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THEORY AND METHODOLOGY OF THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE TEACHING STAFF - A NEW DIRECTION OF RESEARCH IN EDUCATION SCIENCES¹

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Abstract: The article presents the essential ideas of a new research direction in Education Sciences: the **Theory and methodology of the professionalization of the teaching staff**. An important issue in the process of continuing vocational training is the development of professional skills of teachers connected to new national and international professional standards. Lifelong learning promotes the competence of all individuals to manage their change and build their future in professional and personal activity, in response to threats and opportunities related to demographic change, the climate crisis, the rapid evolution of technology. In this context, a priority place in the educational policy documents at international level belongs to the professionalization of teachers, based on the significant socio-psychopedagogical conditions for achieving the established performance objectives and making important decisions in the field of continuous professional training of teachers.

Keywords: professionalization, teachers, lifelong learning, professional competences, teacher professionalization theory, professionalization paradigm, professionalization referential.

TEORIA ȘI METODOLOGIA PROFESIONALIZĂRII CADRELOR DIDACTICE – O NOUĂ DIRECȚIE DE CERCETARE ÎN ȘTIINȚELE EDUCAȚIEI

Rezumat: Articolul prezintă ideile esențiale ale unei noi direcții de cercetare în științele educației: **Teoria și metodologia profesionalizării cadrelor didactice**. O problemă importantă în procesul de formare profesională continuă vizează dezvoltarea competențelor profesionale ale cadrelor didactice racordate la noile standarde profesionale naționale și internaționale. Învățarea pe tot parcursul vieții promovează competența tuturor persoanelor de a-și gestiona schimbarea și de a-și construi viitorul în activitatea profesională și personală, ca răspuns la amenințările și oportunitățile legate de schimbările demografice, criza climatică, evoluția rapidă a tehnologiei. În contextul dat, un loc prioritar în documentele de politici educaționale la nivel internațional revine profesionalizării cadrelor didactice, reieșind din condițiile socio-psiopedagogice semnificative pentru realizarea obiectivelor de performanță stabilite și luarea deciziilor importante în domeniul de formare profesională continuă a cadrelor didactice.

Cuvinte-cheie: profesionalizare, cadre didactice, învățarea pe tot parcursul vieții, competențe profesionale, teoria profesionalizării cadrelor didactice, paradigma de profesionalizare, referențial de profesionalizare.

ABBREVIATIONS:

CPT – continuous professional training
EU – European Union
Abrevieri: FPC - formare profesională continuă
UE – Uniunea Europeană

Introduction. Lifelong learning and continuous professional training become strictly necessary activities for the employees in the field of work, and the educational context requires significant investments in the development of the professional competences of the teaching staff.

UNESCO has presented a report on a new vision of lifelong learning by 2050, stressing the need to promote a culture of learning that could meet societal challenges by restoring a holistic vision of lifelong learning [1].

Thus, lifelong learning provides opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship by developing the professional competences of teachers and creates more cohesive and sustainable communities.

In this sense, the professionalization of the teaching staff becomes an imperative of the today's

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society. An important problem, recognized by the actors involved in education, in general, and in the process of continuous professional training, in particular, is aimed at developing the professional skills of the teaching staff connected to the new professional standards.

The *Commission's Communication on the Agenda for Skills in Europe* proposes EU actions in the field of education and training to support partnerships on the development of professional competences, qualification, requalification and empowering lifelong learning [9]. A major objective concerns the *Competences Pact* (action 1. Establishing a Pact for the development of professional competences and action 2. Consolidating information on the development of professional competences), launched during the *European Week of Professional Competences*, where it is emphasized the need to develop professional competences in the context of online learning throughout life [8].

The key component in the continuous professional training program is the professional competences of the teaching staff, which must be continuously developed to meet the demands of the society both nationally and internationally. Another goal regarding continuous professional training refers to the implementation of a teaching career management system with a high degree of flexibility to offer the diversification of professional paths for the development of the teaching career.

