



Analysis of Education and Continuous Education of VET teachers, Trainers and Instructors in Slovakia

**Within Erasmus +, KA3
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Introduction of Elements of DUAL VET in Slovak Republic**



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I. Development of vocational education and training in Slovakia

The decisive change in vocational apprenticeships in Czechoslovakia was based on the nationalization of most enterprises in the period **1945 to 1951** as well as the establishment of the agricultural cooperatives. These measures led to the central management and apprenticeships for all sectors of the national economy. In 1960 the first steps were taken to establish the first facilities for the training of apprentices in the various businesses in which it coordinated general and technical-theoretical education, practical training and education outside of teaching. Since 1974 it was in addition to two to three apprenticeship training also introduced a four-year apprenticeship, which was leaving exam. A certain group of professions was intended only for training graduates.

Between the years **1978-1985** revise the teacher training schools providing primary, secondary and higher education Decree of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Socialist Republic. 80/1977 Coll. on a uniform system of teacher training schools providing primary, secondary and higher education and other educational and educators. The training of teachers and other staff were as follows:

- a) teacher training;
- b) further training for Heads of Cabinet of regional pedagogical institutes and district Educational centers;
- c) further training for senior staff;
- d) ongoing training for teachers and other educational staff;
- e) the ideological and political education teachers.

Teacher training had three stages:

- step - putting new teachers into practice.
- level - post-secondary or graduate school teachers,
- level - specialized training.

The aim of putting into practice new teachers to help new teachers to overcome initial difficulties at work and creatively apply acquired knowledge of basic training in practice. Putting teachers provide the national committees with teachers of vocational training organizations, who have been in employment, school directors and educational settings, head of vocational schools and training centers, and carried out by an induction teacher. Placing track a given school inspector.

The aim was to encourage post-secondary study ideological and political level teachers, innovate and supplement their pedagogical - psychological, methodological and technical - subject training received in high school. Online Dating teachers organize selected vocational schools in cooperation with regional educational institutions, universities and other professional and scientific institutions according to uniform curricula and syllabus approved of the Ministry. Online dating masters in vocational education and educators are organized in cooperation with the methodological centers, vocational training centers and methodical curricular and non-occupational education relevant ministries.

The aim of postgraduate studies was to encourage teachers ideological and political level teachers, upgrade, supplement, deepen and diversify their pedagogical - psychological, methodological and technical education -predmetové. Postgraduate studies were designed for teachers of schools providing primary, secondary and higher education, including teachers of vocational subjects (engineers - technicians, engineers -

economists, etc.) To secondary vocational schools and training establishments who have graduated from university. Graduate school teachers organized by the faculties of universities according to uniform curricula and curriculum approved by the Ministry.

The aim of the specialized training is to ensure the further ideological and political, educational and professional development of teachers, improve their work, develop pedagogical creativity and deepen their knowledge according to the needs of the school and individual interests, further training of teachers at different kinds of demanding teaching activities (induction teacher, head of the subject commission and methodical associations, educational consultant, instructor teaching techniques, leading activity corner, etc.). Specialised training organized regional pedagogical institutes, institutes, universities and other scientific institutions.

From 1985 to 1996 he governs continuing education of teachers Decree of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Socialist Republic. 65/1985 Coll. the training of teachers. Further education consisted of:

- a) ideological – political education
- b) placing novice educators in practice,
- c) post-secondary studies,
- d) postgraduate studies.
- e) specialized study.
- f) functional learning, continuing education,
- g) extension study.

Placing novice educators in practice organized by the school or school facility in cooperation with the district educational center or the Regional Pedagogical Institute, Central Institute for Teacher Education and sector education institutions.

Online contacted teaching staff organized secondary school designated Regional National Committee in collaboration with the Regional Institute for Education on with the central institution, possibly in agreement with the universities.

Postgraduate studies organized by universities in collaboration with the Central Institute or the sectoral education institutions.

Specialised training organized by Central Institute, regional pedagogical institutes, colleges, secondary schools and industry training facilities. Specialised training should leave the final interview. If the species were attending specialized study the prerequisites, it should leave the final exam.

