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BAHIA, S. B. M. H.; FABRIS, E. T. H.; BOFF, D. S. *Continuous professional development of early years' teachers from Elementary School: an inscription in a different training culture*

Article

Continuous Professional Development of Early Years' teachers from Elementary School: an inscription in a different training culture

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Abstract
This paper aims to analyze the development process of continuous professional development for Elementary School's teachers from a city in Southern Brazil in a Teaching Laboratory (LABDOC). The proposition is a partial demonstration of a broader investigation, aiming to show the power of developing teaching experiments in a laboratory by means of formative research involving (de)formation processes. The empirical *corpus* is built upon the research subjects' input from an online survey in association with the transcripts of meetings held in two phases of the Laboratory (2022 and 2023). The applied framework derives from studies on teaching and teacher training from a post-structuralist perspective. The analyzes were carried out inspired by Foucauldian Discourse Analysis and concepts from the aforementioned fields, especially the concepts of hypercriticism, experiment, experience, and thought exercise. So far, the data indicate that a different formation, teaching experience, and ways of being a teacher must be nurtured in a different training culture, both in Basic Education schools and mainly in teachers training. Under this argument, the text seeks to show through empirical data the challenges of implementing the Teaching Laboratory, highlighting that a different training culture is mandatory so transformations can take place both in initial teaching training and continuing education, which is the focus of this article.

Keywords: Continuous professional development; Early Years; Training Culture; Laboratory.

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Introduction Notes

This article discusses the continuous professional development of early years elementary school teachers, based on the results of a formative and collaborative research project. This project aims to reverse the formative process that typically unfolds within a neoliberal managerial logic, characterized by accelerated time and space. Instead, it seeks to create, alongside teachers, a handcrafted time and space where it is possible to exercise thought, share difficulties, joys, tastes, disappointments, knowledge, and limitations, without fear of making mistakes and in an atmosphere of experimentation.

The analyses developed in this text are part of a doctoral research project on the continuous professional development of early years elementary school teachers (AIEF) (Bahia, 2024), linked to a broader National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) research project conducted with teachers working in elementary education in a public school system in a municipality in the Vale do Rio dos Sinos/RS region. In this larger study, the objective was to establish a Teaching Laboratory with researchers from higher education and researchers from basic education, across different stages/phases.

The need to conceptualize a Teaching Laboratory as an experimental ethos (Masschelein & Simons, 2014) stems from the research agenda of one of the researchers (2008-2010, 2013-2016, and from 2018 to the present date), who required continuity in her research with teachers in a way that made them more active in the (continuous) training sessions they conducted, those that took place during participatory and collaborative research.

This experimental and experiential space needed to be developed in collaboration with the teachers. It is precisely this process that we aim to present and analyze in this article, which showcases the continuous professional development process carried out with early years elementary school teachers in a Teaching Laboratory.

The selected scope for this writing includes an investigation conducted with teachers who work in the first five years of elementary school (Elementary School I), with materials derived from three stages of the research. Initially, we gathered 59 responses from an online questionnaire and subsequently transcribed the narratives from two phases of the Teaching Laboratory, linked to the years 2022 and 2023. These sessions, conducted both in-person and online, analyzed issues related to teachers' expectations, understandings, and needs regarding continuous professional development.

The research *corpus* was constituted from materials produced from the online questionnaires and the transcriptions of narratives produced in the Teaching Laboratory (Fabris, 2020). As an analytical strategy, we drew inspiration from Foucauldian discourse analysis (Foucault, 2007).

The argument we present in this text highlights that, in contemporary times, both initial and continuous professional development have been developed within a neoliberal managerial logic, characterized by accelerated time and space, which entails a high degree of performance. In our view, this brings about a lifelong and constant state of indebtedness in professional development, considering that individuals are consumed by the need to meet the imposed demands for updating and training.

In this sense, we also observe the appropriation of the discourse of lifelong learning, which rapidly meets market demands by education companies operating under neoliberal logic and dominating the professional development landscape, particularly in continuous professional development. These institutions focus on the business aspect of education, which, according to Alves, Klaus, and Loureiro (2021, p. 1), adapt to "[...] a continuously changing and increasingly competitive economy, [in which] individuals must learn to be authors and protagonists of their own lives, taking responsibility for the lifelong learning of skills and competencies demanded by the market."

According to these same authors, current educational reforms and pedagogical practices in Brazil are organized around market logic, which dictates not only lifestyles but also behavioral standards. Alves, Klaus, and Loureiro (2021) further emphasize that this logic in education extends from Basic Education to Higher Education, as it is reflected in policies, programs, and projects from the "S System," private companies, and/or foundations. The dissemination and expansion of liberal and neoliberal governmentality are closely linked to this lifelong learning approach.

It is evident that teacher education has been on the national and international agenda for a long time, even in the mid-19th century when there were no formal training programs and teachers learned the profession from more experienced colleagues (Nóvoa, 2013). Even then, actions that constituted a form of "teacher education" could be observed, which later became systematized through a history that included Normal Schools and their application schools, and subsequently, university training.

