significant theme of professional ethics aside as a secondary item.

In the information gathered with the two open questions (obstacles and proposals) we found uncertain answers, which reflect the difficulty they have to distinguish their main problems and necessities and the possibility to find alternative actions.

However, they recognize the effect that the social culture has on their beliefs and professional practices. A high presence of values has been encountered, especially in the proposals of actions to train on professional values. What prevails behind these actions’ proposals is a confessional or vocational discourse. This can be acknowledged through the affirmation: “preach through practice” and the emphasis given to the figure of the teacher as a role model to be followed.

In both the questions analyzed in this article, professional identity does not appear as a central preoccupation; however, personal identity and other aspects related to the emotional capability of teachers, appeared as a significant concern.

A surprising fact is that the cognitive competencies occupied the third place in the responses. Within the studies conducted on professional ethics by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Hirsch, 2010), these types of competencies were located in the highest level. In the sample, however, two features occupied a certain level of concern: the continuous training (contained in the question related to obstacles) and research (contained in the question related to actions). Normal Schools are considered higher education institutions, and therefore, knowledge constitutes one of the substantive functions in all its facets: creation, transmission, dissemination and preservation. It is worrisome that these types of competencies were not highly appreciated.

We also found some interesting proposals that relate to the recognition of uncertainty as part of their reality and context. In the question about obstacles, for example, as we previously indicated, there were relevant answers related to: “Lack of disposition, change



resistance and not feeling the necessity to improve” and “Conditions from the cultural and social context”.

The presence of self-regulatory strategies in the teachers that re-affirm their principles and practices based on certainty and sufficiency reveal a lack of disposition to assume a reflexive and critical attitude with respect to their beliefs, norms and professional practices. This implies the difficulty to assume the challenges of training new teachers within the context of uncertainty and to assume their own formative process on professional ethics.

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