Extension study was a special kind of study in higher education to expand educational and professional qualifications for educational activities in schools and school facilities. Extension of this trial acquires the vocational teachers in secondary schools who were university graduates of non-teaching study program and additional studies qualification to teach general subjects in primary and secondary schools.

From 1993 to 1995 it worked on the "**agenda for change in the governance, financing and content of education and training in secondary vocational schools.**" The

issue of vocational education and training in educational fields, respectively study programs at vocational schools at that time pay as founders:

- The Ministry of Education and Science of the Slovak Republic,
- Ministry of Economy,
- Ministry of Agriculture,
- Ministry of Transport, Communications and Public Works
- Ministry of Defence
- Slovak Association of Consumer Cooperatives
- Slovak Union of Producer Cooperatives
- Church
- other natural or legal persons.

In terms of further training as a master training but also teachers of vocational subjects at the time, they played a significant role in organizations directly ministries (eg. Institute of Education building Bratislava, Nitra Agrionštitút ...). Within the organizational structure of these organizations operate sectoral educational establishments or methodological training centers to carry out advisory and methodological activities for SOU. Also organize educational activities for masters in vocational training, instructors as well as teachers of vocational subjects SOU. An effective means of working with masters in vocational training are "model teaching days" and for teachers of vocational subjects' model teaching hours. "

From 1996 to 2009 he governs continuing education of teachers Decree of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic no. 42/1996 Z.z. about Continuing Education. Forms of further education have been defined as:

- a) Placing novice educators in practice (hereinafter referred to as "putting into practice")
- b) Preparing the senior teaching staff that belong surcharge r4) (hereinafter referred to as "preparation leading educators")
- c) Continuing education
- d) Specialized innovative study
- e) Specialized education
- f) Extension study

Putting into practice the teaching staff acquires the beginning of practical experience to perform the work and to adapt to the specific conditions of teaching practice. If you want to put it into practice, it has to be organized by the school or school facility in cooperation with the Methodological Centre and the National Institute for Education, possibly with educational organizations established by central authorities.

Content of continuing education was mediation date information useful in teaching practice, deepening, development, and expansion of professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills of teaching staff are informed of changes in the concept of education and training reflected in the curriculum, curriculum, textbooks and new legislation in the field of education and new knowledge of pedagogy, psychology and didactics union. Continuous training is organized and its scope in

accordance with the needs of teaching and professional practice by schools, educational facilities, methodical centers, the National Institute for Education and educational organizations of other central authorities.

Containing specialized innovative study was to prepare for the implementation of specialized teaching activities and research activities. Specialized innovation study organized methodical centers, the National Institute for Education and educational organizations of other central bodies.

Containing specialized qualification studies was to enable staffs who meets the requirements of professional and educational qualification, obtained a transitional period accorded to the teaching of the approbation of courses and instructors and vocational education with full secondary education to gain teaching skills to operate in special schools and educational facilities. Specialized education organized methodical centers, the National Institute for Education and other educational organizations of the central authorities, in cooperation with universities.

Extension of this trial acquire the vocational teachers in secondary schools who are university graduates of non-teaching field of study and supplementary pedagogical study, qualification to teach general subjects in primary and secondary schools. Extension study is a special type of study at higher education institutions to expand training and educational competence of the educational activities in schools and school facilities.

II. Entry into teaching/training force in VET

There are no specific initial training programmes that prepare teachers of general subjects to teach in VET schools. It is possible that individual teachers in teacher training colleges reflect on the specificity of teaching general subjects within VET, but it is not visible in teacher training programmes. There are no programmes aimed at converting teachers of general subjects into teachers of vocational subjects. Graduation from a field-relevant higher education non-teaching programme or from a targeted VET teaching programme is obligatory for teaching VET subjects. Vocational theoretical subjects are rarely taught by teachers originally trained in VET teacher training programmes. These programmes aimed at preparing teachers for VET schools were originally predominantly offered for teachers specialising in economy subjects or mechanical engineering subjects. These programmes gradually diminished and vocational theoretical subjects are as a rule taught by graduates from non-teaching programmes at universities. These graduates are obliged to complete a complementary pedagogical study (CPS for teachers) providing them with teaching competences. CPS can be delivered by HEI only, either simultaneously or consecutively. It can be offered as an additional programme to the already accredited teaching programme. In case HEI does not provide respective initial teaching programme accredited by the Accreditation Commission affiliated to the government accrediting higher education programmes, CPS must be accredited by the Accreditation Council of the Ministry of Education for Continuing Training of

Pedagogical and Professional Staff. The content of CPS with a minimum of 200 hours.

