

Pedagogical reforms in the initial training of Moroccan teachers: The emergence of a new training paradigm and new concepts

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Abstract

In recent decades, all countries in the world, including Morocco, have embarked on far-reaching reforms of their education systems in order to improve performance and efficiency. The initial training of future Moroccan teachers has been the subject of an innovative reform. The Ministry of National Education has chosen the integrative sandwich system as the preferred method of professionalising training. The aim of this training policy was to train competent professionals capable of meeting the many current challenges and putting in place effective practices to respond to the realities of the profession.

The choice of vocational training based on integrative alternation was the preferred strategy of the Moroccan reformists. They wanted to set up a training system capable of meeting all these challenges:

- ✓ Strengthening and revitalising initial training,
- ✓ Rethink the curriculum,
- ✓ Renew the educational architecture,
- ✓ Implement new teaching practices,
- ✓ Promoting a better match between training and employment.

What are the results of this reform? Have the desired changes been achieved? Have we succeeded in renewing the training of future teachers by putting in place new practices that integrate both academic knowledge and

professional action? Have the clinical approach and teachers' reflection on their own practice replaced the juxtaposition and disciplinary approach to teachers' pedagogical practices?

In most cases, the reforms fail to introduce the intended changes. Is this due to the ideas brought about by the reform itself or rather to the lack of preparation on the part of users to implement the desired change? Knowing that every player in the education system can show resistance to change, practitioners have more power than others to block or slow down change. This is also true of the reform aimed at renewing the curriculum.

The success of a reform project depends on collective support for a common project where each member feels involved and where personal challenges are met.

Keywords: Recent reforms, New training paradigm, New concepts, Expected changes

Introduction

In response to the growing needs of Moroccan society, educational reforms have been introduced to improve the education and training system. These reforms aim to introduce a new training paradigm that emphasises professionalisation, alternation and reflexivity. Professionalisation aims to produce competent and qualified teachers, while alternation involves collaboration between training in the university environment and training in the workplace. Reflexivity aims to encourage teachers to reflect on their own practice and adapt to the needs of their pupils. The aim of these innovative concepts is to enhance the quality of teaching and improve educational outcomes for Moroccan pupils.

Two decades have passed since the introduction of the National Education and Training Charter (CNEF), and a decade since the launch of the Emergency Plan; both reforms led to strategic decisions being taken to create both university education streams (FUE) and regional education and training centres (CRMEF).

In this respect, we ask ourselves the following question: how much have we gained from the new training policy and what is its added value?

Issues

Most of the reforms introduced by the Moroccan government do not succeed in introducing the changes envisaged. Is this because of the ideas put forward by the reform itself, or rather because users are not prepared to mobilise the desired change?

It is possible that the reforms driven by the Moroccan state will not succeed in introducing the changes envisaged because of several factors.

Firstly, it is likely that the ideas brought about by the reform itself are not sufficiently well defined or are not sufficiently adapted to the real needs of the Moroccan educational environment. It is also likely that the reforms are not sufficiently supported by the relevant authorities, or that the human and financial resources needed to implement them are not sufficient.

In addition, users may not be well prepared to mobilise the desired change. Teachers, school administrators and students may not be sufficiently trained to use the new ideas and tools proposed by the reform, or may not be sufficiently motivated to change their existing practices. Reforms can also be met with resistance, particularly when they depart from established norms and practices.

It is therefore important to take all these factors into account when introducing educational reforms, and to integrate them into a global approach that takes into account the real needs of the educational environment. It is also important to put in place a monitoring and evaluation system to measure the results of the reform and to adjust policies and practices accordingly.

It is vital to encourage the active participation of key players in education, such as teachers, headteachers and students, in all stages of the reform, from planning to implementation and evaluation. This will ensure that the ideas and practices proposed by the reform are in line with the real needs of the educational environment and that the key players are committed and empowered to implement them.

