

# NATIONAL REPORT

Romania

## SUMMARY

The present report contains the analysis and synthesis of the information included in the implementation logbooks filled out by the BaCuLit trainers in order to document the delivery of the Content Area Literacy courses provided by their respective institutions. The report highlights the obstacles encountered and the solutions identified to overcome them, and contains a set of recommendations as well.

### Ariana-Stanca Văcărețu

Asociația Lectura și Scrierea pentru Dezvoltarea Gândirii Critice România [Romanian Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Association]

## List of acronyms

Art. = article

BaCuLit = Basic Curriculum for Teachers' In-Service Training in Content Area Literacy in Secondary Schools; in-service training course for teachers developed within the Comenius Multilateral project bearing the same name

[http://www.alinet.eu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=50](http://www.alinet.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=50)

CAL = content area literacy

CSI = County School Inspectorate

CTAL = Critical thinking. Active learning

DIC = Documentation and Information Centre

IDP = institutional development plan/ project

MERYS = (Romanian) Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport

MESR = (Romanian) Ministry of Education and Scientific Research

MLSP = Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

NCAVT = National Centre for Adults' Vocational Training

NCIT = National Centre for In-Service Training of Pre-University Education Staff

NGO = non-governmental organization

OECD = Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OM = Order of the Minister

OMNE = Order of the Minister of National Education

Para. = paragraph

PIRLS = Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (international study)

PISA = Programme for International Student Assessment (it aims to evaluate the education systems around the world through testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year old students)

RWCT = Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking

RWCT Romania = Romanian Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Association

TTH = Teacher Training House

## Contents

List of acronyms .....	2
National context.....	4
How teachers' in-service training is organized in Romania .....	4
Institutions in charge of in-service training for secondary school teachers.....	5
Quality assurance.....	6
Other aspects .....	6
In-service teacher training institutions where BaCuLit courses are intended to be delivered .....	7
Expectations regarding the opportunities to implement BaCuLit/ CAL courses in the targeted institutions .....	11
Institutions where the implementation of BaCuLit/ CAL courses has been planned.....	12
Steps taken to analyse the opportunities for BaCuLit/ CAL course implementation in the targeted in-service training institutions.....	13
Trainers of Arad TTH .....	13
Trainer of Olt TTH.....	14
Trainers of Neamț TTH.....	15
Trainers of Filocalia Foundation.....	15
Trainers of the Romanian Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Association.....	16
Conclusions on the steps taken by BaCuLit trainers.....	18
Major obstacles encountered in the implementation of the BaCuLit / CAL course and potential solutions .....	20
Recommendations .....	23
Recommendations for trainers .....	23
Recommendations for in-service training providers .....	24
Recommendations for MESR .....	26
Conclusions of the report .....	28
The stage of mainstreaming BaCuLit project results in the Romanian education system .....	29
Bibliography .....	32
Annex 1 – BaCuLit trainers who documented the implementation of the CAL/ BaCuLit courses by filling out implementation logbooks .....	33

## National context

### How teachers' in-service training is organized in Romania

The continuous professional development of teaching staff in pre-university education is coordinated by the Ministry of Education in accordance with legislation in force. The laws that define teachers' continuous professional development in Romania are: the Law of Education no. 1/ 2011 (\*\*\*, 2013), Methodology for the in-service training of staff in pre-university education, order no. 5.561/2011 (MERYS, 2011) amended by Order no. 3129 of 01.02.2013 (MNE, 2013) and the Methodology for the accreditation of in-service teacher training providers and programmes provided, order 5564/ 2011 (MERYS, 2011), amended by Order no. 3130/ 2013 of 1.02.2013 (MNE, 2013)

In-service training is done mainly through professional development programmes and activities for scientific/ specialised, psychol-pedagogical and didactic training, training programmes in educational management, guidance and evaluation, preparation courses and examinations for obtaining the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> degree teacher status; vocational / professional re-training programmes; masters level studies for specialisation in a different domain. – Art. 4, (1) Methodology for the in-service training of staff in pre-university education, Order no. 5.561/2011 (MERYS, 2011).

According to Art.245 Para.( 6) of Law no.1/ 2011 – the teaching staff, as well as the management, guidance and supervision staff in pre-university education are obliged to participate periodically in in-service training programmes so that, in each consecutive 5-year interval counted from the date of completion of the 'definitivat' examination, they accumulate a minimum of 90 transferrable professional credit points. The number of hours varies: the approximate duration is 300 hours (according to OM no. 5562 of 7 October 2011 for the approval of the Methodology regarding the accumulation, recognition and validation of transferrable professional credits (MERYS, 2011)).

Teachers' participation in in-service training programmes is acknowledged through certificates, diplomas or other documentary proofs provided by the in-service training provider. In practice, there are cases when the training providers also offer financial rewards. There are no specified negative consequences of non-participation in in-service training. In practice, the teachers who do not accumulate 90 credits per 5-year periods have less secure jobs, as they do not achieve a high score in the evaluation forms for assigning a qualificative, for the merit gradation or for the pedagogic fiches.

In education institutions, needs assessment is done by the Continuous Professional Development Commission, which monitors the accumulation of the 90 credits and which, subsequently, provides

information about the courses on offer in the current academic year, especially those provided by the TTHs. The teachers opt for the in-service training courses they wish to attend.

### Institutions in charge of in-service training for secondary school teachers

The national system of institutions, organizations and structures which deliver in-service teacher training for the staff in pre-university education includes: the Ministry of Education through all the specialised directions, the county school inspectorates and the school inspectorate of Bucharest, the Institute of Educational Sciences, accredited higher education institutions, teacher training houses in the counties and in Bucharest, foundations, professional associations and non-governmental as well as governmental organizations which offer authorised programmes within the conditions specified by law, other public and private education service and professional training providers, authorized/ accredited according to the law, etc. - Art. 67 Methodology for the in-service training of staff in pre-university education, order no. 5561/ 2011.

The in-service training provider is an educational institution, a non-governmental organization or a legal body, public or private, which, according to its bylaws, carries out in-service training activities or programmes that are legally authorised. – Art. 3 (1) - Methodology for the accreditation of in-service teacher training providers and programmes provided/ 2011.

A significant role in the in-service teacher training in Romania is played by the Teachers' Training Houses (TTH) which initiate and organize in-service training, scientific, pedagogic and cultural activities included in the institutions' programme provision, approved annually by the specialised direction of the Ministry of Education. At the same time, TTH, as an in-service training provider, proposes for accreditation its own training programmes and/ or programmes developed in partnership with other educational or research institutions. Upon the request of the Ministry of education, TTH organizes and carries out various types of in-service training programmes. – Art. 72 Methodology for the in-service training of staff in pre-university education, order no. 5561/ 2011.

The county school inspectorates coordinate, at the county level, the in-service training/ continuous professional development of the teaching staff done through: pedagogic-scientific and psycho-pedagogical activities organized in the education institutions or by groups of units, and by pedagogical commissions, departments and circles; pedagogical-scientific conferences; exchange of experiences concerning speciality and psycho-pedagogical issues; regular and special inspections for the attribution of

2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> degree status for teachers. – Art. 71 Methodology for the in-service training of staff in pre-university education, order no. 5561/ 2011.