In Brazil, teachers' working conditions have historically been detrimental to their professional development. According to Dourado (2001, p. 72), it is possible to observe "[...] insufficient initial training, [...] low salaries, and poor working conditions, which have led, among other issues, to a process of acute proletarianization of teachers." These conditions, combined with an inefficient national policy for teacher education, exacerbate the weaknesses that, despite extensive research and work in the field of teacher education, have not been translated into effective and high-quality teacher training.

Despite this scenario, there are movements and associations in Brazil that bring together researchers in the field of teacher education, aiming to strengthen these discussions with data that highlight the need for constant revision of national teacher education policies and the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) as well as the BNC-Teacher Education. This includes organizations such as the National Association for Research in Education (ANPEd), the National Association for the Education of Professionals (ANFOPE), the National Confederation of Education Workers (CNTE), and the National Forum of Directors of Colleges/Centers/Departments of Education and Equivalents of Brazilian Public Universities (FORUMDIR), among others (Diniz-Pereira, 2021).

The Teaching Laboratory proposes, as a formative space, an approach that opposes the neoliberal managerial logic. It aims to create alternative possibilities for practicing teaching and for teachers who understand and embrace their teaching roles as the result of a process that extends beyond initial training. This process includes their development as individuals and as participants in a profession, along with the various social and cultural dimensions that intersect with the school, society, and their own teaching identity.

In this research and training space, teachers are encouraged to use a variety of theoretical-practical tools[4], such as radical critique, craftsmanship, study, writing, reading, thought exercises, and co-formation, among others. Additionally, they can revisit the specifics of their teaching at the level/stage of education where they work, as well as their personal teaching marks.

This approach makes it clear that formative investment moves away from homogenizing teaching practices and copying so-called "best practices". Instead, it focuses on fostering teacher autonomy for creating their own teaching methods, valuing study, research, and the teaching knowledge gained from their experiences with students in different educational settings.

From this perspective, we use the concept of formation understood as (de)formation, through which, via the co-formative experience of colleagues and researchers at the university, it is possible to engage in constant thought exercises, analyze practices, and study concepts that may serve as new tools, while abandoning outdated practices that are no longer deemed necessary or important. These can be rethought and reworked in the Teaching Laboratory. This approach emphasizes self-reflection, exploring and understanding one's teaching methods, and the practices that constitute one's teaching, which are necessary conditions for thinking about and conducting oneself differently in teaching.

In this context, we argue that this process requires not only skill but also an approach that is authorial, creative, engaged, present, and relational. Thus, we question: how can this orientation support a different logic or culture in the continuous professional development of teachers?

Theoretical and Methodological Choices

The research titled "pesquisa (de)formação" wich can be translated to "(De)formation Research" (Fabris, 2010) reflects the quest for transformation among the individuals it engages. This research can utilize various data collection instruments, particularly those that initially provide insights into how participants perceive the research focus. In the subsequent phase, (de)formation research unfolds within a laboratory setting, which may be either an online or a physical space, where thought exercises, referred to as experiments, are conducted.

During these phases, tools from radical or hypercritical critique [5](Veiga-Neto, 2003) or other relevant tools are employed to assist in this critical and (de)formative process. These tools help analyze each action brought forth by participants in their teaching practices, enabling the development of a "toolbox." This toolbox consists not of "best practices" but of tools, actions, and theories that can aid in creating new teaching methods. In our view, this approach helps avoid mere replication of teaching activities and shifts the focus towards using alternative tools (theories and pedagogical exercises) as sources of inspiration

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[4] We use the term theoretical-practical tools, understanding theory and practice as inseparable dimensions of knowledge. Although these dimensions may be employed in different ways, they do not exist separately.

[5] It is the exercise of going to the roots, or rather, of engaging in "[...] a constant reflection and radical distrust towards any proclaimed or established truth" (Veiga-Neto, 2003, p. 209). The only *a priori* we consider is historical, and by adopting the radicality of critique as hypercritique, all discourses and truths are put under suspicion.

and possibilities for developing or reinterpreting teaching practices within the context of those we currently engage in or will engage in future times and spaces.

The (de)formation research presented in this text focused on the modes of being a teacher and the teaching practices developed within this formative research, which is understood as continuous professional development. Although quantitative data can be used in (de)formation research, this investigation did not focus on them but rather on what they revealed and how they contributed to the quality of the analyses; thus, we position this research as qualitative.

The empirical corpus was produced using an online questionnaire, the first action of the empirical research. The online questionnaire, created on the Google Forms platform, included 31 questions: 7 for identification, 6 on academic background, 3 optional questions, and 15 open-ended questions. Among these, 3 directly addressed the specific topic of continuous professional development, expressed as follows: How does continuous professional development occur in the school where you work?; Do you participate in continuous professional development activities elsewhere? Which ones?; and What do you consider most important in continuous professional development? Describe characteristics you consider necessary for this development to impact your teaching.

