

Tackling sustainability: First steps towards co-designing teacher professional development

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Transformative, innovative practices and sustainable professional development are not achieved just by attending workshops, seminars and specific designed teacher education courses, though these programmes may often include action research methodologies (Fullan, 2007; Vieira, Moreira & Peralta, 2014). Therefore, other ways for in-service teacher education should be sought, namely more flexible ways, suitable to specific educative contexts, which really address teachers' concerns and needs, enabling self-directed professional development (PD) processes and simultaneously empowering teachers and strengthening their professional knowledge (PK). To meet all these requirements we believe that besides the committed and collaborative participation of teachers, PD processes should include leadership and supervision. This paper looks at the particular case of teaching Portuguese as heritage language (PHL) in Switzerland. It analyses the PD strategy designed by the pedagogical coordinator (PC), which was based on the conclusions of a previous study on PD (Gonçalves, 2011) and followed a job embedded approach in trying a direct connection between teacher's work in the classroom and the PD teachers were provided, as argued by DiPaola and Hoy (2014). The study analyses the PD offers provided to the teachers from 2014 to 2016 in different perspectives – contents, structure, preparation, implementation, evaluation and outcomes. The data analysis indicates that the chosen PD strategy started by gathering the available knowledge, followed by putting it into circulation among the teachers, and finally tried to improve it, shaping its improvement with the active contribution of the teachers towards a joint planning of PD, which could be considered a step into co-designing teacher PD, towards its sustainability.

Keywords: professional development, heritage language teaching, sustainability, supervision, leadership

1 Introduction

Portuguese migrant children have the right to attend Portuguese language and culture classes, which are organised and financed by the Portuguese government in the majority of the countries where there is a significant number of Portuguese emigrants. This type of teaching no longer aims at preparing children and youngsters in their mother language skills to enter the Portuguese

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educational system on their families' return, as in its origin in the early sixties of the twentieth century. The task has become more complex and includes very different and new challenges nowadays. The learner profile of Portuguese emigrant children has been changing over time. Most of the learners are already second or third generation, have very different characteristics and expectations from the earlier generations and present a very different and diverse linguistic and cultural repertoire.

Teaching Portuguese as heritage language (PHL) in the XXI century has to do with developing plurilingual and intercultural competencies, assisting identity construction of children and youngsters who live in and between two (or more) languages and cultures. Though these changes have happened gradually over time, teachers still have little preparation for the task of teaching PHL and only more recently special attention has been dedicated to this issue.

This study is concerned with the professional development (PD) of these teachers. Having in mind their specific setting and needs, this study analyses the PD strategy designed by the Pedagogical Coordinator (PC), which was informed by the conclusions of a previous study on PD, concerning the components of environments that foster PD (Gonçalves, 2011) and by a job embedded approach as proposed by DiPaola and Hoy (2014), in trying a direct connection between teacher's work in the classroom and the PD teachers were provided. Thus, two research questions guide this study, namely the outcomes of the PD project and the importance of the PC as leader of the PD process.

The present paper starts by presenting the theoretical framework on our understanding of PD, explaining how it is intertwined with professional knowledge (PK) and how its sustainability could be achieved. In this context, issues such as leadership and supervision in environments that foster PD are also referred to.

The study was developed with the PHL teachers in Switzerland; the second highest destination of the Portuguese emigrants in Europe (Reto, Machado & Esperança, 2016) and the particular context will be described, presenting the characteristics of the participants and of the PD programme, which had three phases.

The study follows a qualitative methodology and content analysis (Bardin, 2000) was the chosen tool to interpret the collected data (questionnaires and written reflections). The PD offers provided to the teachers from 2014 to 2016 are presented as far as their contents, structure, preparation, implementation, evaluation and outcomes are concerned. The specific contribution of each PD offer will be analysed and discussed in terms of their contribution to the PD of the participants.

At the end we'll discuss how the leadership strategy positively affected the PD spurred by the teachers and how this study may be a first step into co-designing teacher PD, towards its sustainability.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Professional development and sustainability

In-service teacher education programmes create opportunities for sharing and debating professional experiences that contribute to update, widen and deepen the PK of their participants. Considering teacher PD a process of continuous

(de/re)construction of PK within teaching practice (Gonçalves, 2011), the PD opportunities are places of experimentation which can lead to innovation and renewal of practice. However, several studies have shown that transformative, innovative practices and sustainable PD are not achieved just with the attendance of workshops, seminars and specific designed teacher education courses, though these programmes may often include action research methodologies where their own practice is investigated (DiPaola and Hoy, 2014; Fullan, 2007; Hargreaves & Fink, 2007; Vieira et al., 2014).

We believe transformative practices are linked with ways of ensuring the continuity and relevance of professional learning and exchanges not only within special in-service teacher education programmes, but also in the subsequent daily teaching practice (Chien, 2016), which means to ensure that the acquired PK goes beyond immediacy and includes the future action (Hargreaves & Fink, 2007). Therefore, other ways for continuous teacher education should be sought, namely more flexible ways, suitable to specific educative contexts, which really address teachers' concerns and needs, enabling self-directed PD processes and simultaneously empowering teachers and strengthening their PK. We refer to other ways where processes and long-term effects of teacher education are spurred at an individual and at an institutional level, as PD should also meet context's needs.

Thus, it is necessary to invest in ways of addressing PD which connect the working time and growth time, creating an interactional dynamics by which the professional community provides resources and times which promote teacher learning and innovation in teaching practices, pursuing the constant improvement of the educational work (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2001), and its sustainability. This responsibility falls in the area of PD design and leadership, including opportunities with allocated time and space where teachers can construct their own competence of pedagogical leadership, by which they manage the curriculum according to the needs of their learners, stimulating and promoting a collaborative learning environment both for learners and teachers, increasing their ability to solve problems and to engage in a transformative practice over time (Antunes & Silva, 2015). This engagement is related to a way of being in the profession, which concerns each individual's relationship with their own identity and with the working community, ensuring by this way the professional commitment and continuous growth of the teachers, continuously engaging in new responses to the needs of each context. As Fullan states, sustainability in education refers to "the ability of a system to engage in complex aspects and continuous improvement, consistent with profound human values" (2005, as cited in Hargreaves & Fink, 2007, p. 31).