The professionalization of the teaching career is one of the objectives aimed at the quality of education worldwide, and the policies proposed by the European Union converge towards a common vision of this goal.

Once again, we highlight that one of the directions of streamlining the continuous professional training of teachers emphasizes the need for judicious correlation between the needs of professional development and the curricula implemented in the educational system. This desideratum can be achieved by implementing a paradigm and methodological tools for professionalizing teachers, correlated with societal challenges and current trends.

Such a paradigm and the proposed tools can generate connections between the basic components of continuing vocational training from the perspective of lifelong learning, ensuring the functionality of the continuing vocational training system. Scientific research in the field is shaped according to the socio-psychopedagogical reality, demonstrated by actuality and necessity in different periods of scientific evolution: the permanent need for continuous

professional training is accentuated with each stage of social development that causes uncertainties, contradictions, new dimensioning and value reconceptualization.

The purpose of the research consists in the analysis of educational policies in the field, which mentions that the professional training of the teaching staff is a priority of the society in general and of the CPT system, in particular, approached holistically to achieve an essential mission: professionalization of the teaching staff (the development of professional competences correlated with societal, professional and personal needs).

An important role with reference to continuous professional training is played by the epistemological values contained in the national educational policy documents, such as: *the Education Code* [3], *the Standards of teachers' continuous training in general secondary education (2007)* [2], *the Regulation on adults' training continuous education (2017)* [10], *the Methodology for developing adult vocational training programmes and curriculum in lifelong learning (2023)* [7], *the Regulation for teachers' attestation in general, professional technical education and psycho-pedagogical assistance services (2020)* [11] etc.

In this regard, the research carried out introduced a new research direction in Education Sciences at national level the **Theory and methodology of the professionalization of the teaching staff**.

The research carried out will contribute to the development of continuous professional training programs for teachers according to individual, institutional, local, national professional needs.

Results and discussions. The analysis of concepts, paradigms, theories, conceptions, theoretical approaches, models generated in the context of Education Sciences, promoted in education policy documents, directed the research to substantiate a theory in Education Sciences: **Theory of the professionalization of the teaching staff**.

Thus, from the perspective of research needs, the **Theory of the professionalization of the teaching staff** is the result of theoretical analyzes and syntheses, scientific reflections on the development of systemic-holistic and action-strategic approaches to the process of FPC of the teaching staff (Figure 1).

The effort of the analyzes to determine the theoretical specificity of the system and the process of the continuous professional training of the teaching staff led us notably towards the elucidation of a series of theories, which represent the scientific foundations and constitute the basic benchmark in

the modeling of a construct of relevance, contributing to the scientific foundation of the **Theory of the professionalization of the teaching staff**.

In the given context, the **Theory of the professionalization of the teaching staff** consists of the key concepts: continuous professional training, professional competences of the teaching staff,

professionalization, represented by the behaviorist, cognitivist, constructivist, action paradigms, focused on theories and models, action-strategic principles and functions of CPT, development of the professional identity and the dimensions of the professionalization of the teaching staff.