### Quality assurance

The in-service training programmes can be accredited and / or approved by MNE or authorised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the County Agency for Social Payments and Inspection. Each accredited / approved programme has its own system of quality assurance – in the documentation submitted (MNE, MLSP, etc.) for the accreditation/ approval of the in-service training programmes, there is information concerning quality assurance (procedures and tools).

The Ministry of education, through its specialised directions, carries out the regular evaluation of the in-service training providers and of the programmes provided by these bodies.

In Art. 10 paragraph (2) of the Methodology for the accreditation of in-service teacher training providers and programmes provided/ 2011 it is stipulated:

Monitoring of the in-service training programmes entails observation of the activities for the organization, coordination and delivery proper, as well as evaluation that take place within the programme. Monitoring also implies provision of feedback about the recorded progress both for the programme providers, and for the funders and beneficiaries or target groups of the programme.

If the in-service training programme is not accredited, the training programme provider organizes, implements and monitors the deliver of the in-service training programme.

### Other aspects

At present, there are numerous in-service training programmes provided for teachers, who are mostly **exhausted** by participation in such courses. In some cases, the teachers are **not authentically consulted** about their interest in certain courses, and they are **more or less obliged** to attend them (mostly as a formality, by signing the attendance sheet). This context is unfavourable for provision of courses that truly require active participation and demonstration of the developed competences.

## In-service teacher training institutions where BaCuLit courses are intended to be delivered

Except for three persons, the BaCuLit trainers (certified in August 2014) who filled out implementation logbooks work in schools. As a consequence, they pointed out that they would like to deliver the BaCuLit course in the institution where they work as a trainer or in institutions they cooperate with as a trainer.

Each BaCuLit trainer turned their attention to an in-service teacher training provider institution within which they would deliver the BaCuLit / CAL courses as follows:

- Five of the trainers decided to deliver BaCuLit / CAL courses through a Teacher Training House (Arad TTH, Olt TTH and Neamț TTH);
- Four of the trainers decided to deliver the BaCuLit/ CAL courses through the non-governmental organizations where they provide training activities or legally authorised in-service training programmes (Romanian Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Association, Filocalia Foundation and the Romanian Literacy Association).

The major characteristics of the above-listed **Teacher Training Houses** are:

- They are public institutions, funded from the central budget;
- They provide courses on a variety of topics for the teachers in the county; e.g. educational management, non-formal education, conflict mediation, inclusive education, project management, documentation techniques in DIC, education for human rights, pedagogy and didactics for degree examinations, etc. (Arad TTH, Neamț TTH, Olt TTH); long and medium-length courses of 16, 18, 24, 36 up to 89 hours – Arad TTH and Olt TTH.
- They have a large number of trainers (including external collaborators) – e.g. 70-80 trainers at Neamț TTH, 80 trainers at Olt TTH and 50 trainers at Arad TTH.
- They train a large number of teachers of all disciplines every year – e.g. 200 – 2000 teachers trained annually by Olt TTH; 500 – 4000 teachers, auxiliary staff and management staff trained annually by Arad TTH.
- Their system of in-service teacher training quality assurance includes:
  - Monitoring of each training programme by an expert (in Romanian, ‘profesor metodist’, i.e. methods teacher) (Olt TTH, Arad TTH);

- Final evaluation of the participants in the training takes place in the presence of a commission (Olt TTH, Arad TTH);
- Evaluation during the courses is done by trainers who review each participant's portfolio (Neamț TTH);
- Collection of feedback from the participants is done through anonymous satisfaction questionnaires (Olt TTH, Neamț TTH);
- evaluation, at the end of the course, based on a questionnaire, for all types of training programmes (Arad TTH);
- final evaluation done by external evaluators (labour direction) – for the authorised programmes (Arad TTH);
- final evaluation for accredited courses done by trainers who delivered the training, through public presentations made by the participants in which they share their evaluation portfolios (Arad TTH);
- evaluation of the impact of training and identification of training needs for the upcoming academic year, at the end of each academic year, based on questionnaires for teachers, management and expert teachers of the CSI (Arad TTH).

The characteristics of NGOs that do training or deliver legally authorised in-service teacher training programmes, through which four of the trainers intend to deliver BaCuLit/ CAL courses are listed below:

- they are private institutions, which fund the accreditation, organization and delivery of in-service teacher training programmes from own resources (possibly using money from project grants);
- they have a lower number of trainers: 10 (Filocalia Foundation), 15 (RWCT Romania);
- they annually train a lower number of teachers of all disciplines at the regional level (Filocalia Foundation: 100 - 200) and/ or national level (RWCT Romania: 40 - 50);
- they have accredited BaCuLit/ CAL training courses:
  - the course *Gândire Critică. Învățare Activă [Critical Thinking. Active Learning]* accredited by Decision no. 71 of 11.10.2006 of the NCIT for a period of 3 years (in 7 counties of Romania) and by OMNE no. 6170 of 07.11.2011, for a period of 3 years (in 4 counties of Romania); the course is 89 hours long, it carries 25 transferrable professional credits and was accredited by RWCT Romania;
  - the course *Citesc pentru a învăța [Reading to Learn]* accredited by OMNE no. 5550 of 21.11.2013, for a period of 4 years (in 6 counties of România: Iași, Botoșani, Neamț,

Suceava, Vaslui and Bacău); the course is 92 hours long, it carries 20 transferrable professional credits and it was accredited by Filocalia Foundation. The course is part of the 'Reading to Learn' project, implemented (in its second stage) by the Romanian Literacy Association in partnership with the MNE, the school inspectorates in the Northeastern region and Filocalia Foundation, and funded by the Romanian – American Foundation. The 'Reading to Learn' project includes support for teachers who participate in the training, which is provided by the trainers subsequent to the training course completion) in order to apply the new learning in classroom practice.

- The in-service training programme provision is less diverse:
  - RWCT Romania provides:
    - Courses for teachers in the pre-university education system: *Gândire critică. Învățare active [Critical Thinking. Active Learning; Rețele sociale și formarea adulților [Social Media and Adult Training]; Mentorat/ Formare mentori [Mentoring/ Training for Mentors]; Acțiune-cercetare [Action research]; CLIL through CLIL, etc.*
    - Courses are delivered face-to-face or on-line or as *blended learning*;
    - General courses (the curriculum is set for a period of time, accredited programme, e.g. *Critical Thinking. Active Learning*) or courses developed in response to the specific needs of a certain group of learners (e.g. mentoring, action-research);
    - The courses vary in length between 30 and approximately 90 hours and are organized especially as workshops or seminars.
  - Filocalia Foundation has provided:
    - School manager training programme (Calitate și eficiență în managementul școlilor [Quality and Effectiveness in School Management]);
    - Training for teachers: Predare – învățare din perspectiva competențelor cheie [Teaching – learning for key competence development];
    - Training of preschool teachers: Educația preșcolară la standarde europene [Preschool education at European standards];
    - Training of trainer courses;
    - Training courses for quality managers;
    - The training course *Reading to Learn*.