Provide training mechanisms for key players in education to enable them to adapt to the new ideas and tools proposed by the reform. This will certainly provide ongoing support for the active education players involved in implementing the reform in a reliable manner without any drift.

In short, reforms must be planned on the basis of the real needs of the education environment, and education stakeholders must be involved and supported throughout the reform process.

Emergence of a new training paradigm :

Current educational reforms prescribe the development of training programmes with new epistemological frames of reference: there is currently a trend in training that emphasises the development of skills rather than specific objectives, an approach that opts for constructivism rather than behaviourism, meaningful learning situations rather than decontextualised subject content, and a focus on the learner rather than the teacher.

This new training paradigm also emphasises active learning, aiming to encourage learners to be the authors of their own learning and to prepare them to meet the challenges of their professional and personal lives. Current educational reforms seek to promote a more flexible and personalised

approach to teaching, with an emphasis on cross-curricular skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and collaboration.

Modernising training curricula

For the new training paradigm to be effective, it requires curricula to be modernised: indeed, curricula need to be updated to include the latest skills and knowledge, to prepare students for success in their future careers. This may include skills in digital technologies, complex problem solving and critical thinking, as well as opportunities for in-company training for practical work experience.

Conceptual renewal

The new training paradigm involves a change in the way learning is approached and organised. It is increasingly focused on practical skills and knowledge, rather than on the transmission of theoretical knowledge. This involves more active learning methods, such as project-based learning, problem-based learning and peer learning. It also focuses on the needs of students and the skills they will need to succeed in their future careers. Finally, it is increasingly focused on lifelong learning, to enable individuals to continue to develop their skills throughout their working lives.

Focus on the learner as an individual rather than on the teacher

The new training paradigm focuses on the learner as an individual, rather than the teacher (source of knowledge). This means that learning methods are designed to adapt to the unique needs of each student, taking into account their interests, learning styles and long-term goals. This can involve learning tracking tools to assess each student's progress, as well as personalised pathway options to allow students to choose the courses and experiences that best meet their needs. In addition, learners are seen as active participants in their own learning, rather than passive recipients of knowledge.

Integrating new approaches into existing practices

The new education paradigm involves rethinking teaching practices to adapt to the needs of students in a constantly changing learning environment. This may involve approaches such as project-based teaching and competency-based teaching to enhance learning. Teachers can also renew their assessment methods by inventing alternative ways of assessing students' skills. In addition, teachers can become social actors or agents of development rather than just sources of information, helping students to develop skills in critical thinking, problem solving and teamwork.

New concepts have emerged, and their emergence is certainly helping to bring about the desired change. The new training paradigm based on the competency approach requires a change of mindset and mentality if it is to be feasible and achievable. At present, the traditional approach is no longer adequate, which is why the integration of a new approach into teaching practices is of paramount importance.

The desired change cannot be improvised, nor can it be decreed

Introducing a new training paradigm requires careful planning and implementation. It is important to consult stakeholders, gather data and test approaches before rolling them out on a large scale. In addition, it is best to continue to evaluate the effectiveness of new methods and adjust them accordingly.

Implementing the training paradigm is difficult, if not impossible, with the current use of concepts from the old paradigm

It is true that adopting a new training paradigm can be difficult because of the ideas and concepts that were embedded in the old paradigm. Teachers, administrators and other stakeholders often have years of experience using the methods and tools of the old paradigm, so they may find it difficult to adapt to the new approaches. It is important to provide resources and support to help people understand and adapt to the benefits of the new paradigm. It is also important to create opportunities for teachers and administrators to explore and experiment with the new methods before adopting them on a large scale.

The new training paradigm can only be achieved through the use of new concepts, but not in the wrong way

It is true that adopting a new training paradigm may require the use of new concepts and methods to be effective. However, it is important to ensure that these new concepts and methods are based on research and evidence to guarantee their effectiveness. It is also important to consult with stakeholders, including teachers and students, to ensure that new concepts and methods are appropriate and relevant to the needs of the learner. Continuously evaluating the effectiveness of new concepts and methods and adjusting them accordingly would undoubtedly ensure their desired effects.

