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Dossier Concepts, Policies and Practices of Teaching Induction

**Article**

# Pedagogical Coordinators: reflections and practices for beginning teacher onboarding and support

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**Abstract**
The present study is part of an inter-institutional research program focusing on induction processes for beginning teachers of basic education, and it analyzes whether and how the training carried out with a group of pedagogical coordinators from a regional board of education (DRE) of the São Paulo municipal education system mobilized reflections and practices for beginning teacher onboarding and support in the school context. Four in-person training meetings were held, recorded, and transcribed, each lasting four hours and attended by approximately 40 coordinators. The data produced was systematized and organized into four analysis dimensions addressing from the feelings experienced by the coordinators as beginning teachers, to their difficulties supporting and monitoring beginning teachers in the school context, to the onboarding and monitoring actions carried out, as well as the reflections and practices mobilized over the training. The data indicates that while the topics of professional integration and teacher induction may be invisible in many schools, in others they are sensitive topics that have led to actions and practices that benefit beginning teachers. The activities proposed at the meetings not only mobilized reflections on the objective and subjective elements encompassing teachers' professional integration, but more importantly, they helped to highlight initiatives considered by the literature as contributors to professional integration, with the potential to form an induction program.

**Keywords:** Teacher induction, Beginning teacher, Teacher professional insertion, Professional development.

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## 1. Introduction

There are few public programs in place in Brazil to support teachers' professional integration. These programs were the object of a study (André, 2018) with 1,237 graduates from eighteen higher education institutions. Its results have confirmed the relevance of these programs in improving the performance of teachers who are new to teaching.

Even considering that beginning teachers who have attended these programs feel better prepared to face the reality of classrooms, systematic monitoring and support in the school context by the schools' current teaching staff do not exist, save for exceptions.

These results motivate questions involving the concern with the professional integration of new teachers who enter education systems and commence work in schools, and who therefore require support and supervision at this stage of their professional development. Part of these questions have been directed to education departments: Are there programs to monitor and supervise these teachers' practice as they enter the different education systems? How are they developed? Other questions are directed to school units: How are beginner teachers received in schools? Who receives them? Are they being onboarded? Are there monitoring actions aimed at beginners in the school context? When and how do they occur? Are managers concerned with the difficulties and training needs of those who are new to teaching? What initiatives can a school develop to make this entry an effective period of training and professional learning?

In 2018, these questions mobilized a group of researchers to develop a research project about beginning teacher induction processes[5]. In this direction, the project started by observing the lack of public actions for beginning teacher support and monitoring by municipal education departments, which reveals the urgency of understanding and analyzing the role of school culture in developing professionality and a teacher identity in beginners.

Understanding professional integration from the perspective of entering a school's specific professional culture (Gingras; Mukamurera, 2008) requires new teachers to possess not only knowledge and teaching skills, but also the ability to interact and communicate with others, whether a student, a manager, or a fellow teacher. As already noted by the literature, new teachers arrive at school with limited tools for the task of teaching and interpreting everyday school reality. Lessard *et al.* (2004) underscore that it is in the complex process of professional socialization that a teacher's professionality is built, such professionality being understood, according to the authors, as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and identities specific to teaching.

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[5] The research project approved on the call MCTIC/CNPq – UNIVERSAL 2018 under number 420601/2018-0 brought together 16 researchers from 14 HEIs around the country and who form REDEP (Network of Studies and Research on Teacher Professional Development). Based at PUC-SP and coordinated by Professor Marli André (*in memoriam*), the project aims to develop an Inter-institutional Research Program focusing on induction processes for beginning teachers of basic education. The subprojects have a common aspect, namely to develop closer relationships and partnerships with education departments so as to sensitize them towards designing beginning teacher induction programs. To that end, they undertake to develop collaborative work with teachers and school and education department managers.

If teachers' professional integration represents a stage of construction of their professionality and appropriation of school culture, one might ask whether and how school managers (pedagogical coordinators, principals, and assistant principals) have contributed to help beginners overcome their difficulties with the socialization process. And one might ask managers: have training or guidance processes been offered so that you can provide planned support and onboarding to those new to teaching?

Considering these questions, the goal of this article is to analyze whether and how the training carried out with a group of pedagogical coordinators from a regional board of education (DRE) of the São Paulo municipal education system mobilized reflections and practices for beginning teacher onboarding and support in the school context.

## 2. Theoretical Approaches

The possibility of institutional actions for beginning teacher support and monitoring requires managers to understand the different angles that characterize this career stage. The literature has highlighted these angles, which also show the urgency of further research on each of them. Four are pointed out by Gingras and Mukamurera (2008) and address the professional integration stage. The first one looks at the moment of searching and accessing employment, including concerns with working conditions and contract. Integration per se, covering the tasks, professional roles, and real conditions where this craft is exercised, make up the second angle of understanding. The third is centered on the process of occupational or professional socialization in which class management strategies, the construction of professional identity, and professional development devices, among other aspects, are looked into. The fourth core aspect refers to professional integration as entry to a particular professional culture, encompassing the interest in interpersonal relationships, reception, and integration in the workplace.