- The quality assurance system for the in-service teacher training programmes include:
  - For RWCT Romania:
    - The quality assurance system is particularised for each accredited training programme – e.g. use of the evaluation standards that are specific for the *Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking* (RWCT) international programme, accompanied by rubrics, final evaluation done in a public meeting, where the participants share a topic from their portfolio, impact analysis of the training programme;
    - Monitoring and evaluation of the participants' progress using quality assurance systems particularised for each course/ workshop;
    - Final evaluation done in a public meeting, where the participants share a topic from their portfolio (this is valid for accredited programmes);
    - Periodic feedback collected from the participants during the delivery of the training programmes/ courses to allow adjustments to their needs;
  - For Filocalia Foundation:
    - Using questionnaires to assess the participants' satisfaction with the course;
    - Monitoring the training by means of implementation reports;
    - Monitoring the implementation of the participants' new learning through direct collaboration with the principals of the schools where the participants teach.

## Expectations regarding the opportunities to implement BaCuLit/ CAL courses in the targeted institutions

With two exceptions, the BaCuLit trainers expressed their expectations about the outcomes of the course, namely:

- Develop the teachers' professional competences so that they can help develop the students' literacy and learning skills;
- Improved pedagogy, specifically lesson planning for the development of literacy skills;
- The teachers' interest in reflection on how literacy skills development becomes an essential part of classroom practice;
- Understand the importance of authentic text (other than those in textbooks), of vocabulary enrichment in the content area and of reading and learning strategies, and interest for applying these ideas in the classroom;
- Change classroom practices;
- Train teachers to develop the students' skills to obtain good results in international assessments (such as PISA, PIRLS).

Two trainers (Maria Kovacs and Anca Petriuc) had a different kind of expectations – they pointed out the aspects that pertain to teacher motivation to participate in the course and their engagement during the course:

- They anticipated that they would face difficulties in starting a group who would attend regularly. However, they expected that the teachers who would participate would carry out the tasks and learn significant things that they would be able to apply immediately in their teaching.
- They anticipated that an accredited course, which provides credit points for the participants, would prove more attractive for the teachers.
- They thought that if they launched a process of participant selection, they would stand a better chance that the course would be valued.

## Institutions where the implementation of BaCuLit/ CAL courses has been planned

We noticed the tendency to implement the course in the school where the trainers come from; those trainers who teach in schools all planned, in a first stage, to implement the BaCuLit course in their schools. Andrada Marcu (school inspector, trainer based in Arad) and Victor Tița (director of Olt TTH, trainer based in Slatina) planned to implement the BaCuLit course in two schools each in their respective counties, as follows:

Andrada Marcu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Școala gimnazială Păuliș, Păuliș commune, Arad County (rural)</li><li>• Școala gimnazială „Sabin Mănuilă” Sâmbăteni, Arad County (rural)</li></ul>
Victor Tița	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Școala Gimnazială Nicolae Iorga, Slatina (urban)</li><li>• Școala Gimnazială Șerbănești, Olt County (rural)</li></ul>

In the longer term, the trainers plan to implement BaCuLit/ CAL courses in lower secondary schools (Școala gimnazială) in the urban and rural areas (4 trainers), schools (not just lower secondary) in the urban and rural areas (2 trainers), and to deliver it to teachers who work in secondary education and are interested in participating (2 trainers).

Camelia Avramescu, a level 2 BaCuLit trainer based in Arad, initiated the inclusion of the training programme in the ‘approved’ version (36 hours of training, all face-to-face) in the training offer of Arad TTH, as well as that of Olt and Brașov TTHs. As a result of talks with the directors of the two other TTHs, they agreed a structure and presentation of the BaCuLit programme which was included in the training provision of all three institutions.

Six of the trainers mention the number of participants in the first BaCuLit courses they planned to implement: Dumitreț-Victor Tița (50 participants), Anca Petriuc and Maria Kovacs (40 participants in two groups), Alexandru Lezeu (25 participants in a single group, in addition to the training within the *Reading to Learn*), Andrada Marcu (24 participants), Oana Iloae (4 participants).

## Steps taken to analyse the opportunities for BaCuLit/ CAL course implementation in the targeted in-service training institutions

The stages covered by the trainers to analyse the opportunities for BaCuLit/ CAL course implementation depended on the training institutions through which the training course was intended to be delivered, and the trainers' position in the respective institutions.

### Trainers of Arad TTH

The three trainers who planned to work through Arad TTH, a partner institution in the BaCuLit and ISIT projects, had one single stage to complete (of approximately 10 days) in October 2014. It is noteworthy that the BaCuLit Programme is part of the training provision of Arad TTH, and it is to be accredited, and that Arad TTH was involved in the training of these trainers. The three trainers contacted five school principals in both rural and urban areas, and provided information about the goals of the BaCuLit programme to identify the training needs insofar as literacy skills development is concerned, and to discuss the training programme calendar. The trainers found that the directors showed interest, but also some reservation as concerns the participation of teachers, given that they had attended several other training programmes in the recent past. The school principals suggested reducing the number of face-to-face training hours (24 instead of 36) through increasing the intensity of the course.

Trainers	Schools
Andrada Marcu	Şcoala gimnazială „Nicolae Bălcescu” Arad Şcoala gimnazială „Aurel Vlaicu” Arad Şcoala gimnazială Păuliş, Păuliş commune, Arad County Şcoala gimnazială „Sabin Mănuilă” Sâmbăteni, Arad County Şcoala gimnazială Zădăreni, Arad County
Anca Crişan	Şcoala gimnazială „Aurel Vlaicu” Arad
Aurica Vlaicu-Hergane	Şcoala gimnazială „Aurel Vlaicu” Arad

Table 1: List of schools in Arad County contacted by the trainers

From their approach, the three trainers learnt the following:

- It would be helpful to have a shorter version of the training programme (as concerns 'face-to-face' training hours) which could be developed relying on the experience gained in delivering

the course in the ‘distance learning’ version. Thus, 36 hours mean approximately 12 meetings, i.e. 12 weeks in which an afternoon per week is allocated to this programme.

- To increase motivation for participation in a CAL type programme would require an information campaign, because CAL is, generally speaking, not part of the professional culture of teachers in Romania. To this end, all available resources should be engaged.
- The issue of supplementary funds is secondary; if the training programme were accredited, it could be provided relying on the financial resources of the TTH.

### Trainer of Olt TTH

The trainer who proposed to work through Olt TTH is the director of Olt TTH, and therefore he has the power to make decisions for this training provider institution. In his implementation logbook, he mentioned that he covered a 5-day stage in September. He contacted the principals of two schools (one in a rural area and one in an urban area) to provide information about the goals of the BaCuLit programme, and to assess the needs in terms of facilitation of literacy skills development, and also to discuss the training programme calendar. The outcome of the discussions was positive and he received the recommendation that the BaCuLit programme be adapted (face-to-face meetings over a 36-hour period). Starting from the needs analysis carried out on teachers in Olt County, it was decided to provide the course entitled ‘Cross-curricular literacy skills’ for teachers in Olt County in the version ‘approved’ by MNE. The BaCuLit programme is included in the Olt TTH offer, and it is going to be accredited.

