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## INITIAL TRAINING OF TEACHERS: PREPARING TEACHERS EVALUATORS(?)

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**Abstract:** The present text presents the results of a research carried out in the *Stricto sensu* Postgraduate course - Doctorate in Education entitled About teacher perceptions about the evaluation of learning and the Prova Brasil, in classes of the 5th year of Elementary School of the Municipal Education Network of Uberlândia -MG, and which had funding from CNPq (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development) in the first three years of the course. We had the collaboration of a Scientific Initiation student of the Degree in Pedagogy Course at the Federal University of Uberlândia, for a year supported by FAPEMIG (Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de Minas Gerais). We present the results of interviews carried out with teachers from the Municipal Education Network of Uberlândia-MG. This study seeks to identify whether and in what way the participating teachers felt prepared or not to evaluate the learning of their classes from their initial training, and their perceptions about possible contributions and/or deficits of their initial training to proceed with processes evaluations in their teaching profession. We carried out exploratory research and contemplated a qualitative approach. There was intense participation of teachers who influenced, with their subjectivity, the construction of data, which took place through both interviews and the application of a questionnaire, and all instruments were used in the school unit, at a time when the teachers were in the period of activity outside the classroom. Visits to school units took place from August to October 2016. Ten schools and seventeen teachers participated in the research. It is evident that there is a failure in the courses that train teachers/es, with regard to evaluating their classes. Given the importance and decision-making power given to assessments, one must then,

at the very least, ensure that students in teacher training courses were able to carry out assessments with the groups under their responsibility.

**Keywords:** Learning assessment, Teacher training, Teacher perceptions.

## INTRODUCTION

The text that we present here brings the results of a research carried out in the *Stricto sensu* Postgraduate course - Doctorate in Education entitled On teachers' perceptions about the assessment of learning and the Prova Brasil, in classes of the 5th year of Elementary School of the Municipal Education Network of Uberlândia-MG, and which had funding from CNPq (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development) in the first three years of the course. We had the collaboration of a Scientific Initiation student of the Degree in Pedagogy Course at the Federal University of Uberlândia, for a year supported by FAPEMIG (Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de Minas Gerais). In this work, we present the results of interviews carried out with teachers from the Municipal Education Network in Uberlândia-MG.

This study seeks to identify whether and in what way the participating teachers felt prepared or not to evaluate the learning of their classes from their initial training, as well as their perceptions about possible contributions and/or deficits of their initial training to proceed with evaluation processes in their teaching profession. Since the results of the evaluations would determine the approval/failure of each student, reflecting on the training received by the teachers who conducted the evaluation process becomes extremely necessary.

## METHODOLOGY

To complete the study presented here, we carried out exploratory research and considered the qualitative approach, which has, among other characteristics:

- its focus is the human experience and the recognition that human realities are complex;
- contact with people takes place in their own social contexts;
- the relationship between researcher and assessment subjects emphasizes face-to-face relationships and empathy between them;
- the results seek to explain the rationality of the contexts and the internal logic of the different and varied groups that are being evaluated;
- the reports tend to present a dynamic reality and show the point of view of the various actors in the face of an unfinished project that is projected into the future; its conclusions are not universalizable, although the understanding of peculiar contexts allows for broader and more comparable inferences (MINAYO et al, 2005, p. 90).

There was intense participation of teachers who influenced, with their subjectivity, the construction of data. As Gonzalez Rey (2002, p. 55) summarizes very well, the research subject “[...] is not simply a reservoir of answers, ready to express themselves in the face of a technically well-formulated question. The subject, in fact, [...] performs true constructions implied in the dialogues in which he expresses himself”.

The construction of the data took place through both interviews and the application of a questionnaire, and all instruments were used in the school unit, at a time when the teachers were in a period of activity

outside the classroom. During the period in which we carried out the field research, the Municipality of Uberlândia, through the Municipal Department of Education, reserved a period of the week, in the teaching shift, for the teachers to carry out activities inherent to their profession: study, correction activities, elaboration of evaluations, among others. Visits to the school units participating in the research took place from August to October 2016. Ten schools and seventeen teachers participated in the research.

## DEVELOPMENT AND RESULTS

The proposed study is driven by a deep concern that has been with us for a long time. By investigating whether and how the teachers who participated in our research felt prepared to evaluate their classes based on the initial training they received, and inquiring about their perceptions regarding possible contributions and/or deficits of their initial training to carry out evaluation processes in their teaching profession, we are considering the central role that assessment assumes in the educational process. It is through it that knowing, approving, not knowing, disapproving is legitimized...