Also regarding the stages forming this career entry period, Nunez-Moscoso, Tardif and Borges (2018, p. 13) addressed teachers' professional integration as a subjective experience and pointed out that structural elements, such as contract type, working conditions, student types, school organization, among other points, can affect new teachers' subjectivity. A prominent aspect regarding these structural elements pointed out by the authors is the sharing of responsibility before them, as they "co-structure the experience and largely condition actors' power to act." This phenomenon in which an environment limits new teachers' actions, the authors rely on Clot (2010, p. 13) in considering it "a form of impeded quality."

The emphasis the authors place on these objective elements highlights, in the present article, the importance for managers to be aware that this stage constitutes a "positive experience" (Nunez-Moscoso; Tardif; Borges, 2018), which is thus considered by the authors when it occurs with monitoring and facilitated integration and, one might add, with emphasis on developing professional competence, an aspect that characterizes the induction process, according to Alarcão and Roldão (2014).

Thus, what is being emphasized is the intentionality existing in beginning teachers' induction process, a systematic, coherent, and comprehensive training,

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support, and monitoring process that lasts two to three years uninterruptedly and starts from a teacher professional development program (Wong, 2020).

In Latin America, too, the literature has focused on teachers' professional integration. The study conducted by Vezub and Alliaud (2012, p. 29, our translation) demonstrated that countries such as Chile, Ecuador, Argentina, and Uruguay, in reflecting on teacher training and professional development, organized their educational policies with a view to monitoring beginning teachers:

> Teachers' professional development in schools, through various on-site pedagogical support mechanisms, is a policy and practice increasingly widespread in different countries. One strategy in particular – used by organizations and expert groups – is that of monitoring the early years of professional teaching practice. The emergence of these "induction" or pedagogical support and counseling programs – centered on the professional induction period – should be interpreted as part of this discourse. These policies aim to respond to specific problems arising in teachers' early years[6].

These countries are undertaking to address the need and urgency of devising institutional conditions and pedagogical strategies that can help to overcome the challenges facing beginning teachers in their early career years. From this perspective, monitoring a beginning teacher pertains to a collective construction whose practices involve listening, counseling, guidance, stimuli, confronting, in order to afford early career teachers the possibility to talk about themselves in their new work context, as a "**subject** capable, in **an existential situation**, of giving meaning to what they experience, of saying **where** they are, who they are, and **where** they want to head" (Paul, 2019, p. 269, emphasis added).

Thus, the theme of monitoring that underlies this text comes from Paul (2019, p. 269), who starts from the principle that monitoring "is first and foremost a relational device of greater or lesser density that aims at parity, i.e., the relationship of equal reciprocity in exchange and dialogue, relativizing unilateral hierarchic operation modalities in favor of collaborative modalities."

In recognizing that entry to the teaching career is a specific moment in the teaching learning process with implications for whether a teacher will (or will not) stay in school teaching, it is urgent that training policies address this stage of professional development.

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[6] El desarrollo profesional de los docentes en las escuelas mediante diversos mecanismos de apoyo pedagógico in situ constituye una política y una práctica cada vez más extendida en los distintos países. Una estrategia particular – impulsada tanto por organismos como por grupos de expertos – es la que se dirige a acompañar los primeros años del ejercicio profesional docente. El surgimiento de estos programas de «inducción»/«inserción» u apoyo y asesoramiento pedagógico – focalizados en el período de inicio/inducción profesional – debe ser interpretado como parte de ese discurso. Estas políticas pretenden dar una respuesta a los problemas específicos que se plantean durante los primeros años de desempeño del profesorado.

## 3. Methodological Procedures

As mentioned earlier, this study is part of an inter-institutional research program focusing on induction processes for beginning teachers of basic education. The guiding question in this program is as follows: Is it possible to develop, with experienced[7] teachers and school managers, a collective discussion and reflection process oriented to designing institutional onboarding and monitoring (induction) actions for early career teachers to be implemented in schools? To obtain evidence that might answer this guiding question, a partnership was established with a DRE of the São Paulo municipal education system comprising almost 40,000 teachers spread across more than 1,000 school units. Our intention was to analyze whether and how the training carried out with a group of pedagogical coordinators from a regional board of education (DRE) of the São Paulo municipal education system mobilized reflections and practices for beginning teacher onboarding and support in the school context.

Given this system's dimension, research variability would certainly involve studying a DRE, among the 13 existing in the city of São Paulo, which had a large number of beginners to provide the context for this study.

Among the actions developed in this partnership, in the second half of 2019, four in-person training meetings were held with the pedagogical coordinators working in municipal elementary schools (EMEF) in order to sensitize them to the importance of onboarding beginning teachers and monitoring their work, with a view to discussing and reflecting collectively so as to raise possible actions these coordinators could take to support early career teachers.