Trainer	Schools
Dumitrele – Victor Tița	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Școala Gimnazială Nicolae Iorga, Slatina (urban) – 25 participants</li> <li>• Școala Gimnazială Șerbănești, Olt County (rural) – 25 participants</li> </ul>

Table 2: List of schools in Olt County contacted by the trainer

From his approach, the trainer learnt the following:

- The director of the institution is a key factor in attracting participants to attend this training course; he also understood that the marketing strategy for this literacy skills development course is important.

## Trainer of Neamț TTH

The trainer who planned to work with Neamț TTH covered a single one-day stage in October 2014. He contacted school inspectors and the principals of two schools (Școala Gimnazială Mihai Eminescu, Școala Gimnazială Vasile Alecsandri, both in Roman, Neamț County) to discuss the opportunity for implementing the course in their respective institutions. The outcome of the meetings was positive, and the trainer was reassured that they would support the implementation of the course. It was recommended that the BaCuLit course be accredited and that it should be a blended learning course (36 hours face-to-face training and rest of the number of hours, up to 92, delivered on-line).

From his approach, the trainer learnt the following:

- There is a risk that people who were contacted to gain their support for the implementation of the BaCuLit course may be revoked from their position, and this could mean losing the support of the respective institution.
- The course is more attractive for teachers if it is accredited and as a result the participants gain credits for completing it successfully.

## Trainers of Filocalia Foundation

The trainers who planned to work with Filocalia Foundation to deliver the CAL/ BaCuLit training course are in a special situation. Filocalia Foundation was a partner organization in the BaCuLit project, it tested the BaCuLit course, and it is a partner organization in the ISIT project. Moreover, Filocalia Foundation accredited the *Reading to learn* training course for teachers, a course which was built on the BaCuLit curriculum. The course is being delivered in six counties in the Northeast of Romania within the *Reading to Learn* project. Filocalia Foundation contributed to the training of these trainers. For these reasons, Cătălina Holic, one of the trainers (who completed the BaCuLit course in its testing period):

- participated, as a co-trainer, in the implementation of the course *Reading to Learn*,
- presented the concept, the goals and the objectives of the BaCuLit programme in her school and raised awareness among her colleagues of the need to attend the course,
- organized the implementation of the course in her school,
- promoted the *Reading to Learn* course, sharing the concept, the goals and objectives of the programme in the Comisia metodică (Methods commission) of the curricular area 'Man and society' to teachers who are members of Circle no. 3 of the geography teachers and to the geography inspector.

The other trainer, Oana Iloae, who planned to work with Filocalia Foundation, decided to implement the training programme in her school, and therefore:

- she presented information about the training programme to her colleagues,
- she taught a model lesson in the 'Language and Communication' Commission with the aim to exemplify how literacy skills development can be done,
- she discussed with her colleagues the possible outcomes of their participation in the course in terms of student results in examinations,
- she shared with colleagues from her department the concepts of literacy and some strategies,
- she decided to consolidate her knowledge through going over the theoretical part of the course, and applying the BaCuLit strategies with one group of students.

In the future, she intends to implement the *Reading to Learn* training programme as a co-trainer.

From their approach, the two trainers learnt the following:

- The training programme can be introduced in the schools IDP and in the managerial plan for the current academic year.
- The teachers can be motivated to participate in the training by providing credit points for completion or an amount of money for participation.

### Trainers of the Romanian Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Association

The two trainers who are going to deliver the BaCuLit / CAL training courses through RWCT Romania are also in a somewhat special situation, which however is different from the above presented situation. RWCT Romania is a partner in the ISIT project, it has contributed to the development of the training of trainers curriculum, and at the time this approach was launched, it had on offer the CAL training programme called *Gândire critică. Învățare activă [Critical thinking. Active learning]*; the accreditation period of the course expired on 7 November 2014. The two trainers covered a seven-step strategy, in the period 18 August 2014 – 24 October 2014, as follows:

- They discussed with the president of the association, the director of the training programme *Critical thinking. Active learning (CTAL)* about the possibility to provide the course through building BaCuLit elements into GCIA (accredited) course, and through developing a new baCuLit course (which would be delivered in a blended learning format);
- They revised the CTAL curriculum to include the BaCuLit elements (this was possible to do without changes the essential elements of CTAL, which is in effect a CAL course);

- They developed the curriculum of the BaCuLit blended learning course;
- They collected feedback on the developed curricula from the president of the association, the director of the CTAL programme;
- They developed a strategy to promote the course and agreed the details with the president of the association;
- They contacted the inspector from the MNE in charge of delivering in-service training programmes to discuss the possibility of organizing the final evaluation within CTAL after the accreditation period was over; the agreement was secured to allow RWCT Romania to conduct the final evaluation after the accreditation period was over;
- They promoted the two courses through emails, e-groups, and on the website of RWCT Romania, by informing the teachers in charge of continuous professional development in Cluj County, the members of RWCT Romania, and teachers from the Colegiul Tehnic Energetic Cluj-Napoca;
- They communicated with the potentially interested teachers, and enrolled them in the course; the teachers preferred to enrol for CTAL, as this was an accredited programme and thus it provided transferrable credit points;
- For the CTAL course, they organized two groups: one in Scoala *Horea, Cloșca și Crișan* Turda and one in Colegiul Tehnic Energetic Cluj-Napoca, with participants from the Colegiul Tehnic Energetic, other schools in Cluj-Napoca, and schools in the rural areas in the proximity of Cluj-Napoca;
- They covered the administrative steps necessary for the delivery of the CTAL course in the two locations, and started the delivery of the course;
- The director of Cluj TTH was contacted and the BaCuLit programme in the blended learning version was presented along with the proposal to have a partnership agreement with RWCT Romania, so that Cluj TTH would include the BaCuLit blended learning version in its training offer;
- The partnership agreement between RWCT Romania and Cluj TTH to provide the BaCuLit blended learning course was signed; Cluj TTH showed interest to include the BaCuLit blended learning course in its training provision for 2015-2016.

From their approach, the two trainers learnt the following:

- In order to integrate literacy courses in the training provision of the organization in the long term, with the resources available and given the teachers' conditions for participation in such courses, we need to have flexible training offers (including blended learning).

- The BaCuLit course should be combined with CTAL to increase its amplitude and provide a more effective framework for planning learning.
- The course should be free of charge or provided for a fee that can be afforded easily by the teachers, and run according to a schedule that has been agreed with the group of participants. Another factor to increase participant motivation would be to provide them with the immediate opportunity to share their learning and experiences with other colleagues from their schools, in their locality.
- There are a number of possibilities to raise funds. Partnerships can be made with other organizations which have a more substantial authority over the final beneficiaries (TTH, CSI) than an NGO.
- Accreditation can be secured relatively easily, provided that the programme, the curriculum and other (administrative, human resource-related) aspects are described in clear terms and in the format prescribed.