Appearance of new concepts

Epistemological mistrust or even caution should be exercised with regard to the concepts evoked; signifiers and signifieds should be consistent. Their attributes should all be respected.

The concept is a fundamental element of human thought. It represents an idea, a notion or an abstract category that enables us to group and organise the information and experiences we encounter in our environment. Some concepts may simply be abstractions used to describe existing phenomena or realities without necessarily having any effect on the real world. The notion of a concept is closely linked to the way in which we apprehend reality and construct our knowledge. Concepts form the basis of the meaning of words and sentences. Words are signs that refer to concepts.

The relevance of concepts lies in their ability to organise and give meaning to our experience of the world, as well as their potential to trigger transformations in our understanding and action.

If these concepts are foreign to the education system, an effort to objectify and adapt them is the best guarantee of maximising good results.

Some poorly chosen concepts have no impact on teaching practice and add almost nothing to what already exists, while others, on the contrary, are conducive to change but their use is somewhat clumsy.

A concept that has a strong impact on practice comes down to the effects of its associated attributes. Without them, it becomes an empty word; the concept is only truly powerful when the attributes attached to it and which give it meaning are respected. By ignoring one of its attributes, we run the risk of emptying the concept of its deepest meaning.

Reforms

Reform is a form of social change that is particularly characteristic of the civilisation of modern democracy. It is a planned form of social change that takes the form of a project.

- **Three conditions must be met for any change to take place:**

- ✓ The curriculum change process should be designed and implemented using a participatory and pluralist approach.
- ✓ Replace these reforms in their own social, cultural, political, ethical and economic contexts.
- ✓ A systemic approach to curriculum reform processes would seem to be of interest today.

Curriculum

A curriculum is a plan of action. It is inspired by the values that a society wishes to promote; these values are expressed in the aims assigned to the education system as a whole.

The curriculum provides an overall, planned, structured and coherent vision of the pedagogical guidelines according to which learning is organised and managed in terms of expected outcomes.

The curriculum refers to the design, organisation and programming of teaching/learning activities along an educational pathway. It brings together the statement of aims, content, activities and learning approaches, as well as the methods and means of assessing student learning.

Professionalisation

The initial training of future Moroccan teachers has undergone a supposedly innovative reform. The aim was to use **professionalisation** to train competent people capable of dealing with the many challenges and issues of the day;

The professionalisation of teachers is based on the following principles

- ✓ Teacher training is professional training,
- ✓ Professional training is based on an analysis of teachers' actual activities, with a view to their future development.
- ✓ Professional training involves learning in real work situations.

Recent educational reforms driven by the relevant authorities have given rise to new concepts that are closely linked to the workplace. One of these concepts is professionalisation.

The professionalisation of the initial training of future teachers is one of the new concepts.

How much has teacher training gained from the advent of this concept and its pedagogical use? What is its added value?

According to the sociology of professions, it took 4 key periods for the professionalisation of initial teacher training to be achieved.

Four key periods :

Stage 1: Universitarisation ;

This first stage took place mainly in the 1960s and 1970s. It consisted of placing the initial training of teachers in universities, in order to raise the level of training and guarantee a solid theoretical basis for the practice of the profession. This development was accompanied by a significant increase in academic requirements, particularly in terms of qualifications (masters, doctorate).

Stage 2: Standardisation and normalisation;

The second stage, which took place between 1980 and 1990, was characterised by a desire to standardise teacher training. The aim was to define the skills and knowledge that needed to be mastered in order to be considered a good teacher, and to incorporate them into codified training programmes. This standardisation of training was supported by professional

bodies (for example, training programmes had to be validated by the Ministry of Education).