2.2 Leadership and sustainable professional development

In designing a PD programme, the shaping of the processes and the way the programme is conducted and directed can make a difference (DiPaola and Hoy, 2014; Hargreaves & Fink, 2007). Processes should respect specific requirements, which are prone to have substantial impact on teacher learning (Bredeson, 2000) and, consequently, to foster sustainable PD, namely: i) the direct involvement of teachers in the design, delivery and content of PD as co-responsibility can generate energy, determination, and commitment (Antunes & Silva, 2015); ii) the setting of a learning environment, where the leader is also a learner and iii) the assessment of PD outcomes.

Considering the first aspect i) the *direct involvement of teachers*, a process of sustainable PD places the teacher at its core, as actor and manager of his/her own development (given their personal characteristics, which include the beliefs and needs). In this sense, and following an ecological perspective of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1980), though processes are very important, the most important is the meaning, that is, how the “content—what is perceived, desired, feared, thought about, or acquired as knowledge, and how the nature of this psychological material changes as a function of a person’s exposure to that interaction with the environment” (Bronfenbrenner, 1980, p. 9). Sustainability is therefore connected to the meanings attributed to the different types of interactions and how those meanings shape the individual’s PD, boosting it for future interactions in a continuous loop movement. Therefore, the ii) *learning environment*, including the PD processes created by the leader, and the impact (mostly emotional) that they have on the led are crucial, as leadership involves directing and influencing others, in the sense of motivating and empowering them to achieve both personal and institutions’ aims (Antunes & Silva, 2015; Gumus, Bellibas & Esen, 2016).

So, besides the committed, engaged and collaborative participation of the individual, adequate planning of processes and their leadership in a safe and collaborative learning environment, in which supervision strategies are included, can play an important role. In fact, in order to ascertain that learning situations constitute a fertile ground to foster PD, those learning situations need guidance and regulation, not only within the professional project of each teacher but also referring to the educational project of the context, i.e. of the institution and of the community. As DiPaola and Hoy state, “sound professional development results from a continuous collaboration of principals and teachers in collegial supervisory process” (2014, p. 164).

Thus, fostering sustainable PD includes the constant monitoring of PD design and leadership by assuring the following aspects are always respected: i) emphasis on working situations, considering them as a source and place of learning because of the different analytical perspectives of those working situations; ii) the way that time and moments of collective and individual growth are perceived, valued and planned at the institution; iii) the connection between school and community or other entities required to contribute to professional learning and iv) the articulation of educational goals with the objectives of the institution (Gonçalves, 2011).

Finally, the design of a PD programme also includes regulation processes that contribute to the iii) *assessment of PD outcomes* and are intended to foster “the development of teachers’ professional reflexivity to improve the quality of student learning” (Vieira, 2006, p. 15) and address “attention to the identity of the teacher and to the processes that support [...] its construction and development” (Alarcão & Roldão, 2008, p. 19), placing the individual at its core and assisting PK (re)construction.

In short, PD is sustainable when the individual is committed in the process of reflecting on his/her personal and PK, and of discussing it in the interaction with colleagues, leading the results of this process to a greater understanding of teaching and of PK, as it discloses suggestions and points ways to engage in transformative practice to solve problems and foster learners’ success. Furthermore, enacting this professional attitude is the ultimate aim of in-service education programmes, which must pay attention not only to their content and processes but also to supervision and leadership strategies.

3 The context

The study was conducted with the Portuguese teachers in Switzerland, which is a plurilingual country by its nature with four official languages – German, French, Italian and Romansh – and also because it is a country of strong immigration and many other languages are part of everyday life of its inhabitants. The Portuguese community is the third largest immigrant group, after the Italian and German.

The teaching of PHL has evolved in a direct dialogue with emigration. Originally conceived to prepare emigrant Portuguese children to enter the Portuguese educational system on their families' return, nowadays, besides promoting a deeper and sounder knowledge of the Portuguese language and culture, it aims to assist identity construction and to facilitate integration in the host country. This is due to the changing migrant paradigm, as many families choose to definitely settle in the host country, and also to the acknowledgment that sound knowledge of the language and of the origin culture may have a positive influence on academic success (Caprez-Krompæk, 2010). The value of teaching heritage languages is in Switzerland acknowledged and the Swiss Confederation recommends all the cantons to facilitate their teaching.

Portuguese teachers' educational background is mainly as mother language teachers, having little or no specific education as teachers of PHL. Only in the last years has the concept of heritage language conquered its own space and is used to describe the individuals' relationship with a language whose status is, at times, difficult to identify: mother tongue, second language or foreign language. It also encompasses a variety of situations of use, as well as teaching-learning situations characterised by complexity and heterogeneity (García, 2014; Little, 2010, as cited in Faneca, Araújo e Sá & Melo-Pfeifer, 2016).

The PHL teachers are scattered all over Switzerland. They teach in the Swiss schools on an extra-curricular basis and after the regular Swiss school timetable. They often teach in a different school each day of the week. They do not share a teacher's room as any other teacher, and they only meet 3 or 4 times a year in pedagogical meetings. Under these circumstances collaborative work is difficult, especially when they work and live in remote areas.

The pedagogical coordination of these teachers has its headquarters in Bern, at the Portuguese Embassy and is responsible for the organization of this type of teaching, as well as for the PD of the teaching staff, a challenge for the PC, considering the particular features of the context.