### Conclusions on the steps taken by BaCuLit trainers

From the analysis of the steps taken and the results obtained by the trainers in their attempts to include BaCuLit/CAL in the training provision of the institutions they collaborate with, we can draw the following conclusions:

- Four of the in-service training provider institutions, namely Arad TTH, Olt TTH, Filocalia Iași and RWCT Romania already included the BaCuLit / CAL course in their offer. As Olt TTH was not a partner in either the BaCuLit project, or the ISIT project, we believe that the inclusion of the BaCuLit course in its offer is an excellent result which deserves appreciation. In addition, it is expected that in the 2015 – 2016 academic year, Cluj TTH and Neamț TTH will also include the BaCuLit course in their in-service training catalogue.
- All BaCuLit trainers started preparations for the implementation of the CAL/ BaCuLit course in their respective schools or with groups of teachers from secondary schools.
- The ISIT project partner institutions increased their capacity to deliver CAL/ BaCuLit courses:
  - Arad TTH and Filocalia Foundation expanded their pool of BaCuLit trainers. This allows them to better promote the training programme in schools. For Filocalia Foundation, this is helpful in the implementation of the *Reading to Learn* project.
  - RWCT Romania facilitated the specialisation of two RWCT trainers in BaCuLit and this allows it to include BaCuLit elements in the CAL course it has delivered for 15 years.

- Six of the level 1 BaCuLit trainers proposed to train a total number of 143 teachers in the current academic year. As not all level 1 BaCuLit trainers completed their implementation logbook or they did not specify in the logbook the number of teachers they intend to train, it is very likely that the number of teachers to be trained will be higher.
- The level 2 BaCuLit trainers provide counselling for the new trainers in preparing and delivering the training sessions, as well as in preparing the evaluation of the course.

## Major obstacles encountered in the implementation of the BaCuLit / CAL course and potential solutions

In their implementation logbooks, the trainers pointed out some major obstacles that prevented the implementation of the BaCuLit/ CAL course, as part of the provision of an in-service training institution. It should be noted that the obstacles mentioned by the trainers are mostly connected to delivery. We share below the obstacles identified by the trainers and possible solutions for overcoming them.

### **Obstacle 1**

Resistance, self-sufficiency, and reservations of teachers as concerns the effectiveness of the implementation of the new learning in the CAL/ BaCuLit course, marked by the circumstance that the national examinations at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> grades are very rich in content.

### **Solutions**

Raising awareness of the teachers of the opportunity to participate in the training programme and of the effectiveness of applying the new learning during the course in **demonstration activities** conducted with the students in the classes where such a teaching style can be applied.

Organize **information campaigns** about the CAL programme, especially as this concept is not, in general, part of our teachers' professional culture.

Organize a national level working group of BaCuLit trainers to identify the elements of CAL in the school curricula in force and analyse the examination test items from the perspective of CAL. Promote them in discussions with potential participants in the training course.

Conduct an impact study of the CAL/ BaCuLit training course and publish and promote the findings.

### **Obstacle 2**

Lack of time and exhaustion of the teachers due to administrative overburden.

### **Solutions**

Avoid organizing the course in highly hectic periods for teachers from the administrative point of view (beginning of the academic year, end of semester, end of academic year, etc.).

Organize the course over **longer periods of time** – thus, the frequency of the face-to-face sessions is lower, and the teachers' weekly workload is diminished, so that they have time to plan for the implementation of the new learning in the classroom.

Organize CAL/ BaCuLit courses in blended learning form.

### **Obstacle 3**

The teachers are little open to sustained learning, as they are exhausted.

### **Solutions**

**Careful selection of the participants**, interviews with those interested, explanation provided face-to-face about the conditions of attendance (not just direct enrolment, because the chances that they read and understand the course description are minimal).

### **Obstacle 4**

School principals' reserved or negative attitude vis-à-vis this training programme.

### **Solutions**

Identify **motivated principals** who are open to having their teaching staff trained in literacy skills development.

### **Obstacle 5**

The distance from the county capital city to the locality where the participants come from, which needs to be covered by those who want to attend the course.

### **Solutions**

The CAL/ BaCuLit course should be **implemented in the school**, as the factors of change should be most of the teachers in the schools and the results should be visible to all.

### **Obstacle 6**

There were frequent changes recently in the TTH staff, and this discontinuity had a negative effect on the programme provision – for instance, the approach initiated at Neamţ TTH did not result in the inclusion of the BaCuLit course in their training provision, because the management was changed; at Arad TTH, none of the persons involved in the delivery of the BaCuLit programme in December 2013 - August 2014

was hired as a permanent staff of the TTH, and the teachers who are BaCuLit trainers have numerous other responsibilities.

### **Solutions**

**Ensure continuity of the BaCuLit programme provision** regardless of the management or leadership of the institution through which the training course is provided by getting the programme accredited.

Engage all BaCuLit trainers in the marketing of the course and in the delivery as well.

### **Obstacle 7**

Lack of professional transferrable credits which the teachers need.

### **Solutions**

**Accreditation of the CAL/ BaCuLit programme** by the in-service teacher training provider institutions.

**Collaboration** among in-service teacher training organizations which included the CAL/ BaCuLit programme in their offer with a view to securing programme accreditation.

## Recommendations

Subsequent to the analysis of the implementation logbooks, we recommend the following:

### Recommendations for trainers

To promote the CAL/ BaCuLit course in school and to motivate teachers to participate in the course, more is needed than a simple presentation of the course to the school principal. Even if the principal manages to ‘convince’ the teachers to participate in the course, some will not participate to learn something useful, and to use it in their teaching. They will use excuses such as lack of time, they will skip sessions, and will fail to apply what is expected of them in the classroom. You will manage to motivate teachers to participate meaningfully if:

- You identify the elements of CAL in the school curricula and talk with the teachers about their current practices as concerns the teaching of the identified elements;
- In the message you send to the teachers, emphasise the fact that the development of students’ literacy skills contributes to the development of the ‘learning to learn’ skills – if the students learn how to learn, they will be able to prepare properly for the national examinations as well;
- Organize a demonstration session in the school – show the teachers what the course means, before you want them to decide whether or not to enrol;
- Encourage the teachers who attend the CAL/ BaCuLit course to share with the other teachers their experiences of using the reading strategies in the classroom (in discussions, through writing articles, etc.). In this way, it is likely that they will also motivate their colleagues to attend the course.
- Keep in touch with the media and promote the activities you do in the press, on radio and television; capture the positive aspects of the course and bring them to the attention of teachers and the general public.

Deliver high quality CAL/ BaCuLit courses, support the teachers who attend the course to translate their learning into classroom practices, provide constructive individual feedback, hold a demonstration lesson in the classroom of a teacher who has difficulty implementing the learning in the classroom, observe lessons taught by your participants in the course, etc. Collect evidence about the learners’ progress in applying the CAL principles and methods in their teaching. We find that the models proposed by the RWCT Romania trainers and the ‘Reading to Learn’ project of the Filocalia Foundation are, in this respect, examples of effective practice.

Apply in the classroom the CAL principles and methods. In this way, you will be able to provide examples from your own practice to the teacher colleagues you train, and you will gain credibility.

Any type of course organization (at the school level, in groups of teachers of the same discipline, in groups of various disciplines from various schools) has both advantages and disadvantages. If you don't manage to organize a group of participants for the CAL/ BaCuLit programme in one school, remember that there are other options as well.