With these characteristics of a training action articulated with research and reflection, the methodology that inspired and founded the study was research-training, based on the action research premises (Thiollent, 2011). This modality was chosen due to the "[...] Procedurality and the dynamicity of a study that combines scientific research and training action, which are dialectically constituted, from an epistemological point of view" (Pruncepe; Pereira; Rigolon, 2022, p. 28).

Each training meeting, recorded and transcribed, lasted four hours and was attended by approximately 40 coordinators. The agenda for each meeting was based on the general goal, and the proposed activities sought to enable dialogical meetings, reflection moments, and proposal actions. Each meeting started with an inspiring text and included discussion time both in small and large groups.

The first meeting sought to sensitize coordinators to the importance of onboarding beginning teachers and monitoring their work. In addition to reading the short story *Nasce um escritor,* by Carlos Drummond de Andrade, the coordinators were invited to revisit the memories of their first year in teaching, especially regarding the types of onboarding (or the lack thereof) they were provided as beginning teachers.

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[7] The underlying assumption was that involving experienced teachers in planning onboarding actions for beginning teachers can strengthen a partnership based on dialogue and joint reflection on the problems of practice both are immersed in, in addition to enabling experienced teachers, given their knowledge of the teaching and learning process, to develop trainer skills. However, this study focused only on pedagogical coordinators.

Next in this meeting, the results of a study by Pruncepe and André (2019) on beginning teachers were presented and a discussion on the topic was conducted. The meeting's final activity was reading collectively a Teaching Case: *Os nove trabalhos de Helena: desafios enfrentados em sua inserção na profissão docente* [*The nine labors of Helena: Challenges faced in her beginning as a teacher*]. It was suggested that the coordinators split into groups for reflection based on the following questions: How would you conduct Helena's onboarding if you were coordinator at the school where she started teaching? What actions must be ensured by the education system to onboard beginning teachers? What strategies could be put into practice to minimize the shocks Helena suffered? After completing the task, the groups submitted their answers.

The second meeting discussed why and how to survey beginning teachers' training needs. The intention was also to know whether the previous meeting had met the goal of sparking reflections among coordinators, and to resume beginning teacher onboarding and monitoring actions proposed by the groups after reading and analyzing the Teaching case.

The sensitization text was *Redação*, by Adriana Falcão, which deals with public schools' precarious conditions. After debating on it, the coordinators were asked about the reflections raised by the previous meeting. Subsequently, the systematization of coordinators' answers to the Teaching Case questions was presented. The participants were invited to read collectively an excerpt from this text by Pereira and Placco (2018): *Mapear os conhecimentos prévios e as necessidades formativas dos professores: uma especificidade do trabalho das coordenadoras pedagógicas* [*Mapping teachers' prior knowledge and training needs: A specificity of pedagogical coordinators' work*]. The text drew participants' interest especially regarding the script of questions for beginning teachers. The discussion on the purpose and importance of these beginning teacher profile questions caused the coordinators to wish to know and identify the beginning teachers in the schools where they work. To that end, they administered a questionnaire with closed questions on features like age, gender, training, length of teaching, among other items, and three open questions, namely: What are the main challenges you are facing? What do you do to overcome them? What do you miss? A date was agreed upon with participants for submitting the answered questionnaires, allowing the research team to systematize the collected data.

The third training meeting allowed us to find out how the beginning teachers received and completed the questionnaires, which generated a discussion about how the information they provided could help the coordinators and, finally, raise possible actions to meet the training needs identified.

The suggested initial reading was *Vista Cansada,* by Otto Lara Resende. After reading, the coordinators were asked to share examples/situations in which the school routine ends up "blinding" people. After this sensitization, a long time was dedicated to discussing beginning teachers' training needs and their implications for the professional development process.

Finally, the fourth and final meeting was dedicated to presenting and discussing the results from the 24 questionnaires corresponding to six schools, which the coordinators returned to the research team. The planning for the later meeting considered this partial analysis.

The data for the four meetings was analyzed at two moments: initially, the accounts related to the memories of coordinators' first teaching year were systematized, as well as beginning teacher onboarding and monitoring actions, which were examined based on the case that was read and on beginning teachers' training needs; subsequently, data from the records of group discussions and the questionnaire they completed was analyzed.

The collected data was thus systematized in order to identify topics and themes present in this data set, so as to explore possible analysis dimensions that allowed understanding whether and how this training mobilized reflections and practices concerning beginning teacher support and monitoring in the school context. Four dimensions of analysis emerged from the data, which will be detailed in the following sequence: (I) beginning in teaching: experienced feelings and onboarding in the school environment; (ii) coordinators' difficulties supporting and monitoring beginning teachers in the school context; (iii) onboarding and monitoring actions carried out in schools; (iv) the training carried out: reflections and practices about beginning teacher support and monitoring in the school context.