According to Villas Boas, teacher training in terms of preparation for assessment is inadequate. He claims that:

Even today, the training of these professionals leaves something to be desired. They themselves are evaluated by an authoritative and classificatory process, aimed only at the attribution of grades. Teaching courses are still mostly conducted by teachers without pedagogical training, who reproduce the practices of their former masters. (VILLAS BOAS, 2011, p. 33).

The aforementioned author asks what teachers are trained for: to reproduce or to produce new ideas (VILLAS BOAS, 2011)?

We are in favor of the evaluation being perceived and treated as a field of knowledge,

and we are totally in agreement with the perspective of Fernandes (2016), explained during a course taught at the Federal University of Uberlândia, an opportunity in which the aforementioned researcher defends the need to have a more solid idea about the foundations of evaluation as a scientific domain of knowledge that involves: “Own concepts, method, objects of study, mechanisms of self-refutation – allows evaluating the evaluation itself – meta-evaluation” (FERNANDES, 2016).

And as Freitas ([et al], 2012, p. 15) puts it:

This way of looking at the pedagogical process, evaluation does not appear at the end, but is juxtaposed to the objectives themselves, forming a dialectical pair with them. These are the objectives that form the basis for the construction of the evaluation. The contents and the level of mastery of these, designed by the objectives, allow extracting the situations that allowed the student to demonstrate their development in an evaluation situation.

“This assessment, which promotes student and teacher learning and the development of the school, is called formative, [...]”, as it also considers the process for defining learning. (Villas Boas, 2010, p.30).

From these positions, we bring the following reflections regarding the training received by the participants of this study and the understanding of procedural, formative evaluation.

In our dialogue with the teachers, we approached the issue regarding the initial training of teachers, in relation to the acquisition of knowledge provided to them, with regard to the preparation to evaluate their and their future students. More than half, a total of nine teachers, stated that they were not prepared to evaluate, as we will see below.

In the speeches of the teachers who attended the Technician in Teaching,

questions emerged that evidence its technical and practical character, as illustrated here by the speech of Professor Natália, who explained that, although the course has prepared her to teach, she is not I felt prepared to assess:

No, no. I only knew how to teach. I didn't know how I was going to drive, you know? You know you know! I've always been very good at Mathematics and Portuguese, I thought that was enough, right? But after you're in a classroom, you have to fill out papers, you have to lead... That's different, you have to be really prepared. I keep seeing the teachers starting today, [...] many friends of mine gave up on the internship, during their initial training. When you take a room and you're faced with reality, it's different. They know, but they don't know how to pass. The saddest thing is when we don't know how to pass. (NATALIA, 2016).

The absence of studies on evaluation in the initial training course became apparent through the speech of Professor Polyana, who, when answering, considered that the course had prepared her to evaluate her and her students, was emphatic in saying:

Not at all, is it? Not at all, because, as far as I can remember, when I studied at high school, there were some subjects that I must work with them, but I don't remember at any time the question of evaluation. I do not remember! Anything! (POLYANA, 2016).

It was by living together and seeking help from the faculty of his school that he found conditions to then evaluate his classes: “We discuss, get ideas and we learn, learning with each other, with our colleagues. [...] it was like that, because I had no vision in relation to the evaluation.” (POLYANA, 2016).

It was also from the collaboration of colleagues that Professor Keila (2016) found a way to evaluate, although she claimed to have had excellent teachers, but it was in practice, in exchange with colleagues, in continuing education that she learned and continued to learn. about the assessment.

And teacher Maria Aldair (2016), in addition to finding support from colleagues, also had the supervisor's guidance to find a way to evaluate. She stated that "[...] I kept seeing the experiences of my colleagues who had been at home for more time. I asked, paid attention to them, what they did; they lent me material... and so it went. [...]" (2016).

In addition to saying that they were not prepared to evaluate, there are teachers who claim that they would never apply, nowadays, evaluations that they carried out at the beginning of their careers. It also highlights that there were many more practical than theoretical elements in his training, which was the Technical Course in Teaching. Professor Wilma's account illustrates this scenario very well:

I'll be very honest, if I compare the evaluations I make today with the ones I made at the beginning of my career, I'll be ashamed (laughs). I'm ashamed to say that there was an assessment that we applied. That was just the sum. Today, it's totally different; It's a construction process because I did the Teaching, that Teaching where we had to have a Science notebook, plan everything! You don't have that today, do you? So when I walked into a classroom I had more practice and less theory. [...] We didn't take the context into account; the context of the child is not? It was that thing there, clean, raw, thrown away, there was no questioning. (WILMA, 2016).