It is recommended that you respond to the participants' / potential participants' requests. If they ask that the course be delivered in a reduced number of hours, analyse the possibility of reducing the number of hours, but only make your final decision if you are certain that the alterations made do not affect the quality of the course.

Collaborate with the other BaCuLit trainers, share with them your BaCuLit successes and challenges. Ask for their opinion when uncertain about how to organize and implement the BaCuLit course.

Develop and assume a pro-literacy position paper which will be a statement of your intention and which would demand that decision-makers in the national education system prioritise the development of students' literacy skills.

### Recommendations for in-service training providers

Build your training offer on a limited number of high-quality programmes that are of an optimal professional consistency. For instance, TTHs currently provide a large number of programmes and in many cases monitoring of their quality assurance does not live up to the commitments made in the programme description provided.

Describe the CAL/ BaCuLit training course in the promotional materials so that the teachers understand what it is the course entails precisely. Keep in mind that in Romania teachers know little about the concept of literacy and that the terms used in this field are not widely shared in our education system.

To permanently integrate the literacy course in the training provision of your organization, based on the existing resources and the teachers' conditions of participation in such courses, flexible provisions are needed. We believe that the model proposed by RWCT Romania (two alternative CAL/ BaCuLit courses: one of 89 hours and another blended learning type course) is a successful mode.

Create opportunities for the participants to share what they learn in the course (dedicate a special section to CAL in a conference you organize, in a publication you produce, etc.).

Use an effective system of quality assurance for the CAL/ BaCuLit courses. Include in this system means of supporting the teachers to apply in their classrooms what they learn in the training.

Evaluate the impact of the CAL/ BaCuLit course and promote the results of the impact evaluation. It is the only way in which you will be able to demonstrate the quality of the course and thus you will support the trainers in their efforts to promote the CAL/ BaCuLit course.

Make known the results of the CAL/ BaCuLit course implementation by sharing them with other in-service teacher training organizations in the country.

Support the new trainers, who still have limited experience in teacher training and in literacy, providing opportunities for apprenticeship in CAL/ BaCuLit training alongside more experienced trainers. We believe that the model proposed by Filocalia Foundation (trainer certified in August 2014 involved in the training, at the beginning, as a co-trainer) is a successful one.

Organize a CAL/ BaCuLit workshop/ course for inspectors of various disciplines and expert teachers ('metodist'). It would help with the implementation of CAL in schools and also to motivate teacher participation in the course. Moreover, it would help avoid the situation in which the inspector/ 'metodist' disagrees with the CAL principles and strategies used by teachers in their classrooms simply because they are not familiar with them.

Seek accreditation of the CAL/ BaCuLit course (if you have not done that yet). The teachers are interested in accredited courses.

For the accreditation, organization and successful implementation of the CAL/ BaCuLit courses, seek collaboration. It will help reduce the time invested in organizing/ implementing the CAL/BaCuLit course and it may also improve the quality of the course.

Collaborate for the implementation of a CAL information campaign, as CAL is not, in general, part of the professional culture of Romanian teachers. Promote in the educational system and in your professional community the concept and practices of literacy through a variety of actions to raise awareness, such as: symposia or conferences dedicated to this topic, workshops, media appearances, social media feeds, targeted publicity, etc.

Develop and assume responsibility for a pro-literacy position paper which should be a statement of your intention to promote literacy and to request that decision-makers in the national education system prioritise the development of students' literacy skills.

## Recommendations for MESR

### 1. Make the development of students' literacy skills a priority of MESR

Results in international assessments such as PISA and PIRLS indicate that the Romanian students' performance is much below that of the OECD average. PISA 2012 data indicate that a significant percentage (37.3%) of the Romanian 15-year olds have low level literacy skills. Also, the number of students with low level literacy skills is significantly higher than that of the students with good and very good literacy skills.

Moreover, in the 'Roadmap for the 2011-2012 academic year' [Foaia de parcurs pentru anul școlar 2011 – 2012] (MERYS, 2011), it was pointed out that in order to enhance all children's access to quality education and to increase the rate of school success, it is necessary to improve the students' reading literacy skills: 'Reading, comprehension and interpretation of text must become obligatory practices and preoccupations for all teachers, regardless of the discipline [they teach]'.

### 2. Consistency and coherence in approaching the issue of students' literacy skills

While in September 2011, the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, through releasing the Roadmap for the 2011-2012 academic year (MERYS, 2011), announced that the **improvement of literacy skills** was one of the three priority actions of the Romanian education system, beginning with the 2012-2013 academic year, this priority was forgotten. The 'Draft Strategy for Lifelong Learning' (MESR, 2014) refers, in subchapter 1.2. *The context of education and training*, to the PISA 2012 results and includes, among the measures proposed, 'the assessment of competence needs and development of a more comprehensive set of competences', without however including specific activities for the development of literacy skills.

The PISA 2012 results show that the actions taken in schools, CSI, and TTHs have not led to considerable improvement of the students' literacy skills. There is need for more time and conjugated actions/ measures at a systemic level:

- Coherence in the school curricula through the inclusion of content area literacy in all school curricula regardless of the class level or discipline;
- Inclusion of literacy as a topic in teachers' initial training;

- Promotion of BaCuLit/ CAL in-service training courses as a means of methodological support for the teachers;
- Promotion in the education system and in the professional community of the concept and practices of literacy through various awareness-raising actions, such as: specifically dedicated symposia or conferences, workshops, releases in the mass media, in social media, targeted publicity, etc.

## Conclusions of the report

In the current context of the Romanian education system, it seems obvious that the need for CAL/ BaCuLit courses is created by the training providers.

Based on publicly available evidence, the BaCuLit trainers and the ISIT project team recognise the need within the system to develop literacy skills, to introduce literacy practices in the daily practice and discourse about education. The CAL/ BaCuLit training course is a coherent in-service training programme which we consider is appropriate for the development of literacy skills provided:

- The training programme is accredited; we appreciate the fact that Arad TTH, Olt TTH, RWCT Romania agreed to accredit the BaCuLit training programme for several locations and thus partly share available resources. In addition, this will sustain the collaboration initiated through ISIT among the various in-service training provider institutions.
- The teachers are motivated to change their classroom practices;
- There is awareness of the need for literacy within the education system.

We are aware that in the absence of high level support and concentration of (human and other kinds of) resources necessary for the implementation of the training programme, we will face difficulties in the authentic penetration of the education system.

Under the current circumstances, the efforts of the BaCuLit in-service training providers and trainers should focus on:

- Motivating teachers to actively participate in the CAL/ BaCuLit in-service training course and shaping the interest of school principals, inspectors, etc. for the course. Impact studies of the already implemented CAL/ BaCuLit training courses should be carried out to provide the rationale for the course and a motivating factor for the teachers.
- Careful development and piloting of a blended learning in-service CAL/ BaCuLit teacher training course, and perhaps also carrying out research / experiment with a control group of students. In order to compare the results of the CAL/ BaCuLit *blended learning* course with those of a similar face-to-face course, the experiment can be extended to classes of students whose teachers participate in the face-to-face CAL/ BaCuLit training course, the blended learning version, and also classes of students whose teachers do not participate in the CAL/ BaCuLit course.