According to a recent study on the professional situation and PD needs of the HL teachers in Switzerland by Calderón, Fibbi and Truong (2013), there is a strong interest in attending in-service education offers especially on collaborative practices with the regular Swiss teachers and on teaching heterogeneous classes. Other topics include "Second/foreign languages didactics" and "Plurilingualism".

The needs of the PHL teachers do not differ from the ones of their colleagues of other HL in Switzerland, as besides the lack of the possibility of gathering with colleagues, one of the major concerns of these teachers is how to teach mixed aged classes of mixed linguistic competencies.

4 Participants

The number of teachers involved in the PD offers varied from 94 to 83, from 2014 to 2016, according to the table below (Table 1).

Table 1. PHL teachers and learners in Switzerland (2013-2016).

School Year	Number of Teachers	Number of Learners
2013/2014	94 teachers	11510 learners
2014/2015	85 teachers	11260 learners
2015/2016	83 teachers	10731 learners

The teachers' age ranges from 25 to 65 years old (majority between 30 and 55), and all of them hold (at least) a teaching degree. Their experience varies from 1 to 20 or more years. The majority of teachers has between 10 to 15 years work experience in Switzerland.

The learners are organized in groups of a minimum of 12 learners to a maximum of 23 and are mostly multilevel groups (A1 to C1) and multi age groups (6 to 18). They attend PHL classes after regular Swiss school, on a voluntary basis. The final mark is included in the school report, as an informative record, and learners can pass final exams of levels A1 to C1.

5 Methodology

To answer our research questions (*the outcomes of the PD project and the importance of the PC as leader of the PD process*), we need to analyse how the chosen leadership strategy may have influenced teachers' PD in a way that could tackle its sustainability. Therefore, on the one hand, we will look at the PD strategy of the PC and, on the other hand, at the analysis of the collected data throughout the PD project, namely the teachers' answers to the open questions of the questionnaire and the written reflections.

5.1 Professional development strategy

The aim of the PD strategy was to develop a comprehensive programme of diverse in-service teacher education offers, and at the same time, a process of determining the effectiveness of the program in contributing to the sustainability of PD of the PHL teachers' in Switzerland. The programme should address teachers' concerns and needs, should be flexible, enabling self-directed PD processes and simultaneously empowering teachers and strengthening their PK. It should also directly address and suit the specific educative context of HL teaching, and a job embedded approach was followed as proposed by DiPaola and Hoy (2014).

The PD programme was designed according to the requirements presented in part 2, (ensuring the active participation of teachers, providing a safe collaborative learning environment and including PD assessment processes) and operationalised in alignment with the findings of a previous study on language teachers' PD in school context (Gonçalves, 2011), which identified six components of environments that foster PD, namely 1) the construction of growth opportunities

for all the teachers; 2) individual teachers' ownership of the construction of PK, 3) the construction of an ability to intervene in context; 4) the promotion of collegiality, 5) the creation of suitable spaces and times for PD; 6) the monitoring and evaluation of the processes and the results of PD work.

The programme was designed and monitored by the PC of the teaching staff. It included in-service education offers between 2014 and 2016 (Table 2) and was implemented according to three phases:

- 1) Preparatory phase: its objective was to get acquainted with the teachers and their practices in use. This involved a first contact with the teachers on pedagogical meetings, the reading and analysis of pedagogical documents, such as long term planning, unit planning, teaching reports, activities, needs, etc.
- 2) Launching phase: its objective was to respond to identified needs and gather the available PK and make it circulate among the teachers. In this phase two PD offers were implemented: **i)** "Diversity management and differentiation in the classroom" (one of the most needed areas of PD) and **ii)** Conference centred on PHL teaching in Switzerland. This event was organised with the active participation of the teachers. They produced posters about their activities with the learners, and five teachers organised workshops for their colleagues. This was an opportunity for all teachers to get together, contact each other and get information on what was being done by the entire group, taking advantage of the opportunity to develop their PK. This event was conceived both as a formal PD opportunity and also as an informal interaction space (Mawhinney, 2010), that is, a space which was perceived and experienced by the teachers as an opportunity for informal interaction as they rarely have the chance to get together to socialize.
- 3) Co-Designing phase: its objective was to help teachers configure their own PD with their active collaboration. Two PD offers were implemented: **i)** a workshop on the intercultural potential of the linguistic biography. It was closely linked with teaching practice as teachers had to plan a didactic unit, implement it and then share and discuss its results with their colleagues. They were assisted with feedback and individual monitoring during the planning phase. **ii)** a seminar on concepts and practices related to HL teaching. This was a first approach to a new handbook for HL teaching in Switzerland, organized by the Pedagogical University of Zurich. The teachers presented some selected chapters to their colleagues, which led to participatory discussions on theory and practice, with the presentation of concrete examples.

Table 2. PD offers 2014-2016.

