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Fiorucci, M., & Moretti, G. (a cura di). (2019). *Il tutor dei docenti neoassunti* [The tutor for newly-hired teachers]. Roma: RomaTrE-Press. ISBN 978-88-32136-72-2. Online 978-88-32136-73-9. <http://romatrepress.uniroma3.it/ojs/index.php/index/search/category/339>

In the volume *Il tutor dei docenti neoassunti* (*The tutor for newly-hired teachers*) edited by Massimiliano Fiorucci and Giovanni Moretti, published in October 2019 by RomaTrE-Press in the publishing *Series Psychology and Education*, scholars and professors from various different academic disciplines examine the implications for the Italian national school system of several recent changes concerning the figure of the tutor for newly-hired teachers.

As Rosalia Spallino points out in the «Prefazione» (Preface) to the volume, the year of teacher training is important not only for the teacher concerned, but also for the entire school community, since the role of the tutor is that of a «connector with the work in the field» for newly-hired teachers.

As pointed out by the editors in the «Introduzione» (Introduction), the volume analyzes the results of a training and research project by the Department of Education of the Roma Tre University, in collaboration with the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio, and the Regional School Office (Ufficio Scolastico Regionale) for the Lazio Region, with the involvement, in blended learning modalities, of a large number of teaching tutors. This project is described, and the role of the teaching tutor is explored as a complex new phenomenon in the broader educational panorama.

In the first essay, «Il tutor dei docenti neoassunti come risorsa per lo sviluppo professionale dei docenti: un percorso di formazione» (The tutor for newly-hired teachers as a resource for the professional development of teachers: a pathway of training), the author Giovanni Moretti describes the training programme for teaching tutors created in the Lazio region, focusing on the conceptual dimensions of reflection and collaboration, with the aim of improving the relationship between the newly-hired teacher and the

teaching tutor. There is a process of «change-reciprocal learning» between the newly-hired teacher and the tutor, in which the latter is recognized as being able to exercise wide-ranging capacities of educational leadership at school.

The social character of learning is a central aspect of the concept of learning as a shared practice, in which value is attributed to the relational dimension inherent in understanding and knowledge. In her essay «La formazione tra pari e la riflessione sulle pratiche professionali: il framework teorico della comunità di pratica» (Peer education and reflection on professional practices: the theoretical framework of the community of practice) Giuditta Alessandrini examines the concepts underlying the community of practice, and analyzes how its relational dimension can be effectively enhanced in a school setting, particularly for the initial training of newly-hired teachers. The author then focuses on the motivational dimension of learning and its central role in activating significant learning processes.

The essay by Massimo Margottini «Autovalutazione e promozione di competenze strategiche» (Self-evaluation and promotion of strategic competencies), analyzes the strategic competencies at school that are the basis of self-regulated behaviour in students. The author emphasizes that in Italy a series of useful tools already exist, which can be used at school for detecting the degree of self-regulation of learning particularly in secondary school and university students. He also underlines the importance of communicating the results of research to students, focusing on the central role of feedback, so as to encourage students to think immediately about the outcomes of learning, as well as to reflect upon them over time in more depth.

Classroom observation is one of several possible training modalities that tutors of newly-hired teachers can adopt and the fourth essay in the volume, written by Anna Maria Ciraci «L'attività di osservazione in classe nella fase di avvio alla professione docente» (The activity of classroom observation in the initial phase of the teaching profession) concentrates on this methodology. Analyzing the results of the training programme organized by the Department of Educational Sciences of the Roma Tre University, in collaboration with the Regional School Office for the Lazio Region, the author describes the fundamental characteristics of observation procedures. She pays particular attention to the role of the observer, the criteria for conducting classroom observations and the various instruments used, such as «the classroom observation sheet», and she stresses the importance of providing teachers with cognitive and methodological instruments that are suitable for the exercise of their profession.

Concetta La Rocca's essay «Ricerca, azione e fiducia in classe. Uno sguardo trifocale sulle attività valutative» (Research, action and trust

in class. A triangulation of evaluation activities) puts the initial training period of the teacher in relation to the field of reflective practices and active learning, and equates it with a genuine action research context, in which the trainee teacher has the role of a researcher, and the teaching tutor has that of a critical friend. The author analyzes evaluation practices of teachers within this kind of context from the triple viewpoints of the teacher, the tutor and the students, with the aim of making a valid contribution towards constructing collaborative environments that can encourage in-depth reflection on training practices.

Fabio Bocci's essay «Pratiche di osservazione tra pari. Il Microteaching come mediatore per lo sviluppo e l'apprendimento professionale degli insegnanti» (Peer observation. Microteaching as a means for professional development and learning among teachers) addresses a central aspect of professional teacher training, namely peer observation, by focusing on the techniques of micro-teaching. The author advocates its reintroduction at school, linking it to the use of new technologies, such as web applications. This approach would seem to be more flexible than the one adopted in the past, as it makes it possible to create virtual communities of practice and develop situated reflective practices.

