



# University and Elementary School: collaborative research experiences in continuing teacher education

José Rubens Lima Jardimino\* and Margareth Diniz

Federal University of Ouro Preto, Rua do Seminário, s/n, Mariana, Minas Gerais, Brazil. \*Corresponding author. E-mail: jrjardilino@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT.** This article addresses the continuing teacher education through research, with the university-school relation as reference in the perspective of the education of the teacher researcher who is a subject of his/her professional teacher development (PTD). As methodology, a collaborative approach was used through narratives and conversation. The analysis units exposed in the text are excerpts of narratives of teachers who participated in two long-term research projects (2014-2017), performed with three universities in the network project: Observatory of Education – OBEDUC/Capes and the Observatory of Educational Research of the Inconfidentes Regions – OBERI, with support from the FAPEMIG. Among the many contributions collected in these researches, the possibility the teachers had to re-signify the PTD stands out, considering subjective processes fomented by new training practices, focused on aspects that contribute especially for the ideas of self-management of the school, of citizenship, of the rights of people to participate in the decision-making processes and in their own training process, from the logic of the implication of the subject.

**Keywords:** continuing education; teacher researcher; professional teacher development.

## Universidade e Escola Básica: experiências de pesquisa colaborativa na formação continuada de professores/as

**RESUMO.** Este artigo aborda a questão da formação continuada de professores por meio da pesquisa, tendo como referência a relação universidade-escola na perspectiva da formação do professor pesquisador e sujeito do seu desenvolvimento profissional docente (DPD). Utilizou-se como metodologia a abordagem colaborativa por meio de narrativas e conversação. As unidades de análise expostas no texto são excertos de narrativas de professores participantes de duas pesquisas de longa duração (2014-2017), realizadas com três universidades no projeto em rede *Observatório da Educação* – OBEDUC/Capes e Observatório da Pesquisa Educacional da Região dos Inconfidentes – OBERI, com apoio da FAPEMIG. Dentre os vários aportes colhidos nas pesquisas, destacou-se a possibilidade dos docentes ressignificarem o DPD, considerando os processos subjetivos, fomentados por novas práticas de formação, com atenção para aspectos que contribuam especialmente para as ideias de autogestão da escola, de cidadania, dos direitos das pessoas participarem dos processos de decisão e de seu próprio processo de formação, a partir da lógica da implicação do sujeito.

**Palavras-chave:** formação continuada; professor pesquisador; desenvolvimento profissional docente.

## Universidad y escuela básica: experiencias de investigación colaborativa en la educación continua de los maestros

**RESUMEN.** Este trabajo aborda el tema de la educación continua de maestros por medio de la investigación, teniendo como referencia la relación Universidad-Escuela en la perspectiva de la formación del Maestro-Investigador y sujeto de su Desarrollo Profesional Docente (DPD). Como metodología se utilizó el enfoque de la colaboración a través de narrativas y conversaciones. Las unidades de análisis expuestas en el texto son extractos de las narrativas de maestros que participaron en dos proyectos de investigación a largo plazo (2014-2017), llevados a cabo en uno proyecto de red con tres universidades brasileñas: el Observatorio de Educación - OBEDUC/Capes, y el Observatorio de la Investigación Educativa de la región de los Inconfidentes, contó con apoyo de Fapemig. Entre las diversas contribuciones recogidas en la investigación, se destacó la posibilidad de que los docentes volvieran a significar su DPD, considerando los procesos subjetivos, fomentados por nuevas prácticas de capacitación con atención a

aspectos que contribuyen especialmente a las ideas de autogestión de la escuela, ciudadanía, los derechos de las personas a participar de los procesos de decisión y de su propio proceso de formación, desde la lógica de la implicación del sujeto.

**Palabras-clave:** educación continua; maestro-investigador; desarrollo profesional de docentes.

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## Introduction

The discussion on the education of the teacher researcher requires from the university researcher a critical and reflective position, in order to question themselves and to question fixed knowledge.

This study will address a reflection on the relationship between the university and the elementary school, and the consequences it creates, highlighting the place of research in teacher training. The research, which is organized collaboratively, is important both for the professional teacher development and for the questioning of the position of the university professor in the overvaluation of their academic knowledge, which could reinforce the hierarchical relationships between the university researcher and the elementary school researcher. Aiming to deconstruct this perspective, the report of one of the elementary school teachers as a researcher will serve as a reference to assess such endeavor.