From the 109 participants in the CNPq Research who completed the online questionnaire, we selected 59 teachers who work in early years of elementary education (AIEF). Considering ethical commitments, we maintained confidentiality agreements with the teachers[6]. Therefore, we refer to the research subjects as PAIEF (Early Years Elementary Education Teacher). The number accompanying the acronym originates from the online questionnaire, according to the order of responses.

The teachers who participated in the Teaching Laboratory – AIEF (phases 1 and 2) were designated as School Researchers – AIEF, with the number accompanying the code indicating the alphabetical order of the registered participants.

The first phase of the Teaching Laboratory, conducted online, took place between April and July 2022 and was organized with specific teams for each stage of Basic Education (Early Childhood Education, Elementary School 1, and Elementary School 2, including administrators). Sessions were held twice a week, on Mondays and Wednesdays, consisting of 2 hours of synchronous activities and 1 hour of asynchronous activities for each of the 7 sessions, totaling 21 hours. Additionally, work on creation, school experiences, and Moodle records were considered, amounting to a total of 19 hours. Altogether, the first phase of the Teaching Laboratory accounted for 40 hours, with certification.

In the second phase of the Teaching Laboratory, sessions occurred monthly from May to October 2023, including two in-person meetings. The sessions were organized with 2 hours and 30 minutes of synchronous activities (1 hour for a general meeting and 1 hour and 30 minutes for specific meetings) and 2 hours and 15 minutes of asynchronous activities for each of the 6 initially scheduled meetings, totaling 17 hours and 30 minutes of synchronous activities. Work on creation, school experiences, and Moodle records were also considered, totaling 22 hours and 30 minutes.

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[6] The research project was approved by the University Ethics Committee (registration number). All participants signed the Informed Consent Form (ICF).

Additionally, an extra final meeting was held, making a total of 7 meetings, as we considered it important to meet the teachers in person and strengthen connections. The final meeting was also in person, allowing us to share the experience reports produced by the teachers. In total, the second phase of the Teaching Laboratory also accounted for 40 hours, with certification.

The analytical material produced from the online questionnaire and the Teaching Laboratory meetings was then described and organized into tables. After these steps, excerpts were grouped by recurring themes and/or shifts and analyzed, drawing on Foucault's discourse analysis to identify and scrutinize legitimized discourses as well as those that are not articulated, and to highlight discourses that maintain certain traditions and formative cultures versus those that shift and may produce new meanings.

In this text, we present two directions taken by the teachers: the first highlights the theory-practice dichotomy amplified by neoliberal rationality; and the second indicates alternative ways of thinking about continuous professional development, in contexts and times that move away from immediacy, consumerism, and utilitarianism.

Continuous Professional Development: time and space in neoliberal rationality

> [...] to challenge, twist, and problematize reality does not mean to deny it or oppose it but to question our certainties about it; it does not mean to understand it as natural and necessary but as always radically contingent (Veiga-Neto, 2012, p. 3).

The continuous professional development of teachers has a long history. When addressing this topic, beyond marking our place of speech, we aim to examine some of the events in teacher training that have been highlighted in the educational field, considering, as the epigraph suggests, a contingent and not universal history that needs to be carefully thought out and problematized. Thus, we put into question some of the conditions that, in contemporary times, have shaped continuous professional development practices and the ways in which we, as teachers, have engaged with these spaces. Santos (2006), in his research on continuous professional development, primarily inspired by Foucault's archaeology and genealogy, helps us understand the emergence of continuous professional development through two traces:

> [...] one that forms with the transition from a society of sovereignty to a disciplinary society, in which the so-called teacher training emerges; and another that forms with the transition from a disciplinary society to a society of normalization, in which the conditions for the emergence of continuous professional development begin to take shape (Santos, 2006, p. 92).

By accepting, along with the author, the shift from a disciplinary society to a society of control or security as one of the conditions for the heightened need for continuous professional development, we recognize that the governmentalized State imposes other conditions on the population's lives, including neoliberal governmentality. This condition positions everyone as stakeholders or partners of the state, making the achievement of its objectives more economically efficient.

In this logic, continuous professional development is removed from the state's commitment and assumed and shared by each school and each individual, understood as an entrepreneur of oneself. Thus, contemporary neoliberal rationality imposes a sense of permanence on professional development, framing it as a lifelong process.

We have observed, in the field of teacher training, that teachers embrace this imperative of constant and lifelong development in a performative, accelerated process that places everyone in competition with themselves and others. This development, termed lifelong learning, already shows its close relationship with the language of learning rather than with education and teaching.

> It is not the word "learning" itself that bothers me, but rather the way the ideology of learning, with all its individualistic, psychological, and cognitive baggage, has colonized educational discourses and practices. [...] In schools, from preschool to university, teaching is no longer the focus; instead, learning is emphasized. Any curriculum must be viewed through the lens of learning objectives and aimed at learning outcomes. Learning, therefore, must be autonomous and meaningful (Larrosa; Rechia, 2018, p. 55).