Includes at least 80% of pedagogical-psychological and social science fundamentals and at least 40 hours of pedagogical practice under the supervision of pedagogical staff in a practice school. Without a programme quality guarantor (a relevant VET teacher with the second attestation or a university teacher with a PhD degree related to respective VET subjects and a minimum of five years of experience), CPS programmes cannot be accredited.

VET trainers were traditionally specialists with a certificate of apprenticeship, completed complementary pedagogical studies and (surprisingly) also a completed upper secondary programme with a matura school leaving certificate. Requiring a matura certificate in addition to a certificate of apprenticeship is in some cases of VET (e.g. crafts-related) questionable and could create an obstacle to bringing practitioners from the world of business to enter VET schools.

Training for school-based VET trainers to acquire required skills in pedagogy can be offered by HEIs within the aforementioned complementary pedagogical studies (CPS for trainers) with also a minimum of 200 hours, of which at least 80% of pedagogical-psychological and social science fundamentals, and accredited in a similar way. Alternatively, the already employed trainers without qualification can enter qualification studies offered by the in-service training institution MPC and regulated by the Decree of the MŠ No 445/2009 Coll. (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2009b).

A currently offered qualification study for trainers accredited by the Accreditation Council of the Ministry of Education for Continuing Training of Pedagogical and Professional Staff offers 240 hours of training (75 hours of theory of education, 65 hours of psychological theories, and 100 hours of specific VET pedagogy, out of which 30 hours of direct practice) spread over a maximum of 36 months. The third alternative refers to trainer training programmes offering bachelor degrees.

These programmes were newly developed by HEIs and accredited by the Accreditation Commission affiliated to the government in particular to attract paying part-time students. These bachelor studies are increasingly attractive as they offer the first level of higher education as a result of a similar working load compared to the previous two alternatives.

VET schools face a lack of young experienced trainers and partly also VET teachers. It is caused by low competitiveness of wages, but also by high formal qualification requirements. This is why new legislation partly weakened formal qualification requirements for involvement in VET.

Practitioners without teacher training can teach VET subjects, but no more than 10 lesson hours per week. It is hoped that this can attract practitioners to teach part-time. Practical training within 'dual VET' is provided by instructors employed by companies.

III. VET teachers and trainers continuous professional development (CPD)

CPD of teachers and trainers is regulated by Act No 317/2009 Coll. (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2009b) and detailed by the Decree No 445/2009 Coll. (Ministry of Education, 2009b) that introduced a CPD reform based on provision of credit-based continuing education programmes. The most important provider of CPD programmes (17) is MPC (18). All programmes are co-financed from the national ESF project 'Professional and Career Growth of Teaching Staff' and accredited by the Accreditation Council of the Ministry of Education for Continuing Training of Pedagogical and Professional Staff.

Complementary to MPC, the State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV) is also entitled to offer continuing education to VET teachers and trainers, but due to the lack of means, only specialised trainings eligible for financing from respective ESF projects have been offered (see Section 5). In contrast to MPC and its 'Professional and Career Growth of Teaching Staff' project, ŠIOV does not run any ESF project aimed at development and provision of VET specific CPD programmes.

Continuing education can also be offered by other institutions (19), but not all types of programmes of non-state providers are eligible for accreditation. The following types of continuing education are recognised from 15 November 2009:

- (a) adaptation education, obligatory for beginners, lasting from three months to a year and not offering credits for its completion;
- (b) actualisation education, aimed at upholding the professional competence needed for standard performance or attestation, lasting 20-60 hours spread over a maximum of 10 months and offering credits for its completion (except for the preparatory training for attestation);
- (c) innovation education, aimed at improving professional competence of a teacher, lasting 60-110 hours spread over a maximum of 12 months and offering credits for its completion;
- (d) specialisation education, aimed at acquiring professional competences to pursue specialised activities (e.g. class teacher, drug addiction prevention, career guidance, mentoring of novice teachers), lasting 100-160 hours spread over a maximum of 18 months, and offering credits for its completion (except for training focused on class teachers and mentors of beginning teachers);
- (e) school leadership education, obligatory for teachers in administrative positions, lasting 160-200 hours spread over 24 months and not offering

credits for its completion, as it is obligatory for the position.