## The stage of mainstreaming BaCuLit project results in the Romanian education system

### (Mainstreaming – BaCuLit project)

**Domain A: Transfer the results of BaCuLit to MESR decision-makers in order to include CAL in all the national curricula of all disciplines and in the teachers' classroom practice**

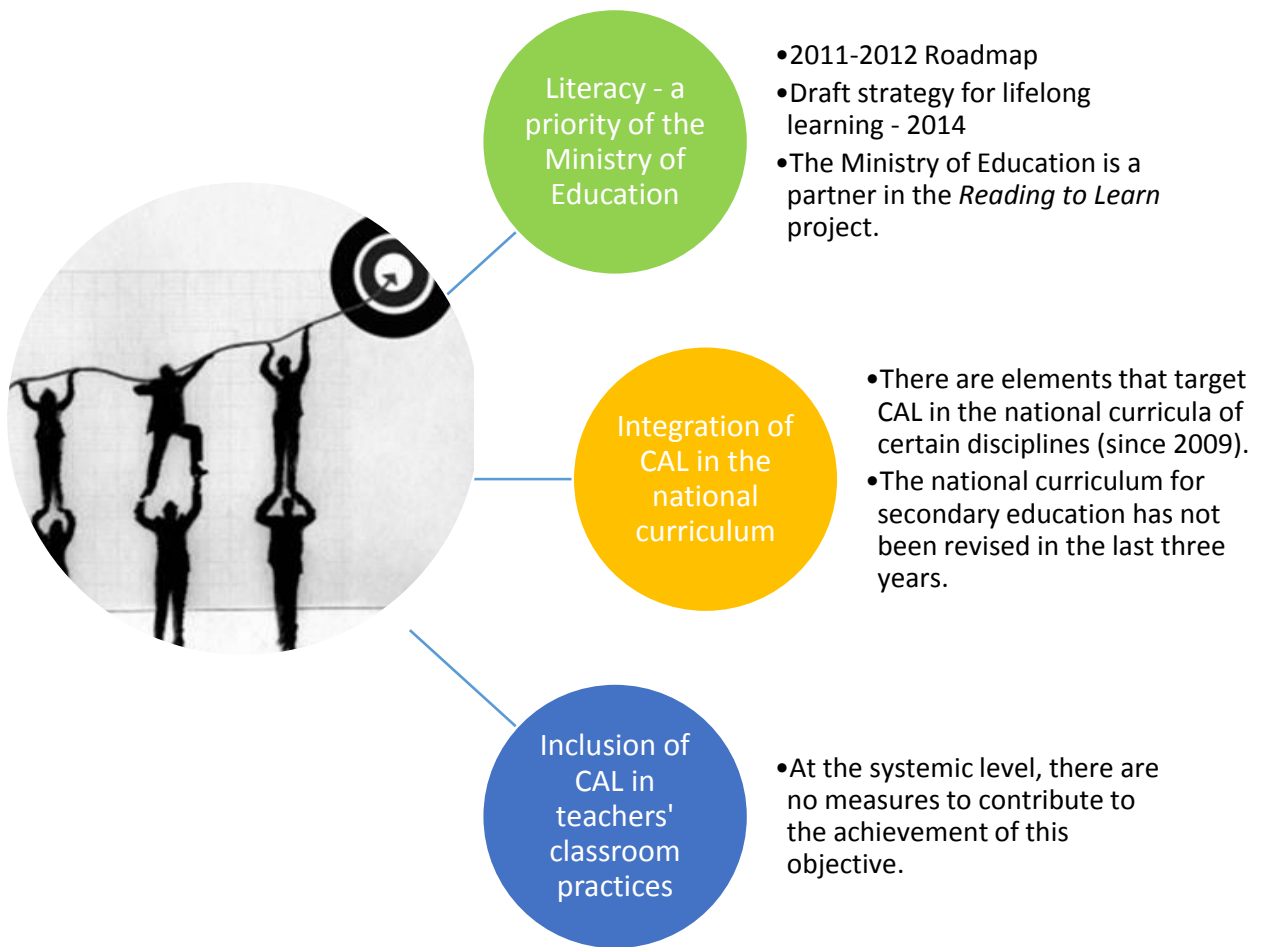


Figure 1 – Transfer of BaCuLit results to MESR decision-makers with a view to including CAL in the national curricula of all disciplines and in the teachers' classroom practice.