The training acquired in the Degree in Pedagogy enabled the teacher to have a more critical view, contrary to the report of the teachers who attended Pedagogy as initial training. For these, there was a lot of theory and hardly any practice. And the theories, considered in excess by the teachers, were perceived more negatively than positively.

Although we understand that "The Pedagogy Course, which has the National Curriculum Guidelines as a reference, according to Resolution CNE/CP n.1, of

May 15, 2006, is faced with the challenge of rethinking issues that directly influence teacher training contemporary" (SANTOS; COSTA, 2011 p. 02), some speeches such as that of Professor Wilma, highlights that, even though it is very theoretical, it is in this training that future teachers have more space, conditions to reflect on such practices. Theory supports these reflections.

Finally, Professor Camila, who also studied Teaching Technician, stated that she did not consider having been prepared to evaluate her future classes, "Because theory is one thing, isn't it? And the practice is different. We learn right there in the classroom, it is in everyday life that you will see: "this works, this doesn't work", right? Do what you can, take what you didn't, change." (CAMILA, 2016).

Still dealing with the group of teachers who claim that they did not feel that the initial training they received had prepared them to evaluate, three attended a Licentiate in Pedagogy in their initial training. Of these, both Professor Cláudia and Professor Elizabete stated that the help of professional colleagues was essential so that they could be able to conduct such evaluation processes.

The three professors criticized the faculty, academic teaching, saying that there is too much theory. Professor Elizabete's speech illustrates this criticism who, when answering whether her initial training offered her subsidies to evaluate her and her students, she said:

Of course not! (laughs) I don't think any undergraduate course can help you this way, because I think it's all a matter of practice. The Pedagogy course has a lot of theory! So, in relation to theory, there is a lot that we apply in the classroom; but day-to-day practice we don't learn on the college bench. (ELIZABETE, 2016).

For teacher Alesandra (2016), in no way did her initial training prepare her to evaluate her

classes, although she stated that she strongly believed that theory and practice go hand in hand,

[...] the theories of learning Wallon, Vygotsky, Piaget, in on-the-job training I saw that perhaps tradition is really not that I have stopped being a little traditional, because this is something very ingrained in us. But I try my best to be different; so, I believed in the quiet student, sitting in a row, I had to pay attention; I had to put everything I said... from then on I changed both my paradigm in relation to my practice in the classroom, as well as my way of evaluating. So I study, exchange experiences, in-service training, continuous training... all this showed me education in a different way, so I don't believe at all that I was prepared at the beginning. (ALESANDRA, 2016).

Among the teachers interviewed, four stated that the course prepared them to assess their students, and all of them attended a Teaching Technician course in their initial training. In the words of Professor Janine,

[...], we were really trained to go to the classroom, so this helped me a lot, I regret that these courses have been reduced or even ended, because they really formed us better. My Teaching course helped me a lot in relation to this evaluation process, whereas the Pedagogy course did not [...] even because what we heard there was very unrealistic. [...] (2016).

In view of the position of this teacher, it seems to us that the initial training – technical – instilled in her the vision that the evaluation really is a practical, objective instrument, nothing more than tests, tests and assignments. The end result was what really made sense, as evidenced by Professor Karinne's statement:

The old yes. The summation yes. It was that sum. Evaluate what? The teacher used to say: the student has to know. We had to know, she didn't want to know if it was decorated or not, but it wasn't even decorated because it was perpetuated, we really learned. It was the one the teacher was bad at, because of

0.1 he left you! Then today you are... the boy needs 15, 16, 30! The direction says like this: You have to go! There's "X", there's "X" for disapproval. You have to round, and their rounding is up, if you round down... The student has no responsibility there, oh. You set the test day, the day you want comes, the time you want [...] At the time we studied, things were very different. We are adults. Everything was organized. We had the planning notebook, the test notebook, the didactics referring to each subject taught, material manufacturing, literacy, I don't even know how it works, nowadays. Because if you talk about the traditional method, back to back, everyone needs to crucify you. (KARINNE, 2016).

In her report, in addition to stating that the Technical Course in Teaching, which, in her view, prepared her to assess her and her students, the teacher came out in defense of traditional education, and also denounced the existence of a of grades accepted by the school. And that even if the student has not managed to reach the minimum performance according to the assessments to which he/she was submitted to be approved, he/she is pressured to approve this/e student. And even in his speech, a certain nostalgia emerged, as he recalled the Magisterium notebooks, the confection of materials and compared the boys of today with those of before, saying that "Unfortunately, boys today do not have any education, they do not come from home, does not come" (KARINNE, 2016). But she made some confusion, because when she says that we are all adults, she forgets that her students are children, at most pre-adolescents.