It is precisely prescribed what kind of programmes can be offered by respective providers, e.g. regional schools (adaptation, actualisation, specialisation), non-state legal entities (actualisation, innovation, specialisation). Important providers are also HEIs.

More precisely stipulated adaptation education is one of the new legislation novelties. Mentoring for teachers and trainers within adaptation education is stipulated by law for a period of three months to one year, and a maximum of two years, if a beginner teacher or trainer fails to achieve required competences according to the assessment of a school director. No mentoring is envisaged by law for teachers and trainers in the second to the fourth career levels. Schools must elaborate their own adaptation education programme that should lead to the acquisition of competences set by the second career level professional standards. These standards are still not public (and obligatory), and therefore, a school director in cooperation with a three-member examination commission decides upon the progress from the first to the second level career path fully autonomously. The director's decision is based on an assessment report of a mentor observation of performance of a beginner in a classroom or workshop in the so-called 'open lesson', and on a final peer discussion. A failure of a beginner to complete adaptation education within two years leads to the termination of his/her contract.

All aforementioned types of programmes except strictly school-based adaptation education must be subjected to accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for Continuing Education affiliated to the MŠVVŠ (20).

CPD lies in the responsibility of a school director. It is based on an annual continuing education plan that must be discussed with a school establisher before being officially issued. This plan is important to solve practical issues rather than to identify detailed training needs of individual teachers and trainers. An application for participation in a CPD programme can be sent by an applicant directly to the regional branch of MPC, signed by a school director or not, supplemented with qualification certificates relevant for the respective CPD programme.

CPD programmes are credit-rated, with one credit point corresponding to five hours of workload. In the case of 60 and more accumulated credits, each 30 credits can be translated into financial bonuses equal to 6% of a tariff wage (21) or can be used for progressing to the third and fourth levels in a career path (30 credits or 60 credits and completed specialised preparatory programme are required for entering first or second attestation procedures). Teachers and trainers are obliged to choose one of prescribed topics (e.g. key competences in VET) for writing their attestation work and passing related examination. Credits are valid for seven years only, and therefore, credit-related remuneration bonuses expire in contrast to bonuses related to progress in a career path.

Originally, the legislation allowed for recognition of competences acquired through experience and/or self-learning, but this is not possible anymore. This contradicts the wishes of teachers and trainers; according to the Chamber of Teachers' survey (22), 61.1% of teachers and trainers agree with the expansion of this option. Possibilities for validation and

recognition of competences acquired on the job and in non-formal settings are very limited. Current in-service training and the CPD model prefer participation in accredited programmes and are therefore subject to criticism as a model that prefers credit hunting over the personal development of teachers and trainers that would translate in improved quality of teaching/learning in classrooms and workshops. Thus, the in-service training model is predominantly supply-driven, heavily depending on the offer of accredited continuing education programmes.

A failure of state and public organisations to provide VET schools with state-of-the-art equipment and even provide them with rich enough supply information about innovations in the world of work and the world of education relevant for provision of quality IVET resulted in the creation of a new VET governance architecture introduced by the 2009 Act on VET and the new 2015 Act on VET (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2015). As already mentioned, professional/employers' organisations were assigned many responsibilities; however, their involvement in in-service training of teachers and trainers is not yet backed by legislation. They are only responsible for training of instructors of practical training offered by companies. It is inevitable to expand offers in support of CPD of vocational subject teachers and trainers, and legislatively back their CPD in a more appropriate way.

Although some bodies, e.g. guilds, offer diverse specialised training to VET staff, this kind of training is not sufficiently institutionalised. Similarly to not yet institutionalised master craftsman examinations that have still not been officially revived, improved capacities for retraining and assessing VET specific skills are needed. This is why the experience from German speaking countries in VET specific training should be further exploited. Professional/employers' organisations must be enabled to support CPD of teachers and trainers substantially.