In this close relationship with the language of learning, teachers, also as lifelong learners, need to become flexible, multifunctional, interchangeable, continuously recyclable, and adaptable, optimizing time and school space. "A hyperconsumer certainly hasty, channel-surfing, and bulimic for novelties [...]." (Lipovetsky; Serroy, 2015, p. 31).

To address all these issues in record time and continuously, what can be expected from continuous professional development processes? What does such a logic impose on professionals?

> Recycling oneself, continuously updating our skills, achieving more in ever-shorter periods of time with fewer resources: the hypermodern enterprise forces individuals to live under constant pressure, compelling them to act without delay, to be agile, and to provide instant, hyper-reactive responses (Lipovetsky; Serroy, 2015, p. 401).

The Neoliberal rationality has permeated all spaces, and speed seems to dictate the rhythm of everyday life.

> First in the company, which, pressured by intensified competition, demands for productivity gains, and short-term results, reduces its workforce, flexibilizes employment, introduces individualized performance evaluations, and sets increasingly higher goals. Work-related stress spreads everywhere, no longer sparing any sector or social category (Lipovetsky; Serroy, 2015, p. 401).

In terms of continuous professional development, Imbernón (2010) points out that, in the 1970s, many studies were conducted with teachers to assess their attitudes toward training programs. He notes that, although some progress was made, it did not keep pace with global changes, as "[...] if we focus on the field of teaching, we can observe a lack of clear definition of teachers' roles, which implies addressing problems arising from the social context and the increasing demands and competencies in the field of education [...]" (Imbernón, 2010, p. 8).

To address some of the demands in the professional field, the 1980s saw the rise of technical approaches in training, with practical and critical resistance

infiltrating education, dominated by the paradigm of technical rationality and the pursuit of competencies for the "effective teacher" to be incorporated into so-called "effective training." With this aim, universities began to develop continuous professional development programs for teachers, "[...] mostly situated in training modalities and management practices characteristic of the observation/evaluation model" (Imbernón, 2010, p. 18).

Subsequently, starting in the 1990s, a shift began in the context of continuous professional development. "According to the discourse of that time, the institutionalization of continuous professional development emerged with the intention of adapting teachers to contemporary times, facilitating a constant improvement of their practice according to present and future needs" (Imbernón, 2010, p. 19). However, "[...] institutionalization in professional development had its drawbacks, as it amplified a model of training through standardized courses that still persist. This training model was considered synonymous with continuous professional development" (Imbernón, 2010, p. 19-20).

In recent years, Brazil has seen an increase in public policies for continuous professional development, with various funding opportunities for these actions. However, researchers such as Gatti (2008) question whether it might be more timely to intensify investment in the initial teacher training instead:

> [...] would it not be better to allocate more public funds to expanding slots in public institutions to train teachers and to improving the quality of these courses in terms of project design, faculty, and infrastructure, while reserving continuous education for actual professional development or specializations? (Gatti, 2008, p. 69).

Consistent with our understanding of ongoing professional development involving teachers across all educational levels, we emphasize the importance of enhancing initial teacher training while also allocating funds for the qualification of teachers at their workplaces, in schools, and higher education institutions. This should always involve formative actions with the individuals actively engaged in their teaching practice.

In light of this proposition, we present in Table 1 some recurring comments from teachers in response to the question: "*What do you consider most important in continuous professional development? Describe the characteristics you believe are necessary for this training to impact your teaching.*" These comments highlight a focus on practical dimensions, reflecting the different realities of teaching practice. At the same time, they reveal a desire for training programs to be maximized by what can be immediately applied, as indicated by the term "classroom practice", suggesting a process of direct transfer. Are we immersed in another form of barbarism? That of speed and multifunctionality, utilitarianism, and instrumental logic (Lipovetsky; Serroy, 2015).

Table 1 - Continuous professional development and the prevalence of practice

"They should be based on the reality of the classroom, *not just on theory*. I think the speaker always needs to have been a teacher to really understand what they are saying. *They should bring practice, successful experiences, and also what didn't work...*" (PAIEF1, our emphasis). "[...] *A training based on theory does not work in practice*" (PAIEF22, our emphasis). *"Practical activities"* (PAIEF37, our emphasis).

Source: Research Material 2020/2021

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These and many other narratives indicate that for teachers, continuous professional development is more effective when it emphasizes what they refer to as "practice," stemming from a dichotomous view of the world, which is circulated through what Foucault describes as the order of discourse. By emphasizing practice, teachers likely aim to demonstrate that they find the offered courses distant from their needs and the specificities of classroom reality. However, it is crucial to note that education also moves in the "[...] opposite direction to the culture of immediate gratification" (Lipovetsky & Serroy, 2015, p. 399), implying that both teaching and learning require maturation and thoughtful engagement.

Furthermore, in teachers' statements, we observe that the dichotomous framing of theory and practice separates what pertains more to the realm of thought from what pertains more to the realm of action. In this regard, we understand that a broader comprehension of theory and practice may provide teachers, through collective discussion, experimentation, and systematization of their knowledge, the opportunity to more fully articulate what they do in the classroom, whether concerning the knowledge they teach, generally understood as theory, or their teaching methods. This is because, from our perspective, "[...] alongside any practice—or, to put it more technically: immanent to any practice— there is always a theorization, however obscure and undefined it may appear to those less accustomed to these epistemological issues" (Veiga-Neto, 2015, p. 118).