Valeria Biasi and Nazarena Patrizi's contribution «Il Counselling per la supervisione professionale Docente Tutor - Docente neoassunto» (Counselling for professional supervision of the Teaching tutor - Newly-hired teacher) analyzes the methodology of counselling within the education and training of the newly employed teacher. The counselling process helps to strengthen perceived self-efficacy, promotes teachers' empowerment and through its essential feature, the interview, it makes it possible to gather information and formulate interpretative hypotheses related to the problem that is presented. According to the authors counselling can give valid assistance for professional supervision of the teaching tutor, touching on topics related to the daily activities of the newly-hired teacher, such as relationships with peers and students, teaching practices and dealing with administrative matters.

Arianna Lodovica Morini, the author of «L'osservazione del docente tutor e l'autovalutazione del docente neoassunto: strategie per qualificare le attività di tutorship» (The observation of the tutor teacher and the self-evaluation of the newly-hired teacher: strategies to define activities of tutorship), maintains that the two strategies of reciprocal observation (or «hetero-observation») and self-evaluation can be useful for promoting a constructive relationship between the tutor and the tutee. Peer to peer practices can enrich both their professional experiences and can augment the sharing of knowledge and of teaching practices. In order to assist a reflection upon

professional practices, the author proposes using the tool of the checklist, the utility of which was tested in the context of the project carried out in the Lazio region, in order to identify, in addition to several other questions, the most relevant issues for teaching tutors related to their school activities.

The essay by Arianna Giuliani «La funzione strategica del *middle* management per qualificare e innovare i processi formativi: il Questionario sulle pratiche valutative» (The strategic function of *middle* management in defining and introducing innovations to training processes: the Questionnaire on evaluation practices) concentrates on the role of the teaching tutor in the middle management context at school. This regards those members of staff with certain additional functions and activities that complement their teaching roles, both within and outside the context of school. During her analysis of the results of the Questionnaire on evaluation practices administered during the training programme carried out in the Lazio region, the author focuses on evaluation activities within educational institutions and those relating to peer review. She maintains that the role of teaching tutors with a middle management function should be strengthened and that it could contribute to the creation of learning communities, possibly involving other stakeholders in the local area.

The role of the teaching tutor can have some peculiarities regarding the school grade or year of schooling. Bianca Briceag in her essay «Il Tutor dei docenti neoassunti di scuola dell'infanzia e lo sviluppo del sistema integrato 0-6» (The tutor of newly-hired pre-primary school teachers and the development of the 0-6 integrated system), focuses on the role of the teaching tutor in the pre-primary school. Analyzing the results of the training project carried out in the Lazio region, the article highlights elements that the pre-primary school has in common with other educational grades (for example the possibility of sharing and reflection among peers that is offered by the function of the tutor) and some aspects that are more specific to the context of pre-primary school (for example the need to make new means of observation available to newly-hired teachers). According to the author, the recent introduction of an integrated system of education and training is central to the role of tutors at pre-primary schools who represent the «bridge figures» of this new system.

The last essay in the volume «Il profilo dei docenti tutor dei neoassunti in anno di prova» (The profile of teaching tutors for newly-hired teachers in their trial year) by Giovanni Moretti, Arianna Lodovica Morini and Arianna Giuliani re-examines and summarizes the results of the training project carried out in the Lazio region and underlines some further aspects. In addition to the dimensions of reflection and collaboration, the authors pay particular attention to teaching and evaluation strategies, co-

teaching methodologies, and the role of self-efficacy for middle management functions. According to the authors, in order to ensure an effective and long-lasting process of training, the level of awareness and of self-efficacy of teachers should be increased. They emphasise that, in any future interventions, it will be necessary to take the age of the teaching tutors into account, as this seems to influence the way that they understand and carry out their role.

In summary, in this volume the processes of reflection and self-awareness and the evaluation and self-evaluation of teachers seem to be two central themes of the essays, in addition to several references to communities of practice and spaces of collaboration between peers that can facilitate these processes. Also practices such as reciprocal observation and feedback are repeatedly mentioned as key tools for encouraging learning by newly-hired teachers.

One of the chief merits of the volume is surely that it is one of the first texts published in Italy to initiate a scholarly discussion on a subject that is insufficiently examined but highly relevant. The narration of a range of training experiences and projects, above all the one that was carried out in the Lazio region, presents the reader with many new facts and encourages us to reflect – always accompanied by the stimulating and in-depth interpretations and reflections of the authors – on the good practices, challenges and implications associated with the recent regulatory changes in the Italian school scenario.

The introduction of new training modalities for newly-hired teachers leads to significant changes in the existing professional practices and relationships between peers and while, on the one hand, it naturally causes some uncertainty and instability with respect to the previously prevailing dynamics, on the other hand it can represent a precious opportunity for initiating or strengthening processes of reflection/action and self-evaluation with respect to one's own working practices.

The volume clearly and exhaustively describes a complex phenomenon and it encourages the reader to find out how this phenomenon is likely to develop in future in the Italian school context, which still faces many challenges, such as inclusion, new technologies and the protection of the environment.