Overview of the professional development offers from 2014 to 2016	
PD Offer 1 March 2014	<p>Contents: Diversity management in classroom: strategies to differentiate teaching & learning</p> <p>Structure: one day workshop – planned and conducted by teacher educators (University of Aveiro, Portugal)</p> <p>Preparation: Planned specifically for the Swiss context, according to teachers’ needs (included examples of unit plans and suggested materials for further work in the classroom)</p> <p>Implementation: Participation rate: 86.1% of teaching staff / Duration - 25 hours: 7 hours input+18 hours individual work – unit planning/implementation/written report and reflection for individual teacher evaluation (credits for career progression)</p> <p>Outcomes: 24 individual work submissions for teacher evaluation (29.6%)</p> <p>Data collection: Questionnaires and guided written reflections</p>
PD Offer 2 October 2014	<p>Contents: Portuguese teachers’ practice in Switzerland (specific HL projects, participation in projects in collaboration with Swiss Universities & Swiss educative authorities, ex. Department of Public Instruction of Geneva)</p> <p>Structure: One day conference – teachers presented their work to colleagues (posters, workshops, projects)</p> <p>Preparation: Planned by the pedagogical coordinator specifically for the Swiss context, who supervised and monitored teacher’s presentations/posters & workshops; opening conference by a Professor of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.</p> <p>Implementation: Participation rate: 74% of teaching staff / Duration: 7 hours for presentations of projects/posters and workshops on diverse practice related topics</p> <p>Outcomes: 15 posters on teacher activities with their learners, 4 workshops</p> <p>Data collection: Questionnaires and guided written reflections</p>
PD Offer 3 December 2015 & March 2016	<p>Contents: European Language Portfolio (ELP – Linguistic Biography) & Intercultural Competence (The intercultural potential of the linguistic biography)</p> <p>Structure: Workshop – Part I Input and Planning + Part II Results’ sharing</p> <p>Preparation: Planned by the pedagogical coordinator and by an expert teacher educator; monitoring/feedback of teacher’s planning and implementation work</p> <p>Implementation: Participation rate: 59% of teaching staff / Duration: 25 hours (6 input + 12 planning/implementing/reporting/submitting + 7 hours sharing results)</p> <p>Outcomes: 11 Unit plans of 25 teachers (51.02%) teachers – 5 groups & 8 individual work)</p> <p>Data collection: Unit plans, questionnaires, guided written reflections</p>
PD Offer 4 April 2016	<p>Contents: Concepts and practices related to Heritage Language Teaching (HLT) – a first approach to a just published book by the Pedagogical University of Zurich</p> <p>Structure: Seminar – individual or group presentation of the main concepts & practice examples of each chapter of the book / 7 hours</p> <p>Preparation: Planned by teachers who volunteered to read and present the different chapters and by the pedagogical coordinator, who monitored and assisted teachers during the preparation process</p> <p>Implementation: Participation rate: 95.1% of teaching staff / Duration: 7 hours for presentations and discussion.</p> <p>Outcomes: 9 group presentations of the different book chapters by 16 teachers (19.27% of teaching staff)</p> <p>Data collection: Questionnaires and guided written reflections</p>

5.2 Data collection

The data were collected right after each PD offer and all the teachers who answered the questionnaires and wrote the reflections agreed to participate in the study (Table 3). We identified the teachers who were actively involved in the content and delivery of the PD offers as “active participants” (AP) and teachers who attended the PD offers as “receptive participants” (RP).

Table 3. Participants in the study.

Professional development Offers	Receptive Participants	Active Participants	Total RP + AP	Answered Questionnaires	Written Reflections
PD Offer 1	81	0	81	73	24
PD Offer 2	52	22	74	50	20
PD Offer 3	0	51	51	34	34
PD Offer 4	68	16	84	84	16

In all PD offers the same questionnaires were applied in order to learn about teachers' satisfaction with the offer in the general aspects and about their perceived PD. The questionnaires included both closed and open questions. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (1= bad to 5=very good) teachers had to evaluate the following aspects of the PD offer: organisation, used strategies in the delivery of the contents, performance of the presenters, individual commitment and participation. In questionnaire to PD offer 3, an additional closed question was introduced in order to reveal the preferences of the teachers for different phases of the offer. The open questions referred to the perceived PD; positive and negative aspects of the PD offer and suggestions.

Though all teachers were asked to answer the questionnaires, and could express their opinion on their PD in the open questions, the teachers who were actively involved in the content of PD offers were additionally asked to write about the following points in guided reflections: 1. problems/difficulties in preparing the intervention/presentation; 2. strategies used to overcome the difficulties; 3. satisfaction with the outcome and contribution to own PD. As PD is also a result of individual biography, it was considered that the possibility of writing about their own individual experiences, though with some guidelines, could give particular insights related to these PD offers, their effectiveness and also on the followed leadership strategy.

5.3 Data analysis

The data analysis follows a qualitative methodology (Bodgan & Biklen, 1994), using content analysis (Bardin, 2000) to disclose the meaning participants attribute to the interactions they took part in during the in-service teacher education offers, so as to understand their perceived changes on their PD.

As in some PD offers the teachers were invited to have a direct involvement in their content and delivery, we analysed separately the data according to the two groups of teachers "active participants" (AP) and "receptive participants" (RP), as described earlier.

The data analysis followed the phases of the implemented PD offers and was oriented through one macro-category "professional development perceived by the teachers" for all teachers. Besides this macro-category, the analysis of the written reflections of the AP also followed another category concerning their contributions for the content of the PD offers, namely "preparation process", which includes the already mentioned topics 1) problems/difficulties in preparing the intervention/presentation; 2) strategies used to overcome the difficulties; 3) satisfaction with the outcomes. It is also important to note that on PD offer 1, where teachers were all RP, the teachers who submitted their work to evaluation also presented written reflections, which were analysed following the

same categories. On PD offer 4, an additional open question was introduced to the questionnaire. It concerned the learning about the own practice.

To obtain a more holistic view of the results a quantitative analysis was also carried out. Inside each PD offer the number of teachers who mentioned the same topics in each category was calculated. We also compared participation rates of all the PD offers so as to be able to evaluate the designed PD strategy.

6 Findings

6.1 Presentation of results

The content analysis of the teachers' words, according to each offer of PD and to each group of teachers, AP and RP, indicates that all the offers fostered the PD of the participants in diverse ways: teaching competencies, reflection on own practice which enabled a better self knowledge and awareness of practices and, as an overall result, teachers felt empowered in their PK.

The following table (Table 4) summarizes and illustrates these findings. The left column presents the conclusions of the content analysis carried out to the answers of the RP to the questionnaires' open questions and to the AP's written reflections, according to each category: 1) *perceived PD* and 2) *preparation process*. Accordingly, the right column presents some examples of the teachers' words¹, giving a glimpse of the way teachers described their learning.