Moreover, in this context of "[...] immanence, but also contingency, we understand that the experience of teaching is constructed through diverse relationships with oneself and others, in the space/time of the university and the space/time of the school" (Boff & Bahia, 2020, p. 821).

Historically, teacher training has been criticized for separating theory from practice, with theory being developed in universities and practice occurring in basic education schools. However, our research group has conducted investigations demonstrating that both initial and continuing education fail to resolve this confusion and the purported problem (Boff, 2019; Bahia, 2024).

These issues involving theory and practice are not new in the field of teacher education. In the history of Brazilian undergraduate programs, particularly the so-called 3+1 formula, this dichotomy was evident, initially due to the predominance of theory over teaching practice. According to Fernandes and Cunha (2013, p. 2), this curricular model "[...] assumed some basic premises involving the primacy of theory over practice, where theoretical studies came before practice, and the internship, at the end of the course, was seen as a moment of applying theory to practice."

Although the National Curriculum Guidelines for Teacher Education of 2001 and 2002 (and subsequent ones) attempted to overcome the previous proposal by suggesting "[...] insertion into the professional field from the beginning of the training, including supervised curricular internships from the middle of the course [...]" (Fernandes & Cunha, 2013, p. 3), it remains evident that there is still a clear separation between these two dimensions, as the attempt is always, in some way, to prioritize either theory or practice in the training process.

According to the same authors, a possible reason for the persistence of the theory-practice dichotomy, which often leads initial and ongoing teacher training to be conceived from a dichotomized and hierarchical perspective of

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theory and practice, is the idea that "[...] distancing from a model that favors theory over practice risks removing critical reflection from teacher training processes, potentially leading to its de-intellectualization" (Fernandes & Cunha, 2013, p. 3). This is one of the conditions that allows the initial and ongoing training to often be thought of from this dichotomized and hierarchical perspective of theory and practice. However, as the authors caution, "The challenge is to consider them as a whole, as inseparable aspects of the act of knowing" (Fernandes & Cunha, 2013, p. 5).

In Table 2, we present some of the teachers' statements that highlight one of the recurring prescriptions in the field of teacher training: the need to articulate theory and practice, which reinforces the theory-practice dichotomy:

Table 2: Continuous Professional Development and the Theory-Practice Dichotomy

"*Blend* practice and theory to work with our students" (PAIEF5, our emphasis)
"Theory and practice need to go *hand in hand*" (PAIEF22, our emphasis).
"For me, a basic principle for making professional development meaningful is to *contextualize* theory with practice" (PAIEF34, our emphasis)
"Always work with possibilities that *combine* theory with practice" (PAIEF43, our emphasis)
"*Articulation* between theory and practice" (PAIEF44, our emphasis).

Source: Research Material 2020/2021

For Boff e Bahia:

> In the Brazilian context, the discourse that constitutes the theory-practice dichotomy is prescriptive and consistently points to the need to articulate these dimensions—sometimes more, sometimes less. As a result, theory and practice seem to materialize in distinct spaces and times of professional development and are predominantly regarded as constructs whose dissociation and interdependence are intuitive and easily managed by future teachers. This issue—concerning the relationship between theory and practice—remains central to the debate (Boff; Bahia, 2021, p. 813).

When considering that in the field of continuous professional development for teachers everything seems to have already been said, we ask ourselves: is it possible to denaturalize the conceptions of theory and practice? How can we think differently about continuous professional development and the needs highlighted by teachers without risking dichotomization or promoting a dilution of theoretical-practical dimensions?

Continuous professional development: an inscription in another formative culture

Thinking about spaces for continuous professional development under a different logic involves changing some of the foundations upon which we, as teachers and researchers, are constituted. Veiga-Neto (2015, p. 117), when discussing theory and practice, states that this issue is indeed a problem because "[...] it produces effects in the academic field, in curriculum designs, and in teacher training courses," but argues that it is a false problem, as it disappears if we change the foundations upon which it was constructed. Thus, if we understand theory and practice as dimensions, as two sides of the same coin, we can see that many of the gaps identified in training programs, while they do

exist, also stem from a binary understanding of theory and practice, deeply rooted in pedagogical tradition.

In our view, it makes no sense, nor is it possible, to "[...] think about practice without a theory that shelters it as practice. Furthermore, theory itself is already a practice – and, as we have seen, practice is only practice under the shelter of a theorization that gives it (at least, a minimum of) meaning [...]" (Veiga-Neto, 2008, p. 7).

In the Teaching Laboratory, which is constituted within this inseparable perspective of theory and practice, we propose exercises that have led teachers to confront their own unknowns and doubts, as when planning their lessons and teaching their students, the theoretical and practical dimensions are not always evident (both for teachers and students) when taken as inseparable. By introducing reverse thinking, or thinking about different ways of performing such practices, which involve the teaching object, we can begin to see and understand that for each way of thinking, there is an implicit way of doing.