## 4. Beginning in teaching: Experienced feelings and onboarding in the school environment

When we asked the coordinators to recall from memory how their early teaching career had been and to narrate the types of onboarding and support they had been provided (or the lack thereof), initial expressions gradually appeared that allowed them to look at themselves and others, i.e., the beginning teachers they interact with: "I felt important," "unprepared," "what am I doing here?," "no one onboarding you," "you have to know everything," "insecurity, nervousness," "gratitude, I was seen," "fear," "daily challenges," among other expressions.

The narratives shared were also expected to enable reflections on one of the facets of teachers' professional integration: the immersion in a particular professional culture, encompassing interpersonal relationships (Gingras; Mukamurera, 2008). The following reports can help us understand how this discussion occurred:

> *When I was called as an occasional in a school, I remember that when I got there, they sat me on a stool where I should wait for the principal. Gosh, I felt like a "thing." It was as if I wasn't there. People passed by, and then the coordinator came to talk to me. When you talk about memory, I remember the gratitude that I feel to this day […] he was the only one who saw me, because until then, my colleagues [teachers], who then were not yet my colleagues, passed by, and did nothing* (PC1[8]).

> *I remember the first time I went [to the school]. I was so nervous that I stumbled. I didn't see the unevenness on the floor and fell over, tearing my pants on my knee. So, throughout my first contact with the manager, I had to focus on covering my knee*

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[8] Pedagogical Coordinator (PC).

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> with my hand. She sensed my anguish and asked me if I was ok. I told her I'd stumbled, and seeing I was hurt, she was very kind. I was nineteen! She took a first aid box and put a patch on my knee. That marked the rest of my life! The feeling of fear, on my first move [at school], because a classroom can give you a huge fear, it decreased (PC2).

Participant PC1 reveals an unpleasant feeling as she realized her invisibility to her peers, when she recounts her experience as an occasional teacher in her professional integration. In turn, PC2 says she felt nervous, anguished, and fearful as she had to enter a classroom for the first time. However, both felt welcomed, either by coordinators or the principal.

These feelings of nervousness, anguish, and fear usually overwhelm and paralyze early career teachers. During the early career stage, it is common for a beginner, who has just received their license and transitions from being a student to becoming a teacher, to face the challenges by themselves. These challenges include new and challenging situations for the novice, who most often does not feel prepared to take them (Cruz; Farias; Hobold, 2020). This lonely tackling of professional challenges can be explained by professional isolation, often present in teaching culture (Pérez-Gomez, 2001; Morgado, 2005), which makes a fellow teacher invisible to peers.

Added to the professional isolation ingrained in teacher culture, which often makes newbies invisible, is the fragility of initial teacher education regarding the distance between theory and practice, and these frequently generate unpleasant feelings, causing beginners to go through a challenging, difficult, complex, and lonely stage of teaching learning.

We also found accounts filled with feelings, as some coordinators had the privilege of having someone who onboarded them early in their careers. Participant PC1 says she feels gratitude for the fact that her pedagogical coordinator addressed her on her first teaching day, offering her a coffee and welcoming her.

We noticed that this reception provided onboarding in a way akin to hospitality. This coordinator established with the beginner a relationship sustained on the attitude of gaze, which, according to Almeida (2003a, p. 71), involves the act of "paying attention to the other person." This type of interpersonal relationship, the author adds, can help one constitute oneself as a person and is part of the competence of those working in schools.

Also from this onboarding perspective, PC2 recounts the manager's kind and thoughtful gesture of patching the wounds of someone who was then starting out in the teacher profession. By taking care of her, she caused the new teacher's feelings of nervousness, distress, and fear to subside, and became an important reference in her professional socialization process.

This manager's kind gesture involved not only an attitude of paying attention to the other person, but also the ability to listen and care. She realized that the beginning teacher was anguished and listened to her. Almeida (2003b) says that listening is a basic condition for a person-to-person relationship to be established. The author explains that when someone is listened to, they feel valued and accepted and is therefore able to present themselves to others without fear, becoming more open to the new experience. Almeida (2010, p. 42)

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says that as "human beings, we need to care and be cared for. Taking care of someone else, in the most significant sense, is to be attentive to their well-being and to help them grow and actualize themselves."

The following accounts contribute to a better understanding of these pleasant feelings experienced by the coordinators in their first teaching activities, as well as the importance of onboarding them in the school environment:

> *In a private school, I took up a literacy class, and the principal requested that, by the end of the year, the kids were all literate. Using just the school's textbook, I couldn't do it. I sought help from other staff and family. I talked to their parents. I was really afraid that it wouldn't work, but it did!* (PC5).

> *At the age of sixteen, still attending teaching school, I was invited to replace a teacher on maternity leave. It was an early childhood education class. It was very distressing, and I began to discredit my teaching school teachers, since practice didn't fit in the theories. I learned a lot from the classroom assistant* (PC6).