IV. Practical training instructors in companies (work-based settings)

Instructors offering practical training in companies are not considered pedagogical staff and, therefore, are not addressed by Act No 317/2009 Coll. (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2009b). They work with a maximum of three students in cooperation with a VET trainer from a partner school who supervises a maximum of 40 students in total. Their position is regulated with the introduction of dual VET by Act No 61/2015 Coll. on VET (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2015). Instructors are employed by a company that provides practical training and they are required to have at least a certificate of apprenticeship in respective study field.

They need to have three years of experience, all certificates required for performing respective profession, and within one year of their appointment they need to complete an Instructor Training. These trainings are already under development with regard to all fields within envisaged dual VET. The following is a basic description of the Instructor Training offered by the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry that is responsible, inter alia, for very important fields of study in mechanical and electrical engineering sectors.

Four modules of training are envisaged with total 28 lesson hours, of which 16 hours of face-to-face learning and 12 hours of distance learning:

- (a) practical training provided by employer (legislation);
- (b) provision of practical training (administration);
- (c) practical training content (standards, training plan, syllabi);
- and
- (d) student in practical training (psychology and pedagogy)

Instructors will be trained by lecturers retrained under the supervision of the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Some lecturers have already been retrained within the national ESF project 'Development of Secondary VET' and/or other dual VET pilot projects. A training programme for new lecturers is composed of four modules and lasts 40 hours. Training of lecturers with experience and relevant history of earlier employment lasts only 20 hours.

There were several dual VET piloting projects run before adoption of the Act on VET (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2015), two of which contained important trainer training component:

- (a) The Swiss-Slovak project, 'Vocational Education and Training for the Labour Market', financed by the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme, is testing the Swiss experience in 10 secondary VET schools across the country and in 18 partner companies. A 20-hour 'Training of Instructors of Practical Training' has been developed in cooperation with Swiss partners and accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Continuing Education affiliated to the MŠVVŠ.
- (b) The Austrian-Slovak project, 'Young Stars', is testing the Austrian experience in the Secondary VET School Zlaté Moravce and in 10 partner companies. 12 24 instructors have been already trained in a 32-hour training based on the Austrian experience.

In addition to instructors of dual training, there are also instructors providing similar work-based training within the traditional ('non-dual') approach based on agreements (institutional contracts) between schools and companies. These instructors can also be now trained or retrained under the supervision of respective professional/employers' organisations. Before adoption of the new act on VET, they often acquired the qualification required for a regular trainer, as they belong to the school-based VET subsystem. CPD provision for this group has not yet been developed. If the two abovementioned projects continue, instructor CPD will follow the experience of the partner countries.

CPD in the dual sub-system of VET will have to be developed under the supervision of professional/employers' organisations responsible for respective study fields (as stipulated by the Decree No 64/2015 Coll. (MŠVVŠ, 2015)). Other important players, e.g. guilds, should be gradually involved in retraining instructors. Mapping of relevant partners is already in progress and should result in a 'Map of All Fields of Study Concerned Bodies'. It is not possible to consider a mechanism of CDP (needs analysis, coverage of competences, validation and recognition of competences, etc.) due to a very early stage of its development.

V. The world of education and the world of work

Cooperation and partnerships between the world of education and the world of work in support of teachers and trainers' CPD must be improved. It lacks institutional support and is predominantly based on personal contacts and activities. Teachers and trainers in the school-based system should be served by MPC and ŠIOV and can participate in accredited continuing education programmes (see Section 2.5) that are formally recognised as contributing to their CPD.

They can also participate in other training programmes and other activities (e.g. offered by guilds) that can contribute to their professionalisation, but are not officially recognised as contributing to their CPD, provided they are not accredited. Schools with contracts with companies on provision of practical training (a 'non-dual' sub-stream) can benefit from contacts with respective companies easier than other schools offering practical education in their workshops. These learning opportunities are however rather informal. It is hoped that the cooperation between schools and companies within a dual sub-stream can be stronger and even backed by contracts between a respective school and a company.