An example of this can be seen in the case of literacy. When we teach literacy with the conception of "reading the world" or simply within the logic of "decoding," we reveal two different theories that lead to very different actions in our teaching. We have understood that by making this clearer to each teacher, they will be more attentive when planning their lessons, and this will grant their teaching a greater possibility of engagement from those involved, who will also begin to perceive the different conceptions and actions that support the ways of teaching and learning, not just the conceptions (theories) or the actions (practices), which can prevent a dichotomous view.

The studies by Boff (2019) on the production of meanings in mathematics teaching reinforce this understanding, which we see as important for thinking about teacher training. The author emphasizes that:

> [...] we cannot understand that one dimension exists without the other, as even when one dimension seems not to be present, it is enhancing and constituting the other. [...] In the training of mathematics teachers, this argument allows us to think about both mathematical and pedagogical knowledge in a more consistent way, and it also enables us to justify the choices we make in our teaching. (Boff, 2019, p. 141).

This understanding of theory and practice, considering these two dimensions as inseparable, helps us to conceive of continuous professional development that needs to go far beyond an episodic moment or immediate practicality. We agree with Lipovetsky and Serroy (2015, p. 37) when they say that "to the aesthetics of acceleration, we must oppose an aesthetics of tranquility, an art of slowness, which is an openness to the pleasures of the world, allowing us to be 'closer to our own existence.'"

Moving away from a dichotomous view of the world, we advocate for a slower, more systematic process, involving the participation of those engaged in processes of (de)formation that mobilize the exercise of thought, challenging individuals to reflect, write, study, and transform themselves through the practices to which they submit and that they impose on others. In this process of (de)formation, subjectivation will be developed so that everyone can become subjects of a school and a teaching practice that, although incomplete, develops in relation to others, in the sharing of knowledge, and in experience. "In the face of the aesthetics of speed and immediacy that is rooted in the universe of the

market, there is an assertion of the need to enjoy other beauties, other experiences, and other temporalities" (Lipovetsky; Serroy, 2015, p. 417).

Aligned with this conception, the Laboratory of Teaching Practices has helped us develop experiments and experiences with a toolkit composed of theoretical-practical concepts that help us exercise thought and engage in (de)formation, as suggested by authors who assume a different concept of teacher education:

> It becomes crucial, therefore, to combat processes that aim at the training (formatting) of teachers and, instead, establish situations in which deformation is expressed. To deform is to remove the limits that make thinking restricted to opinions, which confine teaching practices to merely reproducing already given information. Deforming is the possibility of placing the different as something inherent to the world, of thinking towards new forms of meaning, for humanity, for thought, for the teacher, for the school. Deforming is to deterritorialize the mechanisms that fix and constrain teacher formation, restricting them to being mere reproducers of truths in themselves, and instead, enhancing other forms of creative thinking, making them producers of knowledge within the context in which they operate (Ferraz; Nunes, 2020, p. 104).

By turning our backs on acceleration, we also reject neoliberal logic and the actions that derive from it. We understand that proposing exercises that involve the individual so they can think for themselves is very different from what happens under neoliberal logic, where the "entrepreneur of the self" seeks numerous new training sessions, not for self-formation and self-transformation, but to position themselves within a competitive logic in the training market.

The following tables present excerpts from the meetings of the Teaching Laboratory, where we observe shifts away from this neoliberal logic through the experience reports of school researchers:

Table 3: Teaching Laboratory – "I don't want to stop being a teacher"

The proposal to engage in dialogue with the university resonated with me due to the potential for a genuine exchange of classroom experiences. I wanted to find a place where being a teacher felt good and welcoming, where I could find peers to discuss with, and where I would not feel inadequate. I hoped for an environment in the school, as an educational institution, where my desire to think about and discuss education could be accommodated. I often joke that the school can sometimes feel like a factory floor, where the constant demands and excessive workload leave us teachers so exhausted that we rarely reflect deeply on our practice or on the school as an educational institution. For those of us who have become teachers by learning to read the world and reflecting on practice and the organization of educational institutions, understanding that there are different forms of learning beyond the classroom walls, it is often difficult to remain a teacher without an effective continuous professional development space. And that's how I found myself at the first Teaching Laboratory meeting: "I don't want to give up being a teacher!" (School Researcher - AIEF3).

Source: Research Material 2023.

In the teacher's speech, we see that the Laboratory creates a space of belonging where not knowing is accommodated without embarrassment for questions that might be considered inappropriate for a teacher. This is evident when the school researcher (AIEF3) seeks a space where she feels welcomed.

In the Teaching Laboratory, a space of acceptance for critical analysis is created, where different ways of thinking and exercising thought are engaged, and where desires, dreams, and difficulties are named and analyzed. By concluding with "I don't want to give up being a teacher!", we see the potential of

this space for teacher training as a process of (de)formation. It is a space that sought to avoid hierarchizing the knowledge, skills, and experiences shared; where both university and school researchers have free access to question and share what we call co-formative experience. The statement presented in Table 4 confirms this issue.