Participant PC5 recognizes she was scared by the task of teaching literacy to children in her first contact with teaching, and PC6 says that when she replaced a teacher on maternity leave she felt very anguished as practice was disconnected from the theory she had learned in teaching school.

These accounts lead us to consider the absence of connections between university teachers and basic education teachers. Ensuring theoretical-practical premises in the curricula of teacher education courses can minimize the fear and anxiety these workers suffer during their professional integration. Therefore, this collaborative partnership can ensure a more coordinated work, reducing the distance that often exists between university and school (Foerste, 2005).

We found that both accounts indicate the importance of beginning teacher onboarding not only by school management, but also by more experienced peers who can contribute to the beginner's learning process. Such learning may derive both from observing the practice of the more experienced and from their accounts, which, according to Groppo and Almeida (2013), can help beginners reflect on some possible approaches to work.

Onboarding from a hospitality perspective is essential at this specific stage of teacher professional development; however, it is necessary to go beyond that, involving the planning and development of situations that provide a reflective attitude and constant improvement to novices' professional practice (Paul, 2009), which requires monitoring their work.

It should be noted that in the participants' accounts of the feelings they experienced at the beginning of their teaching and in relation to forms of onboarding, issues related to school culture and professional isolation emerge, as well as criticism of the weaknesses of initial teacher education and the theory-practice dichotomy. All these aspects are recurrently addressed by teacher education and establish a strong relationship with the professional integration and teaching learning processes. Therefore, it is essential to pay attention to these relations and the objective and subjective implications for professional integration processes in the context of education systems and schools, with a view to the professional development of beginning teachers.

Thus, it is important to invest both in beginning teacher support actions and practices and in induction policies, since onboarding and monitoring beginning teachers in the school context is not always easy, due to working conditions, among other aspects. The next section presents teacher accounts that help us better understand this problem.

## 5. Coordinators' difficulties supporting and monitoring beginning teachers in the school context

The difficulties that coordinators may face in supporting and monitoring beginning teachers in the school context became more evident after reading and discussing the Teaching Case: *Os nove trabalhos de Helena: desafios enfrentados em sua inserção na profissão docente* [*The nine labors of Helena: Challenges faced in her beginning as a teacher*]. After doing it in small groups, a discussion with the large group was conducted where coordinators exemplified their difficulties. Participant PC14 recounts how day-to-day demands and incidents prevail and often hinder immediate onboarding, as was the case with the Geography teacher on his first day at work:

> *That would be ideal, he [beginning teacher] comes in, talks, we get to know who that person is, what kind of professional he is. But school day-to-day is intense all the time. Just to give you an example, this year we received a new Geography teacher for EFII, and when he came in the coordination office to talk, a little girl came in who was feeling sick. Then I had to leave the teacher and seek help for her. I said [to the teacher], "Welcome, take care of her, and I'll be right back." After that, he ended up going to his classroom, and then he was really at a loss, and I couldn't onboard him. It's complicated!* (PC14).

Thus, it was found that pedagogical coordinators receive and take on work demands beyond their function, as Placco and Souza (2012) have observed. This situation happens mostly because teachers and the coordinators themselves lack clarity on the role that pedagogical coordinators should play, which can be explained by the "absence of continuing education that promotes the development of skills specific to the role of PC" (Placco; Souza, 2012, p. 15).

The following account highlights a difficulty in onboarding beginning teachers:

> *Since the teacher must take on a class with 35 students, how can you provide some onboarding to her, and the 35 students, will they go to the schoolyard? You can't! So I can't have a talk. We think the system should offer this beginning teacher some differentiated onboarding time. When the system allows for a day for us to describe its [the system's] functioning, what the school is like, then it would be better* (PC7).

Participant PC7 says that when a teacher arrives at the school, they must take on their class. Therefore, it is not always possible to provide onboarding

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when the beginning teacher arrives, especially when there is no substitute teacher.

This education system has weekly training sessions; however, the teacher can only attend these if they fulfill the Basic Teacher Workweek (JBD), which is not always the case with beginners, i.e., they cannot fulfill this workweek and are prevented from attending those collective work moments at the school – which precludes allocating time for onboarding in the beginning teacher's workweek. According to Nunez-Moscoso, Tardif, and Borges (2018), this scenario prompts a reflection about how beginning teachers perform in the working conditions they are faced with and during a period when they have few skills and competencies as professional teachers.

Since there is not always a time in beginning teachers' workweek that is dedicated to their onboarding by the management team, the following account helped participants realize that the working conditions interfere with professional performance all the time:

> [...] I realize that at the same time, that there's some neglect with labor substitution, and a certain neglect in managing (a school) irrationally. To give you an idea, we've been without a principal the entire year, and guess who takes the blunt [...] the coordination does. So, I feel that much of our overload has to do with that (PC18).