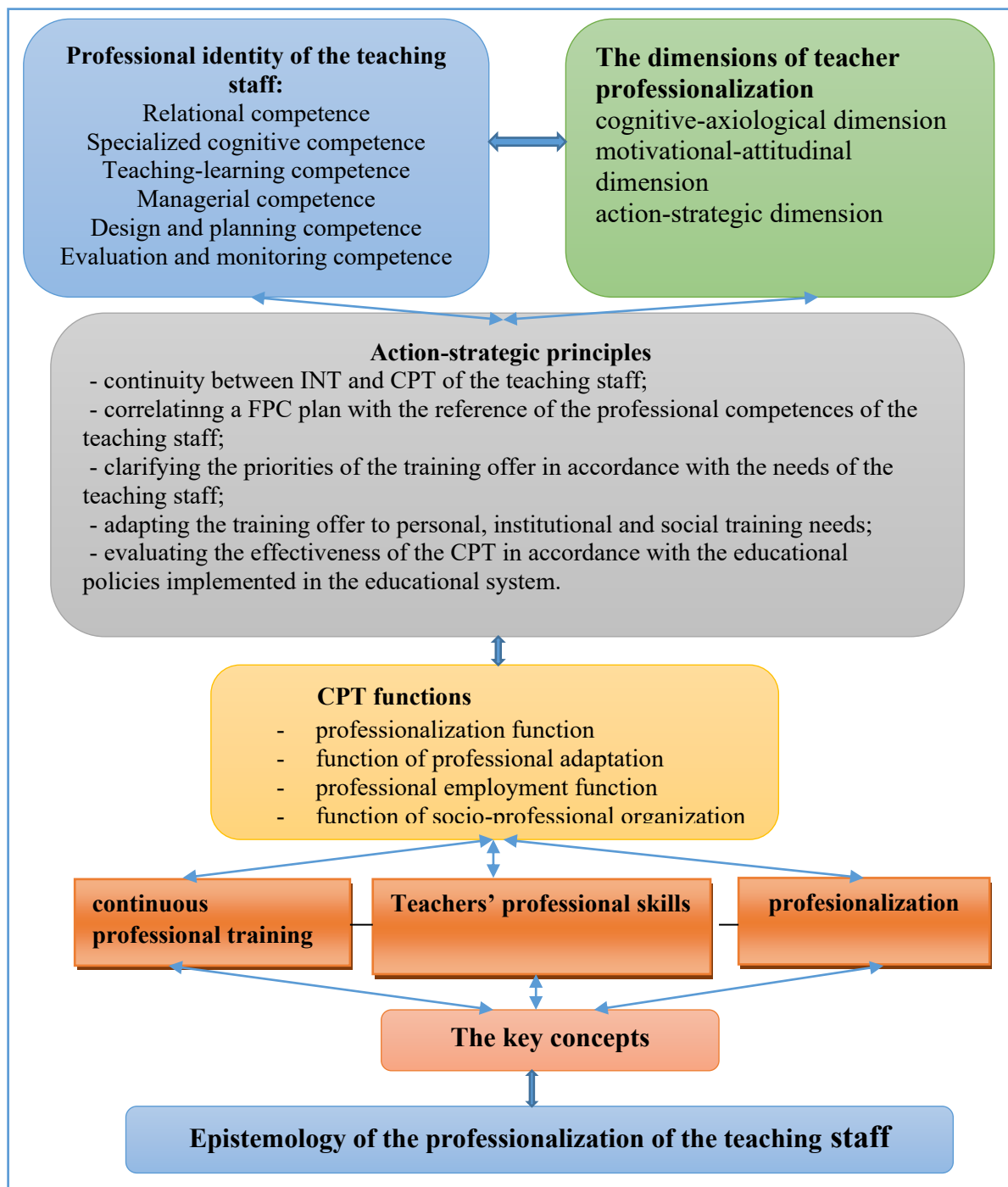


Figure 1. Theory of the professionalization of the teaching staff

As a result of the analysis and synthesis of paradigms, theories and models, we present the epistemological benchmarks regarding the professionalization of the teaching staff in Table 1.