**Domain B: Convince potential users of the BaCuLit project results of the need to implement them**

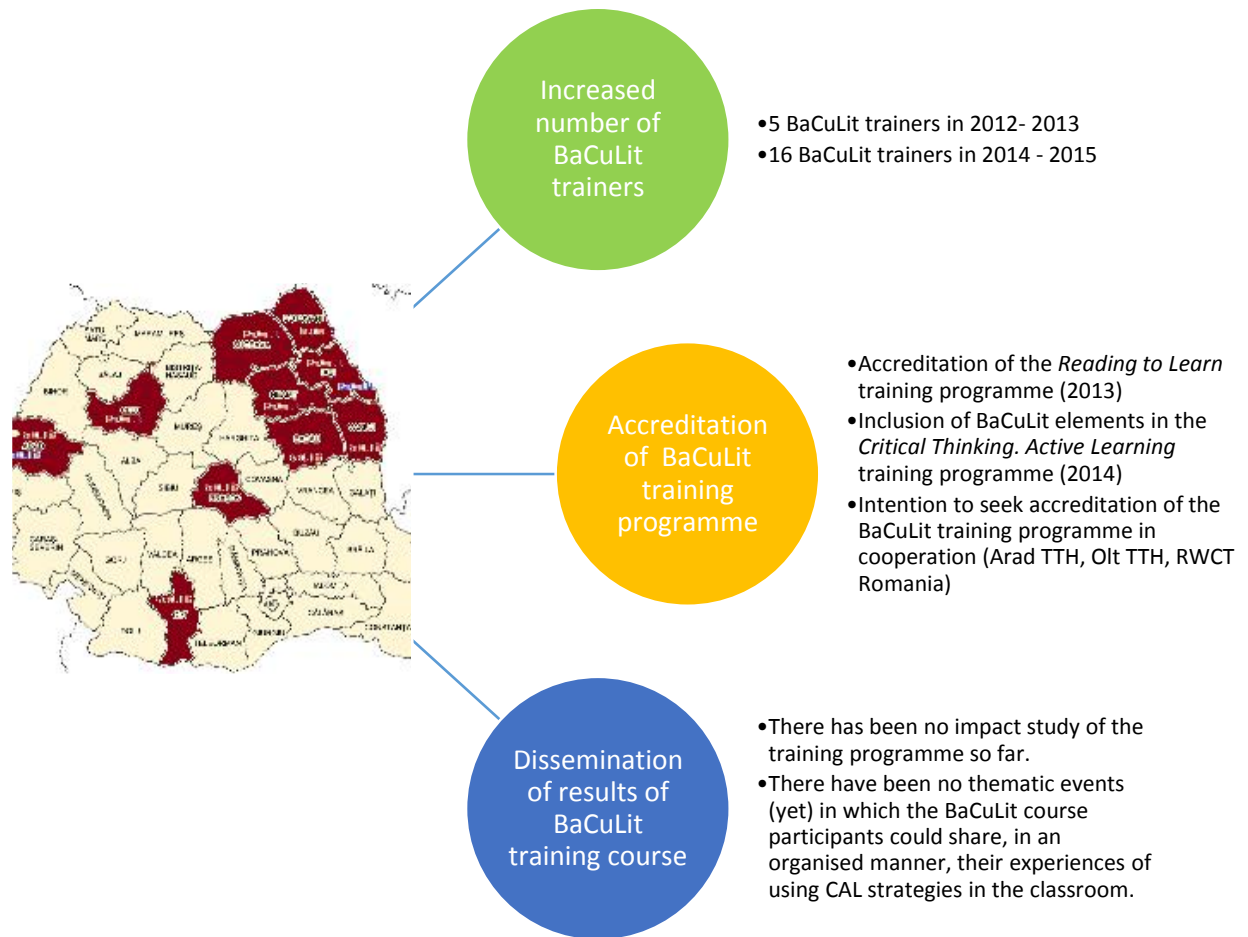


Figure 2 – Persuading potential users of the BaCuLit results of the need for their implementation

**Domain C: Consolidating the practice-based literacy policy cycle<sup>1</sup>** through the development and implementation of a strategic project of at least 3 years, under the leadership of the MESR.

This is a domain in which very little has been done. Within the workshop organized in Cluj-Napoca in January 2015, the ISIT project teams and the BaCuLit trainers discussed aspects connected to this domain and the conclusions of these discussions were included in the subchapter [Recommendations for MESR](#) of the present report.

---

<sup>1</sup> The policy cycle explains policies as a logical sequence of ‘steps’, like in a process. (Păceșilă, 2008)

## Bibliography

- \*\*\*. (2013, 09 02). *Legea educației naționale nr. 1/ 2011 [Law of national education]*. Retrieved January 3, 2015, from edu.ro: <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/c21>
- MERYS. (2011, 09 13). *Foaia de parcurs pentru anul școlar 2011 – 2012 [Roadmap for the 2011-2012 academic year]*. Retrieved January 26, 2015, from Dascal.org: <http://dascal.org/2011/09/foaie-de-parcurs-pentru-anul-scolar-2011-2012/>
- MERYS. (2011, 11 07). *Metodologia de acreditare a furnizorilor de formare continuă și a programelor oferite [Methodology for the accreditation of in-service teacher training providers and programmes provided]*. Retrieved January 5, 2015, from lege5: <http://lege5.ro/en/Gratuit/gi3dgmrxga/metodologia-de-acreditare-si-evaluare-periodica-a-furnizorilor-de-formare-continua-si-a-programelor-de-formare-oferite-de-acestia-din-07102011?pid=&d=2011-11-08>
- MERYS. (2011, 10 31). *Metodologia privind formarea continuă a personalului din învățământul preuniversitar, ordinul nr. 5.561/2011 [Methodology for the in-service training of staff in pre-university education, order no. 5561/2011]*. Retrieved January 3, 2015, from Monitorul Juridic: <http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/monitorul-oficial/767/2011-10-31/>
- MERYS. (2011, 11 4). ORDIN Nr. 5562 din 7 octombrie 2011 pentru aprobarea Metodologiei privind sistemul de acumulare, recunoaștere și echivalare a creditelor profesionale transferabile [Accumulation, recognition and validation of transferrable professional credits]. *Monitorul Oficial nr. 785*.
- MESR. (2014, 11 25). *Proiectul de strategie pentru învățarea pe tot parcursul vieții [Draft Strategy for Lifelong Learning]*. Retrieved January 26, 2015, from www.edu.ro: <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/22313>
- MNE. (2013, 02 07). *Ordinul nr. 3129 din 01.02.2013 [Order no. 3129 of 01.02.2013]*. Retrieved January 3, 2015, from lege5: <http://lege5.ro/en/Gratuit/gm2dmobvgy/ordinul-nr-3129-2013-pentru-modificarea-si-completarea-metodologiei-privind-formarea-continua-a-personalului-din-invatamantul-preuniversitar-aprobata-prin-ordinul-ministrului-educatiei-cerce>
- MNE. (2013, 02 08). *Ordinul nr. 3130/ 2013 din 1.02.2013 [Order no. 3130/ 2013 of 1.02.2013]*. Retrieved January 17, 2015, from lege5: <http://lege5.ro/en/Gratuit/gm2dmobwgi/ordinul-nr-3130-2013-privind-modificarea-si-completarea-metodologiei-de-acreditare-si-evaluare-periodica-a-furnizorilor-de-formare-continua-si-a-programelor-de-formare-oferite-de-acestia-aprobata-prin>
- Păceșilă, M. (2008). Teorii și modele privind ciclul politicilor publice la nivel național și internațional [Theories and models of public policy cycle at national and international level]. *Cercetări practice și teoretice în Managementul Urban, Anul 3, nr. 6 [Practical and theoretical research in Urban management, Year 3, no. 6]*, pp. 17 - 30.

## Annex 1 – BaCuLit trainers who documented the implementation of the CAL/ BaCuLit courses by filling out implementation logbooks

Surname, name	Experience as a trainer	Institution where the trainer works	In-service training provider institution
Holic, Valentina Cătălina	- certified trainer since 2007 - participant in the BaCuLit pilot course (November 2011 – June 2012)	Școala Gimnazială „Otilia Cazimir” Iași and Liceul Teoretic „Vasile Alecsandri” Iași	Filocalia Foundation and/ or Romanian Literacy Association
Iloae, Oana	- trainer; - mentor for beginner teachers	Școala Gimnazială Buznea, I. Neculce commune, Iași county	
Lezeu, Alexandru		Colegiul Național Roman-Vodă Roman and Școala Gimnazială „Mihai Eminescu” Roman	Neamț TTH
Petriuc, Anca	- RWCT trainer since 2000; - trainer certified by NCAVT; - trainer collaborating with Cluj TTH; - in charge of lifelong learning methodological circle (Cluj County); - expert teacher in lifelong learning	Colegiul Tehnic Energetic Cluj-Napoca  RWCT Romania  Cluj TTH	RWCT Romania
Kovacs, Maria	- RWCT trainer since 2004 - trainer certified by NCAVT - teacher trainer in various educational / professional development programmes contracted by non-governmental organizations or other training providers	- Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking International Consortium - RWCT Romania - Resource Centre for Roma Communities Cluj-Napoca - Learn&Vision Association Cluj-Napoca - Etc.	
Tița, Dumitrel - Victor	University reader Trainer in (general) education and education	Olt TTH	Olt TTH

Surname, name	Experience as a trainer	Institution where the trainer works	In-service training provider institution
	management, and in non-formal education Director of Olt TTH		
Vlaicu-Hergane, Aurica		Școala Gimnazială „Aurel Vlaicu” Arad	Arad TTH
Crișan, Anca		Școala Gimnazială „Aurel Vlaicu” Arad	
Marcu, Andrada	mentor	Arad County School Inspectorate Colegiul Național „ E. Ghiba Birta” Arad	