The work overload in RMESP, which results mostly from a lack of human and material resources, compromises beginning teacher onboarding. In the case of participant PC18, it is assumed that, because the school is without principal, this coordinator needs to cope with both coordination and management – which prevents her from onboarding beginners and monitoring them at work.

The impossibility to have a pedagogical coordinator who can onboard and support beginning teachers will certainly affect their professional development, since, according to Imbernon (2004), a teacher's professional development can be furthered, hindered, or even prevented, depending on the professional situation around them.

Reflecting on the working conditions surrounding teachers' entry into this particular stage of professional development is important for sensitizing managers, and from that sensitization, some support and monitoring for beginning teachers is possible (Gingras; Mukamurera, 2008).

While we argue that beginning teacher support and onboarding with characteristics of teacher training and learning should be carried out at the educational institutions, and that education departments should be responsible for training school managers to undertake this process, we agree with PC7 when she argues that DREs should provide training to beginners before they start teaching, and that it should clarify how the education system works.

We stress that, in addition to PC7, other coordinators advocate this training. In their view, by the time they start in a school, beginning teachers should have some knowledge of how the system works, which leads us to think of creating an induction program that, by being part of a system policy, can help early career teachers. This could be done, for example, upon the assignment of classes. The teacher could be given information about the school they will work

at, such as at least a map indicating its location and its neighborhood's characteristics. This professional integration support measure is related to one of the numerous dimensions that, according to Gingras and Mukamurera (2008), make up this stage of professional development: job search and access. The following account illustrates how much beginning teachers suffer by not being given correct information from the education system itself:

> *I started in 1982 and ended up resigning. I really suffered, because in the assignment of classes I went to a school in Grajaú that I didn't know where it was [...] and the principal told me that to leave that school, I would have to stay there for three years. [...] Not until later did I learn that there's no such thing, and at no point did I have any guidance back then* (PC17).

Despite the difficulties pointed out by participants and the fact that the system has no induction policy, many schools develop actions to onboard and monitor beginning teachers, as described in the next section.

## 6. Onboarding and monitoring actions carried out in schools

This section, as said earlier, presents accounts that reveal some onboarding and monitoring actions already in place in schools, which were described by participants during discussions in the large group for the Teaching Case: *Os nove trabalhos de Helena: desafios enfrentados em sua inserção na profissão docente* [*The nine labors of Helena: Challenges faced in her beginning as a teacher*]. This short dialogue between two coordinators indicates the staff's concern with showing beginning teachers around the school's surroundings at the beginning of the school year:

> *A very nice and unique experience with a school where I worked — besides showing you around the school at the beginning of the year, at the organization meeting, the PC and the principal allocated part of that day, half an hour, forty minutes, and arranged it with the school transport driver. They brought the teachers into the van and showed them around the school's surroundings. That was very nice!* (PC10).

> *Schools located in slums where the [school transport] van cannot go in, it's scary at first […] It's important to know where they [students] are from before meeting them in the* classroom (PC11).

The reported initiative is simple and at the same time can be significant for a beginning teacher. Beginning teachers' experience during their professional integration is formed by several facilitating and hindering elements (Nunez-Moscoso; Tardif; Borges, 2018). The reported action, if institutionalized, can be considered an induction facilitator.

Other facilitators were described by the coordinators. Participant PC9 recounts the beginning teacher onboarding procedure in place in the school where he works:

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> *[...] when a teacher joins the system, he has three possibilities: the first contact at the class assignment meeting the previous year, then there is the one at the beginning of the school year, and finally any time of the year. We think that this first time, which is the assignment, is the most neglected, but we do have some practices, and it's the PC who pretty much does it all [...] When they* [a beginning teacher] *arrive, they're sent to the coordination office. Not until the PC has sorted all out do the others begin their part. The procedures are: welcoming them with an informal conversation (who the person is, where they live, how's their way of life, if they're coming from another school), then we go on a "city tour" around the school to show them around the environment, introducing them to all the staff. We also have material that we hand out, like the school year routine. Other schools will hand out PPP excerpts describing how the school works. We'll also entrust that teacher to another teacher we consider more experienced, more welcoming, who will do another part of it on the teacher's side, which management usually can't* (PC9).

In this account we can see the school's care for creating beginning teacher induction facilitators. Nunez-Moscoso, Tardif, and Borges (2018) explain that the facilitators and hinderers experienced by beginning teachers can be determined not only objectively (contract type, student characteristics), but mainly subjectively, for the meanings attributed to each experience are unique. It is worth noting that it is not possible to evaluate, based on these accounts, how the actions reported by the coordinators have (or have not) benefited beginning teachers' professional integration. On the other hand, it is well known that school management teams have been taking initiatives that can serve as professional integration facilitators and might even form an induction program.