Table 4. Content analysis results per PD offer and examples.

PD	Content analysis' results	Teachers' voices
PD Offer 1 March 2014	<p>(Contents: Diversity management in classroom: strategies to differentiate teaching and learning)</p> <p>Receptive Participants (all participants were receptive, but teachers who submitted their work to evaluation presented written reflections)</p> <p>Perceived PD</p> <p>a) fostered the development of teaching competencies in managing diversity;</p> <p>b) promoted reflection on important concepts that underlie the teaching practice, which may seem tacit;</p> <p>c) helped "clearing" or "reorienting" existing representations on the concepts of "diversity" and "differentiation";</p> <p>d) updated practical knowledge through concrete examples for further implementation in classroom;</p> <p>e) strengthened teachers' PK, enlightening individual practice awareness.</p>	<p>RP_Q10 <i>the chosen topic was very useful, as I've learned much and I will be able to plan my classes better</i></p> <p>RP_Q25 <i>It helped me to have a different way of looking at groups of different levels</i></p> <p>RP_R7 <i>This PD offer led me to develop activities which included all pupils, regardless their proficiency level, as I prepared diverse teaching materials and resources and implemented differentiated teaching strategies in a flexible planning model, though specific and accurate in what concerns the teaching and learning aims (...) I could awaken and develop individual unexplored competencies</i></p>

<p>PD Offer 2 October 2014</p>	<p>(Contents: Portuguese teachers' practice in Switzerland)</p> <p>Receptive Participants Perceived PD a) helped to improve and innovate practice due to the sharing of individual practices, teaching experiences, strategies and methodologies; b) deepened knowledge about colleagues' projects and practices, c) fostered reflection on specific issues related to teaching PHL & individual teaching practices,</p> <p>Active Participants Preparation process a) fostered the development of competences such as: competencies (organising, selecting & summarising information to present to colleagues), b) valued constant feedback and support throughout the preparation process, Perceived PD a) fostered learning and reflection (on individual practices and on colleagues' practices), b) enriched PK by sharing experiences / practices / methodologies, c) empowered teachers by recognising one's value and work, allowing a professional well-being, d) strengthened the feeling of belonging to a group.</p>	<p>RP_Q08 ...it opened new horizons to the teaching practice. The posters gave me ideas to implement in the future, the presentation of the different projects motivated me to explore the many possibilities HL teaching can offer. RP_Q39 ...we did much in little time RP_Q48 ...it made me reflect on my teaching practice, cleared how to make projects and enriched my knowledge...</p> <p>AP_R08 (...) it was a process of several steps and many working hours. The main difficulties, besides the lack of time had to do with the "presentation of the work" and strategies. (...) the support and availability of the pedagogical coordinator were very important through the process. The result was excellent (...) it was worth all the spent time and effort. Sharing ideas, suggestions and experiences were relevant aspects to my personal and PD AP_R19 the preparation process of this workshop has really contributed to my PD, as it has given me more confidence and willingness to participate in other similar workshops and has motivated me to continue working on creative writing with my pupils</p>
<p>PD</p>	<p>Content analysis' results</p>	<p>Teachers' voices</p>
<p>PD Offer 3 December 2015 & March 2016</p>	<p>(Contents: European Language Portfolio (ELP - Linguistic Biography) & Intercultural Competence)</p> <p>Active Participants (all participants were active)</p> <p>Preparation process a) fostered knowledge for practice b) promoted awareness of different practices Perceived PD a) fostered understanding / updating of concepts (ELP + interculturality) b) valued individual and group work & sharing results of practice c) empowered teachers due to awareness of good practices</p>	<p>AP_R17 I became more aware of what we often do in classes and that it can contribute to widen the intercultural knowledge of our pupils AP_R22 I think this workshop is an added value to my PD in what concerns the aim of planning more activities involving intercultural aspects, because with the rising migrant movements our society becomes even more multicultural. It is important to make pupils aware of different cultures and learn to respect them. AP_R25 I will rethink the way I plan and improve my attitude regarding pupils' evaluation</p>

<p>PD Offer 4 April 2016</p>	<p>(Contents: Concepts and practices related to HLT)</p> <p>Receptive Participants - Perceived individual PD</p> <p>a) Fostered reflection on the specific discussed concepts (HLT) + acknowledgement of the value of theory to enlighten teaching practice</p> <p>b) Awareness of needs - what must be changed in teaching practice / concepts that need further reflection and discussion</p> <p>c) Motivation to experiment new teaching approaches (acknowledgment of the value of a good planning)</p> <p>Active Participants</p> <p>Preparation process</p> <p>1.1. Some difficulty in understanding concepts (pedagogical & didactic)</p> <p>1.2. Developing competencies (research, selection information, summarising, strategies for presentation to colleagues)</p> <p>1.3. Commitment (rereading/time/individual & group work)</p> <p>1.4. Constant feedback and support throughout the preparation process</p> <p>Perceived PD</p> <p>2.1. Learning and reflection (on concepts/ on learning & linking to or deepening previous knowledge - (de/re/construction of professional knowledge)</p> <p>2.2. Self-questioning of teaching practice (experiences / practices / methodologies)</p> <p>2.3. Collaborative work /sharing opinions fostered learning and understanding</p> <p>2.4. Awareness of formative needs (conceptual and practical)</p> <p>2.5. Empowerment, self-satisfaction by overcoming a challenge (and insecurity) successfully</p>	<p>RP_Q22 ... it has given me new tips, work methodologies to improve my pedagogical practice. In the future I will reflect more on issues of interculturality and plurilingualism.</p> <p>RP_Q47 ... it has oriented me in my teaching practice. It has arisen doubts on my practice. It has opened horizons on my actual planning for HL classes.</p> <p>RP_Q11 'Out of the box' projects can be source of very rich experiences and produce concrete results conducting to self-satisfaction and sense of belonging.</p> <p>RP_Q13 There were few examples of pluralistic approaches, but they made procedures more concrete.</p> <p>RP_Q60 Need to rethink new multiple approaches developed according to learners' needs aiming at developing their competencies.</p> <p>AP_R02 to overcome difficulties I had to do some research about some concepts in order to fully understand the message (...)</p> <p>(...) I also came to the conclusion that (...) a teacher should also question himself and adjust his practice to the pupils. If I hadn't made this presentation I wouldn't have reflected so deeply on this issue.</p> <p>AP_R10 As I had never participated in such an experience, I thought I might have made a huge mistake (...) the most difficult was the presentation to all the colleagues, I was afraid of forgetting everything (...) concluding it was a great experience, both personally and professionally.</p>
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Referring more closely to the results as far as PD is concerned, offers 1 and 3 contributed to teachers' updating of PK and fostered awareness of individual practice. They also fostered reflection on important concepts, such as diversity and differentiation (which, at first, seemed tacit), allowed "clarification" or "reorientation" of the existing representations that underlie practice and informed the professional conversations around the topic, expanded and developed professional competencies.