Table 4: Teaching Laboratory – "A space to share experiences and reflect"

"And that's what I wanted, a space where we could listen, be present, share experiences, and reflect. And I felt well served, in terms of what I came looking for and what I found. [...] And these spaces are important to me. I think it can be different depending on how each person arrives here. [...] Many people didn't stay because they thought it was going to be a lecture or part of the live-stream culture, like the classes we attend and then leave. But for me, it's a place of nourishment because I usually arrive very tired to the meeting, and I leave very happy, super motivated. I feel like my energy rises, having a space to speak where I know I'll find resonance. It's different from much of what we encounter at school, like [...]." (School Researcher - AIEF2)

Source: Research Material 2023.

The teacher's statement, particularly when she says, "I think it [the Laboratory] can be different depending on how each person arrives here. [...] many people didn't stay because they thought it would be a lecture or something in the culture of lives, classes where you watch and leave" shows that in the Laboratory of Teaching, as a formative space, participants need to assume an active, more reflective position. We understand this to constitute a different formative culture, as in this space, teachers are regarded as school researchers. By discussing sharing and reflecting, resonance and motivation, the teacher reveals that the Laboratory is a space for exercising thought, which counters the logic of acceleration and passive consumerism, where teachers are often merely "certificate collectors" from courses that do not impact their classroom teaching.

As we can see in Table 5, the school researcher calls for a training that values her role and unsettles her. She demands a process of (de)formation.

Table 5: Laboratory of Teaching – "To be even more challenged and unsettled"

I consider this part of the significant pedagogical support. [...] That we need each other for our pedagogical practice to make sense. That theory needs practice to be grounded, as even great inventions and discoveries were first imagined and dreamed. Therefore, it is crucial to understand that within each of us, there is a capacity to learn and reframe our pedagogical practice, even in the face of our limitations and difficulties. Self-criticism must exist because, just like students, we as educators must also strive to improve our knowledge and practice. We do not always get it right. The training made me reflect on the real meaning of professional protagonism, something I had never considered before. By understanding and valuing my protagonism, there were changes in how I interact with my fellow teachers. I hope my learning process continues, and that I am even more challenged and unsettled. I am grateful for all the sharing and exchanges so far. (School Researcher - AIEF11).

Source: Research Material 2022.

In the statement presented in Table 5, particularly in the excerpt: "Therefore, it is crucial to understand that within each of us, there is a capacity to learn and reframe our pedagogical practice, even in the face of our limitations and difficulties. Self-criticism must exist because, just like students, we as educators must also strive for improvement [...]", we see that the teacher perceives the movement she made as necessary, relating it to her students' learning. This is important because it allows teachers to replicate their actions of critical thinking and reflection just as their students do.

Another significant point raised by the teacher relates to professional protagonism. When she says, "The training made me reflect on the real meaning of professional protagonism, something I had never considered before. By understanding and valuing my protagonism, there were changes in how I interacted with my fellow teachers. I hope my learning process continues, and that I am even more challenged and unsettled. I am grateful for all the sharing and exchanges so far," we see that the sense of professional protagonism is stimulated and (re)constructed throughout the formative process. By assuming their role as knowers, teachers empower themselves and reinforce their teaching identity with a critical, rather than performative, sense.

Furthermore, by helping each other, sharing knowledge and uncertainties, and justifying their actions with the provided framework, the teachers felt empowered and capable of reading and analyzing their pedagogical actions and attitudes. This process broke away from a formative culture of passive consumption in their training processes.

Thinking differently about the formative culture in continuous professional development: concluding remarks

Based on the analyses conducted, we question whether we can think of other ways to approach the formative culture in the continuous professional development of teachers within the AIEF. We thus highlight some shifts that the Laboratory has enabled for its participants.

First, we argue that thinking differently does not merely mean opposing something but rather entails adopting a stance of skepticism towards established truths that generally reside within the so-called order of discourse. In agreement with Veiga-Neto and Lopes, we understand that:

> [...] thinking differently does not simply mean expanding what is already known, or adding new content to existing knowledge. Rather, thinking differently involves adopting a stance of skepticism towards what is given and appears obvious and natural. It means attempting to think outside the realm of what is already known, not by expanding its boundaries, but by questioning the foundational assumptions of what has been previously accepted. This approach allows for a new perspective that was previously unattainable (Veiga-Neto; Lopes, 2010, p. 149-150).

This exercise in thinking allowed us to problematize teacher professional development by addressing a major issue: "[...] the discussion about the relationship between theory and practice" (Veiga-Neto, 2015, p. 115). Through the online questionnaire, we mapped the participants' understanding of professional development before their involvement in the Laboratory, which highlighted a perspective grounded in the discourse of application, utility, and the predominance of practice. This also allowed us to understand the teachers' expectations regarding their experiences in the Laboratory, which in turn enabled us to discuss these themes and observe shifts in their understanding, based on their experiences with professional development in the Laboratory.