Stage 3: Rapprochement and proliferation ;

The third stage, which began in the 2000s, was marked by a rapprochement between those involved in teacher training and a proliferation of training schemes. The range of courses diversified, with professional masters degrees, continuing education schemes, sandwich courses and so on. This proliferation of training courses raises questions about the notion of skills and calls for reflection on the professionalisation of training.

Stage 4: Professionalisation

The fourth and final stage is professionalisation, which is currently being developed. This stage involves recognising initial teacher training as a genuine profession, requiring specific skills and ongoing professional training throughout the teacher's career.

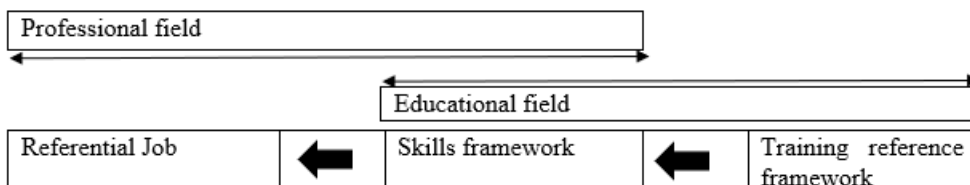
In particular, this professionalisation involves recognising the practical dimension of teaching and taking account of professional experience in the assessment of skills. It is also accompanied by a reflection on the place of teachers in society and their role in transmitting knowledge and values.

Aims of professionalising training

The professionalisation of training requires a shift from fixed, conventional disciplinary training to vocational training that seeks the best training/employment fit, and from a training programme that is disconnected from the workplace to a contextualised programme that contributes to professional integration right from the start of the training course.

The following diagram summarises this approach

Referencing in training



In the socio-educational field, referencing has led to the development of three reference frameworks: Employment, Skills and Training.

Professionalisation, the aim of which was to bring together the two worlds of training and actual employment, is a good illustration of the idea of establishing a **new training paradigm**.

The job reference framework makes it possible to identify the purpose, meaning and activity of the job.

The skills reference framework is derived directly from the activity reference framework. It is deduced from it. It sets out all the professional knowledge and attitudes required to do a job.

Professionalisation has not only led to the emergence of new concepts, but also to the introduction of a new **epistemological paradigm** known as the **empiricist paradigm**.

Work-linked training

Work-linked training is not just a way of organising teaching; it is also a training method that allows "recourse to work situations as a means of acquisition". It is an approach that links two seemingly separate worlds, the academic world and the professional world.

Juxtapositive or false alternation

In this juxtaposition scheme, the work placement appears as a field of application. The knowledge acquired at the educational institution should be put to the test in the workplace. Malglaive speaks of a false alternation, which may indeed be the case in a training programme that claims to offer an alternation approach by suggesting that there is support for this alternation.

Integrative alternation or real alternation

The ideal form of real alternation recommends a so-called iterative approach linking the two training areas, where links are ensured by the use of mutual experiences. In contrast to this form of alternation, the real alternation would be an engineering approach where theory and practice have been developed around activities organised in such a way that, on the one hand, the experiences gained in the professional field can be worked on in the classroom and, on the other hand, they encourage practical use of the classroom input in the light of the professional field.

The prescribed integrative alternation values **iteration and the clinical approach**; it prepares the subject to be both consumer and producer; it ensures that the subject is a learner at school and then a producer and mediator in the workplace. The knowledge acquired at the training centre must be put to the test in the teaching profession.

The relevant authorities have prescribed a new approach to the teaching placement, based on an integrative alternation approach and accompanied by a new spirit of professional socialisation. The added value

of the new concept is explained by a new approach to improving the training/job match. It involves adopting a reflective posture to maximise the relationship between theoretical foundations and teaching practices.

The training includes both deductive activities, aimed at applying the knowledge acquired from the courses given by the educational institution, and inductive activities acquired from professional action and knowledge gained from experience.

Rationalist paradigm

Teacher training based on the rationalist paradigm has always valued the primacy of learned knowledge acquired by giving great importance to learned doctrines over experience and its accumulation.