Offers 2 and 4 provided teachers an opportunity to have an external perspective of their work, as teaching practice has become the object of analysis, reflection, and systematization and, in some cases, object of conceptual clarification, combining theory and practice to better prepare the sharing with colleagues.

6.2 Discussion of results

Referring to the main concern of this study, the PD of PHL teachers, the data analysis shows this aim was achieved, as all the offers fostered the PD of the participants in diverse ways. However, it is important to note that there are significant differences between the perceived PD of receptive participants (RP) who attended the PD offers, and active participants (AP), who presented posters, projects, chapters of books or conducted workshops in the PD offers. RP acquired new knowledge (and/or teaching tips and ideas) during the PD offers to put in practice in the future teaching practice, whereas AP conducted research, developed new knowledge, and reflected on their own practice prior to the PD offers, as preparation for their intervention. As a consequence, they started their growth path long before each PD offer and took profit from the supervision, feedback and monitoring of the PC during the preparation process. Active participants also continued learning during the PD offers, especially from the interaction with the colleagues during the events.

Thus, and having in mind our first research question, *the outcomes of the PD project*, we can consider as outcome of this project the relevance of being an active or receptive participant and the long-term impacts of those roles in each group. AP felt empowered in their PK, which feeds the necessary motivation to go on in the growth path and ensures sustainability of PD, both in short and long-term impact. RP felt motivated to put new ideas into practice as they came from their colleagues who work in the same context and deal with the same challenges, - an evidence-based knowledge -, which can also be understood as a promising sign for the sustainability of their PD. This sign is also supported by the participation rate of AP in PD offers, which ranges between 20% to 30% (Figure 1), acknowledging a consistent group of teachers who is willing to engage in the PD offers and follow a sustainable path of PD.

Another outcome of this project is the relevance of practice and evidence-based knowledge as an influencing factor for active participation and engagement in PD. When comparing the rates of active and receptive participants over the four offers (Figure 1), it is interesting to note that the PD offer 3, a workshop which covered a longer period of time (involving the phases of planning, implementing and reporting) was the one where all the participants were active, though this offer had the least number of participants of all.

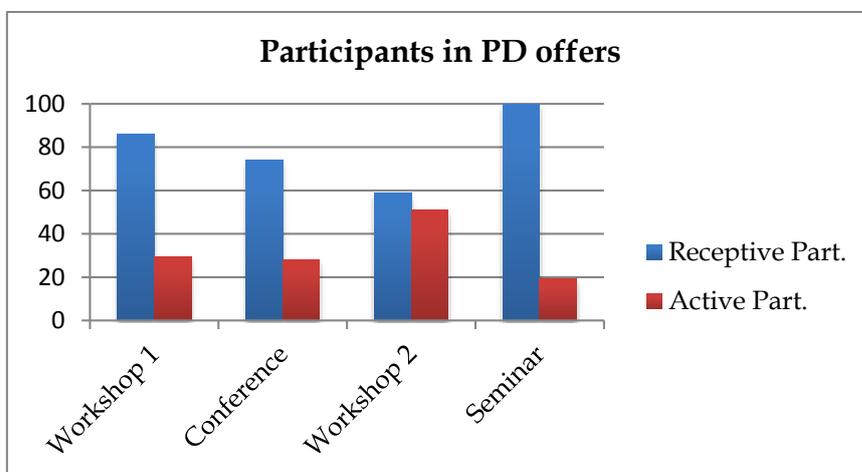


Figure 1. Participation rates in PD offers 2014-2016.

Conversely, the Seminar (PD offer 4), dealing mostly with concepts, had the least number of AP. According to the data, teachers such as those in this study are more likely to engage in PD offers that directly have to do with the practice and where specific “time was given for observation, reflection and dialogue with colleagues” (Novick, 1996, in DiPaola and Hoy, 2014, p. 164), as they do not have much opportunity to get together. This is what teachers’ preferences concerning PD offer 3 also show, as the implementing phase occupies the first place (Figure 2).