Table 1. Epistemology of the professionalization of the teaching staff

Paradigms	Theories and models	Conceptual significances
The behaviorist paradigm	<i>theory of learning through conditioning</i> (E. L. Thorndike)	„learning is essentially subordinated to the action of the following laws: readiness, exercise and effect” [6, p. 42];
	<i>classical conditioning theory</i> (I. Pavlov)	„the presence of the unconditioned stimulus for an activity through the repeated combination of a neutral original stimulus..., which lead to the satisfaction of primary needs” [6, p. 43];
	<i>the theory of learning by association</i> (E. R. Guthrie)	„learning essentially depends on interests and inclinations” [6, p. 44];
	<i>probabilistic theories of learning</i> (B.F. Skinner's operant conditioning)	it emphasizes the role of feedback and its importance for the teaching-learning-evaluation process;
	systems theory of behavior (C. L. Hull)	„there are two elements that must be transferred: equivalence of stimuli (explained on the basis of generalization) and equivalence of responses (depends on their oscillation)” [6, p. 46];
	<i>learning orientation theory</i> (E. C. Tolman)	„learning processes arise as a result of specific orderings of impulse objectives that are repeatedly presented to the body” [6, p. 47];
	behaviorist (behavioral) models	<i>full learning</i> (Bloom, Carroll) or <i>directed instruction</i> (Glaser and Becker, 1981, 1992): the basis of the act of learning is self-determination and self-responsibility;
	<i>learning personal control</i> : (Rimm and Masters, 1974, 1986; Thorsen and Mahoney, 1974, 1996);	it emphasizes the presence of feedback for changing personal behavior and develops self-management strategies for the pupils involved in learning;
	<i>assertion learning</i> (Alberti and Emmons, 1978, 1989)	it emphasizes the analysis of interpersonal and group communication in order to avoid stressful situations arising in the educational process;
	<i>learning by imitation</i> (A. Bandura)	It analyzes social behavioral mechanisms and distinguishes the following operations present in imitation processes.
The cognitivist paradigm	<i>cognitive theories:</i>	<i>the operational theory of learning</i> (P. I. Galperin), <i>the theory of psychogenesis of knowledge and intellectual operations</i> (J. Piaget), <i>the genetic-cognitive and structural theory</i> (J. S. Bruner), <i>the theory of cumulative-hierarchical learning</i> (R. Gagné), <i>the theory of cognitive organizers and anticipatory progress</i> (D. P. Ausbel), <i>holodynamic theory of learning</i> .
	<i>operational theory of learning</i> (P. I. Galperin)	it focuses on the operational structure of human activities and on the orientation of cognitive-reflexive and action types of activity;
	<i>the theory of psychogenesis of knowledge and intellectual operations</i> (J. Piaget)	knowledge of the external world begins with the immediate use of things;
	<i>genetic-cognitive and structural theory</i> (J. S. Bruner)	in the learning process, the emphasis must be on discovery, placing the child in a situation to solve problems;
	<i>cumulative-hierarchical learning theory</i> (R. Gagné)	knowledge is ordered in a systematized series, ranked according to the criterion from simple to complex (first a simple ability is learned, then a complex one);
	<i>theory of cognitive and anticipatory progress organizers</i> (D. P. Ausbel)	learning is seen from two perspectives: from the product of knowledge (receptive learning and discovery learning) and from the mechanism of understanding the meaning of learning (conscious learning and mechanical learning);
	<i>holodynamic theory of learning</i> (R. Titone)	six new types of learning: learning attitudes, dispositions, motivations; opinions and beliefs; intellectual and/or volitional self-control; capabilities; social; organizational capabilities;
	<i>cognitive development</i> (I. Neacșu)	it represents a synthesis of the interactions between cognition, metacognition and social cognition, between thinking, intelligence and the other initial complex cognitive processes (perception, representation, memory, imagination);