Empiricist paradigm

Conversely, teacher training according to the empiricist paradigm favours investment in experience by relying on professional knowledge much more than on academic knowledge.

Reflexivity

The added value of the new concept of the teaching practice placement is explained by a new way of going about improving the training/job match. This involves adopting a reflective stance to maximise the relationship between theoretical foundations and teaching practice.

Developing reflective practice means adopting a reflective stance, regularly and intentionally, with the aim of becoming aware of the way you act.

In the human professions, professional practice is not reflective simply because the practitioner reflects. It becomes reflective when the practitioner (the professional) takes himself as the object of his reflection.

Complexity

Teachers are faced with tasks of increasing complexity, requiring a high level of skills to deal with situations that are not always controllable.

Systemic approach

In an uncontrolled environment where there is complexity, the systemic approach encourages understanding and the adoption of an appropriate solution.

Reflection on action

Recourse to the rationalist paradigm is an absolute requirement, but in the presence of complexity it remains insufficient, which is why recourse to the empiricist paradigm is essential.

Recourse to a new epistemological paradigm

Teachers are faced with tasks of increasing complexity, requiring high-level skills to deal with situations that are not always controllable.

Reflective practice involves a dual process described by Schön (1994): reflection in action, which enables a subject to think consciously as events unfold and to react in the event of an unforeseen situation, and reflection on action, during which the subject analyses what has happened and evaluates the effects of his or her action. Schön (1994)

The term reflective practitioner was put forward by Schön (1994) in order to construct an epistemology of professional action aimed at identifying all the tacit or hidden knowledge that structures the subject's thinking. The aim is to analyse, within the framework of science-action (Argyris, 1990), the relationship between academic knowledge and professional practice.

The two authors put forward the idea that practitioners often proceed by trial and error, their professional activity being totally removed from scientific activity.

- ✓ The workplace is no longer a place for applying knowledge gained through training. Work situations are also formative.
- ✓ Iteration between two types of training: one academic and the other professional.
- ✓ a new spirit of professional socialisation.

Conclusion

The pedagogical reforms of Moroccan initial teacher training were introduced with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and adapting training to the real needs of Morocco's educational environment. These reforms introduced a new training paradigm based on professionalisation, alternation and reflexivity.

The aim of professionalisation is to train competent, qualified teachers capable of meeting today's educational challenges. Integrative alternation, combining training in a university environment with training in a professional environment, enables future teachers to acquire both academic knowledge and practical skills. Reflexivity encourages teachers to reflect on their own practice, to adapt to students' needs and to constantly improve their teaching.

However, implementing these reforms does not automatically guarantee success. A number of factors can hinder the process of change, such as ill-defined ideas, lack of support from the relevant authorities, insufficient resources and resistance to change on the part of those involved in education. It is therefore important to take these factors into account when planning and implementing reforms.

It is also crucial to actively involve key education stakeholders, such as teachers, headteachers and students, throughout the reform process. Their participation helps to ensure that the ideas and practices proposed are in line with the real needs of the Moroccan education system, and fosters their support and motivation to implement the changes.

De plus, il est essentiel de prévoir des mécanismes de formation continue pour les acteurs de l'éducation, afin de les aider à s'adapter aux nouvelles idées et aux nouveaux outils introduits par la réforme. Cela contribuera à surmonter les difficultés rencontrées lors de la mise en œuvre et assurera un soutien continu pour garantir le succès des réformes.

Bref, la réforme pédagogique de la formation initiale des enseignants marocains représente une étape importante vers l'amélioration de l'éducation au Maroc. Cependant, pour que ces réformes atteignent pleinement leurs objectifs, il est nécessaire de prendre en compte les défis potentiels et d'impliquer activement tous les acteurs de l'éducation dans le processus. Cela permettra de créer un environnement éducatif de qualité, favorisant des pratiques pédagogiques innovantes et contribuant à l'amélioration des résultats scolaires des élèves marocains.

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