We will discuss the topic of construction of training of university and elementary school researchers, through two experiences: the research performed in the network project Observatory of Education – OBEDUC/Capes and the research conducted in the Observatory of Educational Research of the Inconfidentes Region – OBERI, approved by notice 07 – Capes/Fapemig (2013-2015). We will discuss the research data on the elementary school teachers in the Inconfidentes Region. For the analysis, qualitative methodologies were used, from two approaches that we have experimented in the respective study and research groups Formação e Profissão Docente (FOPROFI – *Teacher Training and Profession*), and Caleidoscópico, which are: narratives and conversations.

The text is organized around three points: 1 – university and elementary school: approximations and distances; 2 – Report on the Observatory of Educational Research of the Inconfidentes Region *locus* of the researches addressed here; 3 – Demonstration of the research data on the elementary school teachers in the region, contemplating the profile of the educators of the region; the training and career trajectory and a discussion on teacher malaise. Finally, we will discuss the final considerations, reinforcing the need for articulation between university and elementary school for an effective continuing education.

## University and Elementary School: approximations and distances

The discussion on the relations between university and elementary school has been a much-debated topic in the field of education. In a first moment, in the 1980s, the researches conducted in Brazilian graduation, despite having the public school as a topic, were far from the reality of the so-called “school floor”. It was a recurring theme in the meetings of teachers and unions, in which it was reported that researchers used the school only as a laboratory to collect research data, without ever returning to the school unit, to the municipal and state network to collaborate with the dramas that the school experienced, whether in the discussion of teaching and learning, in the curriculum and public policies directed to the school, or in the training of professionals for this institution. It was and, to some extent, still is a recurrent speech that the university does not prepare the teacher to the reality of schools.

The critique to the role of the university in the professional training and in their relationship with society is not new. Anísio Teixeira formulated it when discussing the first University Reform in Brazil, pointing to its arrival as a delay in Brazilian life, and that is not possible to reformulate it without changing the knowledge that it will produce and pass on. That is, Teixeira is aware that the university has to talk with the society, the school in particular, *locus* of the formation of the Republican citizen.

The nation was delayed until the first quarter of the twentieth century, to begin in the effort to transform higher education into the process of becoming aware of the national culture in formation and of acquiring new methods of thinking and knowing. Only in 1922, we had the first draft of a university, based on experimental science to solve development problems. The new science was no longer a science of speculation or exegesis and interpretation of the knowledge existing in the past, but a creative and extraordinarily fertile science in

technological conceptions for the solution of material problems related to power and human enrichment. This was the project that Brazil had in the first quarter of the twentieth century. “The new teaching was a teaching of discoveries, requiring an attitude of mind and methods of methods of intellectual work radically different from those that dominated in the past” (Teixeira, 1988, p. 98).

The Brazilian university and its contribution for public school were a topic since the middle of the last century. Among many who studied the issue, the almost militant fight of Anísio Teixeira stands out.

He was one of the educators who were involved in the true crusade for the construction of public school systems, expressed in the movement of the state reforms of the 1920s and 1930s, aware that the traditional educational model of an education directed at elites had no requisites to meet the new social and political requirements of the transformations that had been occurring in the country (Brandão, 2012, p. 138).

Teixeira thought the university as an institution that forms the national culture (Teixeira, 1988, p. 97), and had as allies many others who thought the university as an interlocutor of a culture which, consequently, should be conceived within the formation of citizens in a common, public, secular, free and mandatory school for all citizens.

To Teixeira (1988), the university would be in constant dialogue with the elementary school, and, not by chance, he was involved in a struggle on the formation of the magisterium *A Escola de Educação* (The School of Education)<sup>1</sup>.

In a very short time, given the limitation of this space, which requires that we make a leap into the relations between these two educational houses — the elementary school and the university. By being encastled in its knowledges, the university took a turn that made it look at the school from the outside. His analysis, as Brandão (2002) signals, was conducted from theories that fed the field.

We think the public school in light of deschooling (Illich, 1976), of social reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1975), of the ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1974), of the dualist and capitalist school (Baudelot & Establet, 1975; Bowles & Gintis, 1977) and of the unitarian school of Gramscian inspiration.

After this external look, with implementation and consolidation of Brazilian graduation, the university lands in the school via research, rushed by the new methodologies of Social Sciences, particularly the Action-Research. The school unit makes a new *terroir*<sup>2</sup>, from which a new explanation on Education emerges.

Despite this proximity, the university had not yet “approached” the school. It was only within the school to produce a knowledge external to it. A knowledge that would not transform culture because it “was not made” from within “and did not count” with the support of its own actors, namely: teachers.

It was from the 1990s, excited by the historical criticism to the university model and the reconquest of democracy, after a long period of silence, that the researches in the field of education approached the school with another type of collaboration. There are several methodological approaches that allow this lurch, but, above all, are the new conceptions of teacher training that will allow the approximation and right identity posture of the education intellectuals who are in the university with the elementary school teachers, highlighting the reflective and critical-reflective conceptions in the formation of the teacher as a researcher. Both will allow that the two institutions meet themselves in a collaborative project of knowledge construction and that they are constituted as producers and creators of culture, as Teixeira, mentioned above, aimed.