	<i>metacognition</i> (I. Neacșu)	the cognitive processing of information, by developing the self-regulation capacities of learning;
	<i>social cognition</i> (M. Șleahțițchi)	at the basis there are interpersonal relationships, which strengthen the professional and social community;
Constructivist paradigm	<i>the psychological theories of learning</i> (adapted to the teaching staff): a) <i>models based on constructivist schemes:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - derived from <i>associationist theories</i>, as a process of accumulation and processing of sensory experience; - derived from <i>theories of learning through conditioning</i>; - based on semiotic (verbal) theories of learning; - based on <i>the operational theories of learning</i>;
	a) <i>models of psychological approach to the teaching staff training process (adapted to the field of continuous professional training):</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>the logocentric model</i>, based on notional, logical learning; - <i>the empiriocentric model</i>, built on the valorization of the trainee's varied experiences in the action of independent knowledge; - <i>the technocentric model</i>, centered on efficiency and performance in education, as well as on the rationalization of the teaching-learning process, in the sense of decomposing learning into component operations [6, p. 69]; - <i>the sociocentric model</i>, emphasizes the social organization of learning [6, p. 69]; - <i>the psychocentric model</i>, in which the focus falls on the learning subject: the theory of formal stages of intellectual knowledge, centers of interest, the model of full learning, the model of cumulative sequences [4, 5]. - <i>the formative model</i>, centered on the idea of personality formation; (the essential components represent the epistemology of constructivism and the skills needed in the initial training of the teaching staff, mentions V. Gh. Cojocaru; - <i>the modular model</i>, centered on the holistic and holodynamic approach to learning; - <i>the informational model</i>, based on cognitivist, cybernetic ideas and modern technologies; - <i>the model of the didactic action</i>, based on the formation of sets of action, learning, on the structuring of the content and on the orientation of the learning process, according to current theories;
Socio-constructivist paradigm	<i>Constructivist, sociological and interactive dimensions.</i>	- the construction of meanings by the members of some social groups; the activities and products made within a group as a whole help to shape the members' behavior within the group;
Action paradigm	<i>action theories</i> (J. Piaget)	- it emphasizes behavior, conduct from the general perspective of development; learning is based on the processes of assimilation and accommodation, considered parts of a unitary and qualitatively balanced process. That's why according to these theories, in the event of discord between the objectives and the subject or situation, the continuous professional training process will be oriented to produce a rebalancing between assimilation and accommodation.

The teacher professionalization pathway should focus on a combination of CPT standards and CPT programs of the teachers' choice to achieve them. Access for the development of the professionalization path should be open and flexible, based on performance levels, on criteria for each stage of career development. In the given context, is is needed ***a new paradigm of CPT from the perspective of the professionalization of the teaching staff*** in the continuous professional training system (Figure 2).

In the view of our research, the concept of open professionalism represents the totality of so-

cio-psycho-pedagogical conditions, which define the presence of a rigorous system of selection and recruitment of the teaching staff, drawing a conceptual and methodological framework for the professionalization of the teaching staff, based on the development of a continuous professional training system of the teaching staff.

Thus, an important step in the development of the professional competences of the teaching staff is *the rethinking of the set of professional competences required by them and the entire CPT program and CPT curriculum*, which requires systemic changes,

targeting aspects of the educational policy in the CPT field, the general conception and the CPT contents, the institutional structures and their way of functioning, according to *the new CPT model*, which assumes new purposes in the professional development of the teaching staff.

The methodological dimension of the teachers' professionalization in CPT aims at: the praxiological construct of the teachers' professionalization made through the *CPT Referential from the perspective of the professionalization of the teaching staff*, which contains: the socio-psycho-pedagogical conditions,