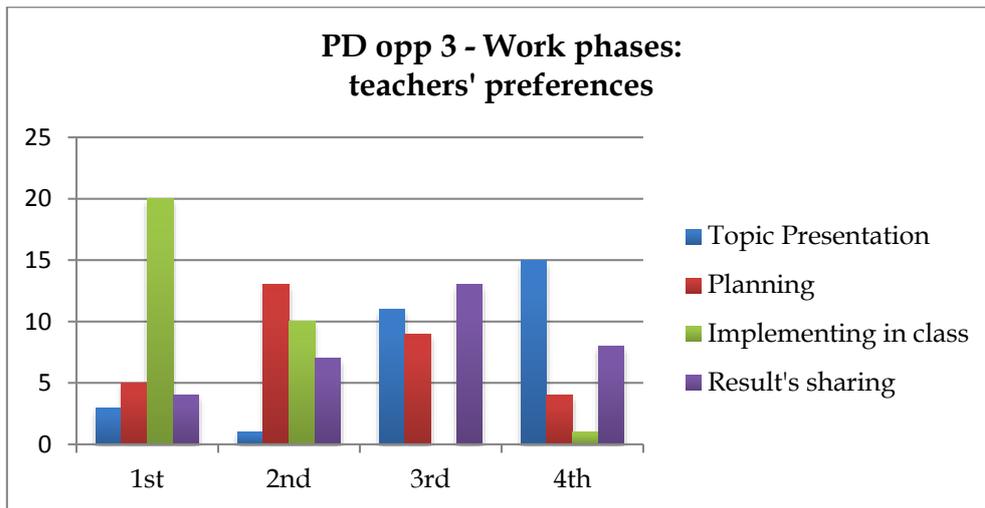


Figure 2. Teachers’ preferences in PD offer 3.

These results are consistent with the common teachers’ remark about PD programmes, referring the need of practical examples and not theoretical frameworks, tending to overvalue experience.

Nevertheless, through the lens of practice, teachers acknowledge the importance of balance between theory and practice. They value the acquired PK for practice (Figures 3 and 4) and acknowledge the need or are willing to change and do experiments in their teaching practice, being the percentage consistent in both PD offers (40%), and they also value and acknowledge the need of further reflection and research (12%, in Figure 4). These results indicate that the path to transformative practices is being constructed.

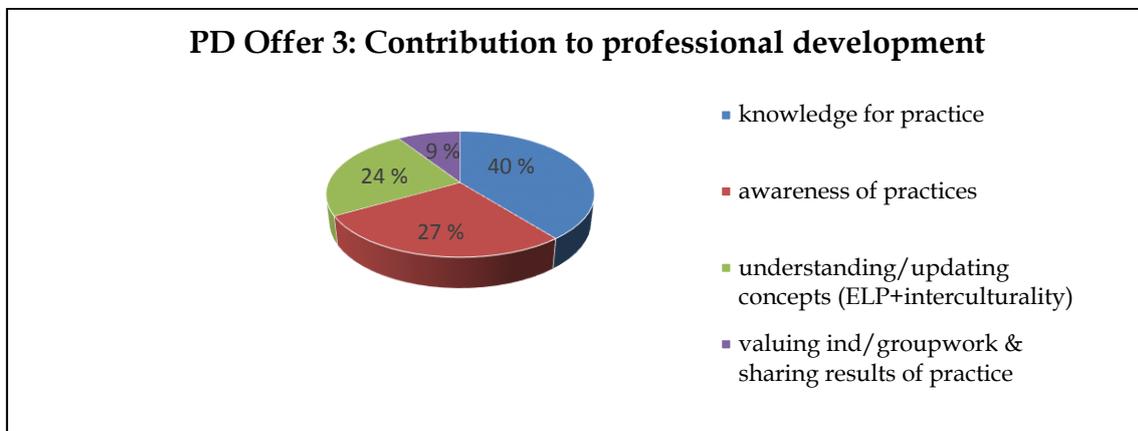


Figure 3. Contribution to PD - PD offer 3 – Workshop 2.

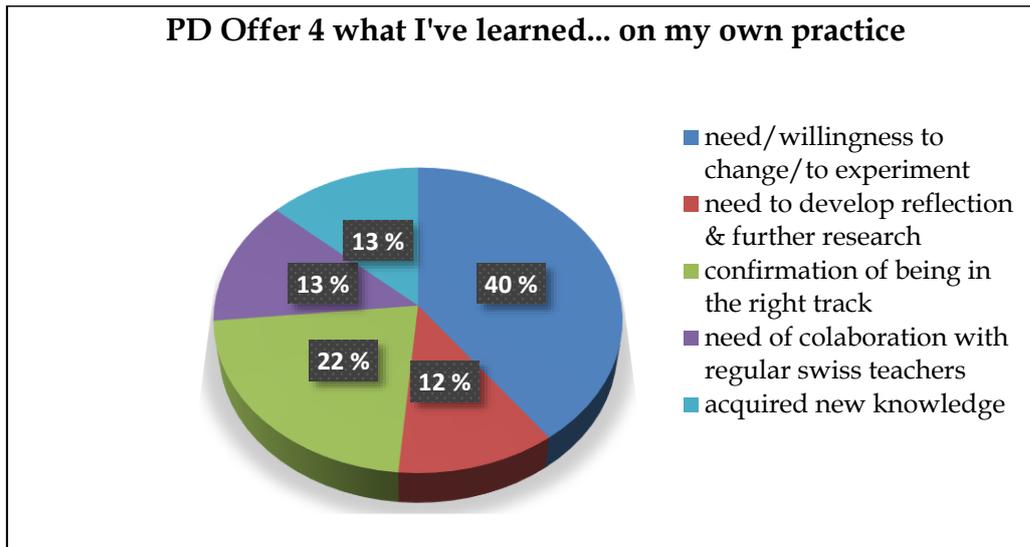


Figure 4. Contribution to PD - PD offer 4 – Seminar.

Referring to *the importance of the PC as leader of the PD process*, our second research question, the planning of the PD design and leadership strategy followed by the PC seem to have played a decisive role for the long-term goal of fostering sustainable PD, empowering teachers to plan their own PD according to the evaluation of their needs.

The PC shaped the programme according to theory, to the context and to teacher's knowledge and its phases were closely framed within the respect of the six components of environments that foster PD (1. construction of growth opportunities for all the teachers, 2. individual teachers' ownership of the construction of professional knowledge, 3. construction of an ability to intervene in context, 4. promotion of collegiality, 5. creation of suitable spaces and times for PD, 6. monitoring and evaluation of the processes and the results of PD work).