At different times, the coordinators showed concern mainly with onboarding initiatives. The dialogue between PC12 and PC13 expresses what they think beginning teacher onboarding should be like:

> *Regarding onboarding, at the municipality we are fully institutionalized. To me, onboarding has to be a human, affection relationship. In that first contact, not the bureaucracy, but down a path of dialogue […]. Thinking specifically about Helena's question, if you are a PC, you'll leave all else aside to go with her to the classroom. Put down the bureaucracy and go with her, because the human is more important now. We can deal later with what's structurally necessary for that beginning teacher* to start off (PC12).

> *I agree with him on how to receive that* [beginning] *teacher. With a hug, a welcome, with the human* (PC13).

Establishing a human relationship of affection, based on openness to dialogue during a professional integration translates into viewing the beginner as

a whole person, including their affections and cognition (Groppo; Almeida, 2013), making them feel comfortable sharing their doubts, anxieties, fears, and learning.

The analysis of the Helena case, about which the coordinator mentioned leaving all else aside to go with the beginning teacher to the classroom, without the purpose of evaluating their performance, means being with them and going where they go in real time in order to support them, as Paul (2009) recommends. These humanized, democratic, and genuinely monitoring actions should be present in an induction program.

The account of participant PC8 indicates other onboarding and monitoring actions developed in the school unit where she works:

> *The teacher is received by the whole office team, who talks a little about work day-to-day, shows them the timetable, the staff attendance book, and offers to help with some situations where the teacher may require it. Then they* [*the teacher*] *go to the coordinator, who receives them and talks to them about the school's dynamics, the pedagogical dynamics, a short summary, of course, and introduces them to the Educational Work Assistant* [*ATE*] *and finally to each person* [*from the school*]*.* [*The PC*] *brings the teacher to the staff room, introduces them* [*the new teacher*] *to the other teachers.* [*The PC*] *Is thoughtfully there at coffee time, to introduce* [*the novice*] *to the other teachers. After that,* [*the beginning teacher] goes to the principal […] who talks to them, welcomes them and gives them this material from our school, it has a name we don't like but it's yet to be changed, which is a Manual of School Guidelines, about a lot of things regarding its functioning. Also, on their first day, the beginning teacher is never alone, but always accompanied by another* teacher (PC8).

This coordinator's account attests that, in the school where she works, beginning teachers are welcomed by the school office staff and the principal, and not just by the pedagogical coordinator. Responsibility seems to be shared in onboarding and monitoring these teachers, as proposed by Foerste (2005), when the author refers to collaborative cultures in contrast with an isolation culture.

Two aspects are evident in this account and need to be highlighted. The first regards the fact that onboarding at this school unit goes beyond hospitality. In addition to showing them the staff and the place, the school office staff makes sure to inform the novice on work day-to-day, work hours, the staff attendance book to be completed, or other needs/demands for these teachers. Through the coordinator, they learn a little about the school's dynamic, with emphasis on pedagogical aspects. The principal gives them informative material regarding the school's functioning.

The second aspect refers to the fact that beginning teachers do not enter classrooms alone, but accompanied by another more experienced teacher. In this example, attention is paid not only to the work to be done in the classroom, but also to the occupational or professional socialization process that is part of the different angles present in teachers' professional integration, according to Gingras and Mukamurera (2008).

Sharing these beginning teacher support and monitoring actions during one of the training meetings with the coordinators was important because it sensitized other coordinators about the different facets of a problem that involves beginners, in addition to enabling reflections and practices around them. The following section presents accounts containing evidence of this sensitization, as well as reflections and practices prompted by the training developed with the coordinators.

## 7. The training carried out: Reflections and practices for beginning teacher support and monitoring in the school context

The accounts of the pedagogical coordinators show how the training sensitized them and sparked reflections and practices about beginning teacher onboarding and monitoring. The following account reveals that PC16 was touched by the reflection around teachers' professional integration:

> *I confess I really liked this subject because it's a reflection that no one will make if they're not provoked. In fact, when things arrive at school, depending on the day, we switch to autopilot mode. We received a teacher this week, and when she arrived we said: "Go to the classroom first." In this training that we had, a beginner teacher from our group was soon appointed Pedagogical Support Teacher (PAP) for students with learning problems. She's just entered the system and she'd often say it in the group, which indicated her concern about taking this role. You could feel her anguish, and I was upset. [...] To her, it was still necessary to understand the system, she was pushed into a hard situation. What I can understand of this agony is that she became a PAP because the school needed someone for that role. There was only her left, so let's do it* (PC16).

This coordinator's account indicates that often the situation of early career teachers is not discussed and must be provoked, as was done in these training meetings with the coordinators.

The coordinator's account shows how upset she was to forward the beginning teacher straight to the classroom on her first day and without the necessary onboarding, and also for having to agree with appointing this teacher for the PAP role. Her account shows that she paid attention to the teacher going through professional integration, realizing the anguish shown by the novice. Her concern with the state of a beginner who just had joined the system and had to take on a role where she will have to work with students with learning difficulties, due to system's staff precariousness, is evident in this account. All of this indicates how pertinent the discussion was at the training with the coordinators, as this action shed light on the different aspects, both objective and subjective, that encompass teachers' professional integration.