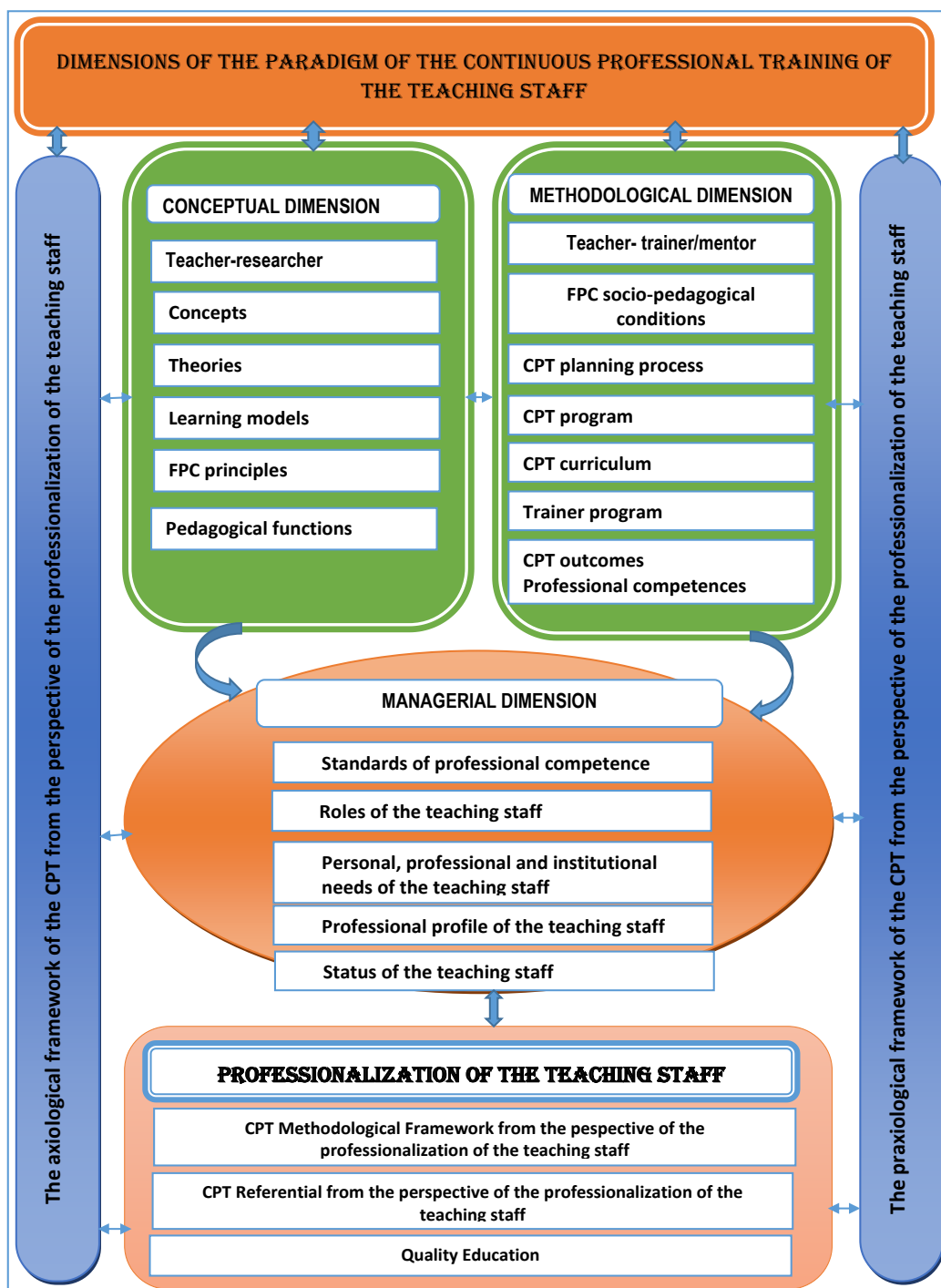


Figure 2. Paradigm of the professionalization of the teaching staff

the outcomes of CPT/professional competences, the planning of the CPT process, the CPT program, the CPT curriculum, the trainer's program and the tools for identifying the teachers' professionalization needs, etc., all constituting units of the *CPT Paradigm from the perspective of the professionalization of the teaching staff*.

In conclusions, the scientific foundation of the *Theory of the professionalization of the teaching staff* allowed the conceptualization of the *CPT Paradigm from the perspective of the professionalization of the teaching staff* based on the conceptual, methodological and managerial dimensions of the CPT of the teaching staff.

The Paradigm of CPT from the perspective of the professionalization of the teaching staff represents

the axiological framework and the praxiological framework of CPT, the change of theoretical and practical aspects as a more effective solution in CPT, the professionalization path in search of a new balance between societal challenges and CPT requirements of the teaching staff, is a new model of the approach and interpretation of the educational reality through its components.

The Paradigm of CPT from the perspective of the professionalization of the teaching staff identified the elaboration of the *CPT Methodological Framework from the perspective of the professionalization of the teaching staff*, which can serve as a basis for the theoretical and praxiological foundation of the CPT of the teaching staff from the perspective of the professionalization of the teaching staff.

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