According to Imbernón (2009), concerning teacher professional development, "The solution does not lie merely in bringing professional development closer to teachers and their context without generating a new formative culture that produces new processes in both theory and practice,

leading us to new perspectives" (Imbernón, 2009, pp. 35-36). We believe that this alternative formative culture becomes possible when we change the

> [...] relationships between the teaching staff, the emotional and attitudinal processes of teachers, professional development within and for the complexity of teaching, the belief (or self-belief) in the ability to generate pedagogical knowledge within one's own centers with colleagues, the shift in power relations within centers, the possibility of self-formation, teamwork, and communication among colleagues in development with the community [...] (Imbernón, 2009, pp. 35-36).

Perhaps this is one of the greatest challenges: changing the culture to produce new perspectives and the possibility of a formative ethos[7] in continuous professional development for teachers. By formative ethos, we understand

> [...] *a certain way of being and acting*, resulting from processes through which each person learns to view themselves, to reflect on their own actions, and to effect transformations upon themselves. This process expands and creates a culture of belonging, a 'dwelling place,' a shared community (Dal'Igna; Fabris, 2015, p. 2, emphasis in the original).

With this concept, developed by Dal'Igna and Fabris (2015), we see the possibility of creating "[...] conditions for the development of a formation focused on the care of oneself and others, enabling new ways of self-production and relationships with others" (Dal'Igna; Fabris, 2015, p. 1). According to Foucault, "[...] for the practice of freedom to take the form of an êthos" (2004, p. 270), it is necessary to engage in what he calls the care of oneself and others and the relationships established within this culture of belonging.

In this sense, we pose the following questions: Is it possible to think about the establishment of a formative ethos in continuous professional development based on co-formative experiences in the Laboratory? Is it possible to conceive of continuous professional development in other ways that question the dichotomous discourses on theory-practice?

We argue that this is possible, as we understand that "[...] both the practical and theoretical dimensions are present during teacher formation, regardless of the space and time in which knowledge is constructed, meaning in an indivisible understanding of theory and practice [...]" (Boff; Bahia, 2020, p. 820). Moreover, we believe that both knowledge produced in universities and that produced in Basic Education schools and other spaces can mutually reinforce each other. "These knowledges, which are subject to power relations, are 'validated' or not in teaching practice, either enhanced or diminished, but they do not cease to constitute theory and practice, in an indivisible manner" (Boff; Bahia, 2020, p. 820).

Considering these issues, this article has allowed us to envision some paths for continuous professional development, but we would like to always maintain a more ambivalent view of the choices, possibilities, and concepts raised so far. While we problematize ways of understanding theory and practice, we are also committed to the teachers and schools that have actively participated

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[7] "[...] the term ethos, derived from Greek, had two spellings: êthos and éthos. The former referred to the idea of dwelling, more related to intellectual development in the shaping of character, while the latter was associated with modes of being, habits, and customs. Although some of Michel Foucault's works use the spelling êthos, I choose to use the form without the accent, embracing its dual meaning. [...]" (Oliveira, 2015, p. 103).

in the research, who, in phases I, II, and III of the Laboratory, are making movements to rethink actions and attitudes in continuous professional development, considering it as a process of (de)formation. They invest time and space in their schedules for creative work to rethink the formative culture that constitutes them and what they are building with their fellow teachers and students.

Thus, by confronting the formative culture in the Laboratory of Teaching, we also rethought our own formation and the activities carried out, such as the selected knowledge, methodologies, teaching methods, evaluation methods, feedback on teacher participation, and our classroom practices. In other words, we also reconsidered our way of presenting knowledge, promoting teaching and education. We understand that everything should be part of this exercise of reviewing what already exists in continuous professional development, to problematize the formative culture and (re)create other formative possibilities.

We understand that this movement, involving cultural change, takes time. Therefore, schools and universities need to consider creating a formative ethos with principles that contribute to this "home of belonging," but without paralyzing actions and attitudes; with authors, perspectives, and methodologies that give teachers the freedom to create and reflect. What we cannot do in this movement is think that tradition needs to be surpassed by what is new. This is a major mistake.

We understand that education cannot be achieved without tradition. What needs to be analyzed are our traditions, so that preconceived notions and naturalized discourses can be reviewed. In this way, our cultural richness can continue to guide new generations, engaged in the contemporary, which moves and constitutes us at this moment of cultural life, such as new technologies and digital culture.

Perhaps, as Gatti (2008) already alerted us to the need to enhance quality initial training at all levels, we need to advocate for this change in initial training itself. By revising their curricula, teacher education programs, especially, need to commit to changing the formative culture, involving not only a new curricular model but new attitudes from students and teachers, so that they experience a more qualified curriculum throughout the formative process. A curriculum where the dichotomy between theory and practice does not occur, which still stipulates the number of practical hours in schools and theoretical hours in universities. These actions are rooted in formative culture and legislation and reverberate in teachers' continuous professional development throughout their teaching careers. These are just a few examples, but the list of dichotomous actions has been extensive. In our understanding, initial and continuous professional development are distinct but need to connect in their formative principles and with a quality education for all.

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