The following account provides another indication that the training with the pedagogical coordinators affected the professional practice of participant PC15:

> *I had an experience in practice when a new intern arrived and I couldn't pay attention to her. That day, three special students from the school were "making a scene" in the hallway, and I brought her along with me, trying to show the school. Luckily, that day the supervisor was at the school and witnessed and helped with the situation. Because the situation was not ordinary, the next day, when it was quieter, I was able to show her around to the students, the school, I went through her shift […] so on the first day I really remembered what we discussed about onboarding,* which I wasn't able to do (PC15).

This account reveals that while this coordinator did not formally guide the beginning teacher at first, due to an emergency requiring attention, she did not abandon the novice, having that teacher accompany her, immediately introducing her to the school's complex reality. This coordinator made sure to welcome her and guide her in an later moment – which is very positive.

In the third training meeting with the coordinators, we discussed the content of a questionnaire to be answered by beginning teachers at the schools where they worked in order to survey their training needs. As mentioned in the methodological procedures, to inform this activity we read the text by Pereira and Placco (2018). During the discussion held at the fourth meeting, we had the following answers:

> *Due to the school's hustle and bustle, I was able to talk superficially with the [beginning] teachers about the questionnaire. It was really nice, because one commented with the other what they had answered, and then they wanted to add [something]. They talked about the same things as us here. A teacher told us that when she first arrived at school, she didn't know where the toilet was, which means they hadn't passed her that information. I ended up seeing myself in this situation where we are failing to receive the teachers, not to mention the codes [of the education system ]* (PC19).

> *[...] teachers can sometimes talk or write things saying that those are their needs, and that's not always the case. If you go to the classroom, to observe it and give them your feedback, you can see that the need the teacher pointed out on paper isn't always real. There is this paragraph in the text about narratives which I really like. We PCs would do well to contrast what's in the teacher's narrative and what's in their actions. For this reason, our observation is important [...]. I think the questionnaire for beginning teachers, combined with our observation, is interesting* (PC20).

Participant PC19 says that she talked briefly with the beginning teachers about the questionnaire they answered, and she realized that the school has been failing to onboard early career teachers.

By reading the text that we recommended to the coordinators, PC20 realized that the questionnaire is a viable instrument to survey beginning

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teachers' training needs, but its use can and should be enhanced through observation of the teacher's classes by the coordinator.

This coordinator's view indicates that the training carried out led her to reflect on beginning teacher support and monitoring, both from the perspective of an empathetic attitude, concerned with hospitality, and from a reflective perspective (Paul, 2009), around identifying and meeting novices' training needs, which in turn indicates that it is possible for these coordinators to undertake, alongside beginning teachers, a training focused on the learning of teaching.

It is worth noting that during this discussion at the last training meeting, the coordinators understood that beginning teachers have training needs different from those of other teachers, and that these needs do not constitute failures, as they are inherent in teachers' professional development. Another contribution of the training developed with the coordinators refers to our provocation to the group regarding what beginning teachers need for their work. Let us look at the following answer:

> *The reference is about the classroom moment. What is their pedagogical contract? What do they know about classroom management? They have to send out a precise message, to make that construction with their own classroom, that they must be firm in knowing who they are and who they will teach* (PC17).

This account reveals that one of the needs of beginning teachers is classroom management, which encompasses their attitude before students. Other needs were also gradually pointed out as the questionnaire was collectively analyzed: students' learning process, addressing classroom diversity, adapting activities to special education students, among others.

The discussions in the meetings that addressed the different perspectives to teachers' professional integration, as indicated by Gingras and Mukamurera (2008), combined with the collective survey on beginning teachers' training needs, provided foundations for each coordinator, in their respective school context, to plan support and monitoring actions, as well as more specific and meaningful training guidelines for beginning teachers.

## 8. Final Considerations

The analysis of data from the meetings with the coordinators, with a view to mobilizing reflections and actions for beginning teacher support and onboarding in the school context, shows that the topics of professional integration and teacher induction may be invisible in many schools, but in others, these are sensitive topics that have resulted in beneficial actions and practices for beginning teachers.

The data indicates that most pedagogical coordinators attending the training not only recognize the need for education systems and schools to dedicate attention to beginning teachers, but they also take it upon themselves to plan onboarding and monitoring actions for those teachers.

The activities proposed at the meetings not only mobilized reflections on the different objective and subjective elements encompassing teachers' professional integration, but more importantly, they helped to highlight initiatives

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considered by the literature as contributors to professional integration, with the potential to form an induction program.

As seen above, coordinators have been concerned with developing welcome practices, visits, administrative support, and whenever possible, they seek to assign a more experienced teacher to accompany the beginner. These are some of the induction program components listed by Wong (2020). These initiatives show a fruitful movement in schools, though it must not be forgotten that an induction program must be orchestrated by schools in partnership with education departments so they can constitute a public policy.

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