The *preparatory phase*, used by the PC to get acquainted not only with the teachers and their practices, but specially to understand the most needed and desired areas of PD (in this case, how to manage and work with classes with different proficiency levels, sometimes from A1 to C1), provided the starting point for the *construction of growth opportunities for all the teachers*.

Both the *Launching* and *Co-Designing PD* phases included two types of PD offers, one more closely linked to the everyday practice (PD offers 1 and 3, where teachers had to plan, implement, share and discuss results) assured the *construction of an ability to intervene in context* and the *promotion of collegiality* and the other (PD offers 2 and 4), which dealt with the discussion of concepts and exchange of PK and experiences, initiated the *individual teachers' ownership of the construction of professional knowledge*.

The PD offers 1 and 3 included a follow-up activity with time enough for teachers to reflect and internalize learning; assuring teachers were given *suitable spaces and times for PD*. Both workshops included planning and implementing activities and reporting. While on PD offer 2 the reporting phase was individual, as teachers had only to write a report, on PD offer 3 it was extended to a joint session, where teachers reported not only about their teaching experience but also about their students' learning.

The individual teachers' ownership of the construction of professional knowledge was reinforced in PD offers 2 and 4. Teachers were challenged to do tasks they had never done before, namely creating a poster about activities conducted with their pupils, a workshop for their colleagues and a presentation of a chapter of a book concerning didactic concepts and practical examples. Teachers had to overcome difficulties to accomplish the tasks and they felt the need to do some research and learn more about not only practical details, such as the management of time, or the best way to summarize information and present to others, but also about some concepts, revisiting theoretical bases, which were already forgotten or, at least, somewhat vague. The overcoming of these challenges disclosed a sense of learning and self-satisfaction. During the process teachers questioned their practices, revisited and refreshed didactical and pedagogical concepts.

Collaborative work and professional learning were also fostered. Teachers could always count on the help and feedback of the PC and with the encouragement to go on and commit to the task. As with the pupils, when teachers are challenged and given the needed support, they engage actively in the tasks and feel empowered with the results. As pointed out by the active participants (AP) the PC played a supportive role ensuring an adequate and safe environment to experiment.

The feedback given by the PC to the AP when preparing their intervention in the different PD offers and the consistent use of evaluation questionnaires and written reflections after each PD offer assured the *monitoring and evaluation of the processes and the results of PD work*.

On the overall, the findings indicate that the followed PD strategy, respecting the six components of environments that foster PD, revealed to be helpful in understanding how to disclose a path towards transformative practice and thus, sustainable PD. The careful way by which the PC designed, monitored and led the PD project, always intertwined with an updated knowledge of teacher's needs and strengths, ensured the PD of all the participants, both active and receptive.

Seeking other forms of in-service teacher education involves the concern with the design of continuous opportunities of PD (action setting), which should be flexible and open to the active participation of teachers (personal influence). Besides respecting the cultural and institutional context (social cultural influences), practical knowledge of the teaching staff must be considered and included as a basis to start action in a safe environment to experiment (promoting innovation), where the recognition of individual work can enact a feeling of well-being and empowerment. Finally, the dynamic interplay of these aspects as key for sustainability of PD (Hoban & Erickson, 2004) needs attentive care and support from the leader, in this particular case, from the pedagogical coordinator.

Moving forward means to conceive the educative experience as a space of professional (trans)formation as a didactics-in-movement where leadership, monitoring and supervision of PD is a challenge and a shared responsibility of pedagogical coordination.

7 Conclusion

In Planning the PD programme the PC chose a job embedded approach and a leadership strategy, which implemented supervision as a process of understanding the complexity of the specific educative context. This leadership strategy shaped, guided and regulated PD always asking, promoting and nurturing the active participation of teachers. By doing this, the PC promoted teachers' agency, which means to promote sustainability of PD, as teachers are the subjects who mostly directly influence students' and colleagues learning with transforming impact (Antunes & Silva, 2015). Throughout the different PD offers teachers were given the chance to participate actively, build their own path in terms of professional growth and empowerment. Especially the teachers who were active participants conducted specific research, reflected on the tasks they chose to commit to and developed new competencies.

This strategy fostered PD as new way of being in teaching, whose traits are conceptually aligned with values for the future, such as openness to participation and collaboration, to diversity, to conflict, to reflection and to mistakes (Day, 2001). These are crucial tools to link and integrate new knowledge and a new attitude towards the profession. We refer to a new way of being a teacher and being in the profession that empowers teachers as they can decide on the purposes and means of their own growth and exercise their autonomy grounded on practice research and discussion about daily practice including PD tasks in their professional routine.

This way of being in teaching implies the assumption of shared responsibilities not only in the (re)construction of knowledge by also in their design and planning in terms of PD. This is a joint responsibility of teachers and of the PC regarding the sustainability of the PD of the teaching staff to fulfil the responsibility of PHL teaching of helping the learners to read and understand the world we live in, respecting and celebrating the legacy of their families and interacting with it, emphasizing knowledge of diverse nature, experiential, scientific, contextual, personal or other, thus building and helping to build their future in the context of a host country.

Co-designing PD is a dynamic process combining the individual needs of the teachers with the context and the goals of the institution by means of a leadership strategy, always attentive and supportive in order to facilitate meaningful learning to all the teachers, and in this way tackling its sustainability. Acknowledging this is a situated and small study, it disclosed a potentially rich path worth exploring.

Endnote

¹ The questionnaires and written reflections were numbered in a crescent order within each PD offer. Each example of the teachers' voices is identified by the type of teachers' participation ('AP' for active participant and 'RP' for receptive participant), followed by the identification of the respective data tool 'Q' for questionnaire, 'R' for Reflection, followed by the order number.

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