In general, teachers and trainers complain about the lack of opportunities for vocationally-targeted retraining. This is why Act No 184/2009 Coll. on VET (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2009a) suggested creating 'Centres of VET' with enhanced capacities to offer in-service training for teachers and trainers alongside with regular secondary IVET programmes for students. These centres are being established, based on the cooperation of self-governing regions and respective professional/employers' organisations. 63 already established centres are, however, not yet ready to offer this kind of assistance.

A change in philosophy is signalled by the new act on VET introducing dual IVET and establishment of workplaces of practical training affiliated to companies.

As already mentioned, professional/employers' organisations are responsible for initial training and CPD of instructors employed by companies, including those who are not involved in dual VET. This leads to suggestions to create institutions managed by companies and/or professionals/employers' organisations that should contribute to professionalisation of all VET staff (including teachers and trainers employed by VET schools) with regard to specific VET-related competences. This should complement CPD focused on the pedagogical/didactic competence offered by MPC and ŠIOV.

In sectors with strong technological progress, businesses regularly organise paid training for professionals. It is not rare that IVET staff participate in this kind of training for reduced fees or for free based on personal contacts with the world of work. These activities are valued by VET staff; however, the access to them is limited as they are often organised during teaching/training hours in schools. Many opportunities for informal and non-formal learning are offered within fairs and exhibitions, the most known being JUVYR and Young Creator.

V. Conclusions

A status of VET teachers and trainers is low. The 2013 OECD data confirm the strong frustration of lower secondary level teachers in Slovakia compared to other countries. Even, with only 4% of teachers believing that the teacher profession is valued in the society compared to the average of 30.9%, Slovakia ranked last among the TALIS countries. Similar results are also expected concerning VET teachers and trainers.

Despite the significant improvement in wages since the strike of pedagogical staff in 2012, the attractiveness of the teaching profession is still low.

This particularly endangers VET schools as knowledgeable specialists find better opportunities in business. It is time to rethink measures to attract people in mid-age with a relevant history in business to enter VET schools. This should not be about a competitive wage only, but predominantly about flexibility in forms of their engagement. With regard to this, also new measures aimed at provision of CPD for VET teachers and trainers are urgently needed.

Ageing of teachers in VET schools is in progress with the average age of 47.6 years in 2014 compared to 43.2 years in 2009. Similarly, the average age of trainers was 49 years in 2014 compared to 45.1 years in 2009. Ageing of teachers and trainers is significantly influenced by the extension of the retirement age, but it also signals a lack of young professionals interested in a teacher/trainer career. A share of pensioners working as teachers in VET schools is higher compared to grammar schools or lower secondary and elementary teachers.

No substantial barriers are visible in the provision of pre-service training in contrast to in-service training. Both pre-service and in-service training suffer from a lack of specialists in VET specific pedagogy/psychology.

This is harmful predominantly for inservice training. Furthermore, vocational subject teachers and trainers have comparably fewer opportunities for their subject-related CPD programmes.

Although the provision of continuing programmes for pedagogical staff is also open to non-state bodies, the market of in-service training services is still dominated by public bodies. MPC, ŠIOV and NÚCŽV, three institutions directly managed by the MŠVVŠ, have however only limited opportunities to enrich this market due to a lack of funding and specialists to cover a variety of VET fields. This is why measures to strengthen the position of professional/employers' organisations in VET have been in progress since 2009.

Since 2015, these institutions have been responsible for the provision of training for instructors of practical training in companies, and higher involvement of diverse professional/employers' organisations, in particular guilds, is envisaged towards teachers and trainers in VET schools. Lacking experience of these bodies in providing training in a systemic quality assured way is however a very serious obstacle that should be addressed in cooperation with countries where professional/employers' organisations have long-term experience in this.

Bridging the divide between the world of education and the world of work is an ultimate challenge. Schools are permanently blamed for high unemployment of young people, but their partnership with companies is still insufficiently supported. Introduction of elements of dual VET by the 2015 Act on VET is a positive step in support of workbased learning opportunities, however, it should not be forgotten that this is not a panacea, despite high expectations of some politicians and employers' representatives.

https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/ReferNet_SK_TT.pdf