The Professor Vanessa was emphatic when she said: "That's how we learn to evaluate, yes! I believe so! Although the assessment is a very complex process", but she pondered that, when she arrived at school, even though she knew how to proceed with the assessment process "[...] the system forces you to do something else. Even if you don't

agree. [...] There is already that pressure you have to work, that is, it ends up being a little imposed". (VANESSA, 2016).

He highlighted that, even not agreeing, he ended up giving in and evaluating the group based on the impositions, which came to him after going through the direction, the supervision; in a cascading effect: "[...] Here, you have to obey, here you have to obey the rules that the supervisor gives you, the supervisor has to obey the rules that the director passes on to her, but the director is also obeying rules that come from the Department of Education. [...]" (VANESSA, 2016).

And although she believed that she had been prepared to carry out the evaluations with her classes, she obeyed, she obeyed, because she knew that the student had to be prepared in the same way as the entrance exam, which is different; she has no formative assessment in the entrance exam (VANESSA, 2016).

The Professor Sonia, on the other hand, stated that "[...] my Communication and Expression teacher who called Didactics, she is called Maria do Carmo, wow, she inspired me a lot, she taught us a lot in this part". And in addition to teaching, she learned "[...] she went to the classroom in practice." (SONIA, 2016).

And four other teachers did not take a clear stand. The initial training of two teachers was the Teaching Technician: Professor Clarice and Professor Fernanda; and two attended a Licentiate in Pedagogy, in their first training for teaching: teachers Hilda and Ana Clara.

The Professor: Clarice did not directly mention whether or not her initial training had prepared her to assess her and her students, but mentioned that "The academic study was very important, but the continuing education I participate in and the daily practice opens up new horizons and new directions for develop quality education. (CLARICE, 2016).

Professor Fernanda, in turn, stated that she took "[...] a wonderful teaching course!", and says that the course guided her in some things with regard to assessment, and not others, even because

[...] We go to the classroom and the reality is different; so you have to learn from day to day and from colleagues, don't you? And if you have a supervisor, a good supervisor who helps us and guides us... so, some things I took to the classroom with the Teaching course, and others I didn't. (FERNANDA, 2016).

The importance also attributed by this professor to collaboration between colleagues can be seen, as well as how important it is for the work team to be cohesive.

Regarding the speeches of professors who studied Pedagogy and did not take a clear position, both stated that in practice it was different from what was studied in the degree. For teacher Hilda, "In theory, yes, I had a lot; But in practice, it looks a little different! I think that, for me to have this security, I have support for me to evaluate, it was after some time of practice!" (2016).

Professor Ana Clara, when asked if she considered that her initial training prepared her to evaluate her students, deflected, answering the following:

Look, my graduation was great. I had a very good graduation, with very non-academic professors, but professors who had both the academic and the practical part and that was talked about a lot. So I had a teacher who was a school principal, I had a teacher who was a supervisor, you know? And teachers too! So they spoke, they taught. I feel privileged in that sense, because soon after I – I didn't graduate in Uberlândia, but I studied my specializations at UFU, which is a very theoretical university. So my specializations that I did at UFU, including psychopedagogy, were not so useful; How was my graduation? [...] then I took two other courses in other institutions that... (ANA CLARA, 2016).

From so many glances launched by the professors, with more than half saying they do not feel prepared to evaluate their students based on the initial training received, we understand that there is an important path to be defined and followed, therefore, we insist: if it is the evaluation that defines passing, failing, knowing and not knowing, there is no way that the courses that train teachers and professors continue to ignore that, in one way or another, they are not being able to guarantee a minimally satisfactory training for each teacher. who every year enters the teaching profession.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In view of the teachers' statements, it is evident that the training courses for teachers and teachers for the Initial Years of Elementary School are still unable to prepare students to conduct the evaluation processes when they work in teaching.

There is an evident flaw in the courses that train teachers/es, given that the importance and decision-making power given to assessments, must therefore, at the very least, ensure that students in teacher training courses were able to carry out assessments with the classes. under your responsibilities. How is it evaluated then? If there is no space, either in the degree or in courses at the high school level, for the systematic study of evaluation? What references do the courses provide for students? How do we rate? How to talk about formative, procedural assessment, if even in undergraduate courses, students are trained within the concept of grade? Here is our question.

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