These two training conceptions that went into circulation in Brazil at the end of the last century, were, throughout these thirty years, educating subjects through and in research, so that elementary school teachers could take ownership of the research categories. And, as they are inserted in the projects of the university, they should become researchers of their own professional practice. By conducting investigations on their own practices, the educators participate actively of the process of building knowledge that is theirs and about them, and, thus, as Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1993 apud Catani, 1997, p. 31) state “[...] from their experiences, they cease to be mere containers of the knowledge produced by university researchers to become architects of study and generators of knowledge”. It is in this sense that the teachers are called teacher researchers (Catani, 1997).

<sup>1</sup> Escola de Educação was the title of the article published for the first time in the Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos, n. 114, in 1969.

<sup>2</sup> We are using, with poetic license, this term from French without translation (which means the more intimate relation between the soil and the particular climate that conceives the birth of a type of grape, which freely expresses its quality, typicality and “identity” in a great wine, and no one can explain why), to analogously express what meant the term elementary school teachers called “school floor”.

The first ideas on the reflective and researcher teacher emerged in early 1990s and take over the educational scenario in the country. In the midst of the education reforms of this period, a training model was sought that could overcome the traditional education of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and technicality, which was its successor in the second half of the century. The expression “reflective teacher”<sup>3</sup> appears in the Law of Guidelines and Bases (LDB – Lei de Diretrizes e Bases) in plans, educational policies and, especially, in Brazilian postgraduate researches. From the Massachusetts Institute of Technology – MIT, where Donald Schön formulated it through the practice of professionals of other fields, but, above all, guided by the philosophical educational concept of Dewey, as stated by Pimenta and Ghedin (2002).

It was proposed that professionals should no longer be trained in the mold of a normative curriculum that first presents the science, then its application and finally an internship that assumes the students’ application of technical-professional knowledge. The professional thus trained is unable to answer the situations that emerge in the professional daily life, because these surpass the knowledge elaborated by science and technical responses, not yet elaborated, that it could offer. Thus, valuing the experience and reflection in the experience, “[...] Schön proposes a professional training based on a practical epistemology, that is, the valuation of the professional practice as a moment of knowledge construction, by reflecting, analyzing and problematizing it” (Pimenta & Ghedin, 2002, p. 19).

The official documents of the teacher education and training policy, especially, started to be guided by this approach (model). The book by António Nóvoa (1992), *Os professores e sua formação*, has a role to disseminate these reflections in Brazil, becoming a privileged interlocutor not only of the academy, through scientific associations and societies, but, above all, of the management bodies of the educational policy (Ministry of Education and Culture – MEC, CAPES, National Council for Scientific and Technological Development – CNPQ).

On the fruitful and controversial discussion of the training of the teacher researcher, we agree that, in a way, it is closely linked to the previous perspective, that is, to discuss the training of the teacher researcher is, in fact, to discuss the critical-reflective teacher. “The research practice of the elementary school teachers, in the figure of the teacher researcher, is, or should be, a fundamental instrument for a reflective practice and vice versa” (Lüdke, 2001, p. 37).

Zeichner (1998) acknowledges that the debate on the reflective teacher brought many advances in the discussion on formation, however, it was necessary to overcome the dichotomy between the teacher researcher and the academic researcher. For the author, in synchrony with other researchers (Kincheloe, 1991; Carr & Kemmis, 1987), the involvement of the university researchers in the movements of ‘the teacher as researcher’ is centered in the reproduction of what the academic literature itself says on the research performed by teachers, or in the sense of producing aid materials to the work of the professor (manuals and textbooks for teachers on how to research), but it uses little the knowledge produced by the teachers themselves in their teaching activities. In fact, what Zeichner (1998) criticizes it that the academic researcher does not use the research-action process to study their own practices.

In this aspect, Zeichner (1998, p. 223) assumes that, to overcome the established and closely guarded dichotomy as a positivist zeal regarding research, we have to turn to Collaborative Research, since, for that author, it is an “[...] important way to overcome the division between academics and teachers, but it is not any collaborative research that does this”.

Based on and guided by these conceptions, we developed, over these five years in the research groups that discuss teacher training, a research with collaborative initiative with the teachers of the municipal network of the Inconfidentes Region. The various projects funded by the financing agencies (CAPES, CNPQ and FAPEMIG), especially the ones allocated in the Foprofi and Caleidoscópio<sup>4</sup>, have used collaborative research with diversity of methodological modalities and, in this article specifically, the conversations and narratives as fundamental point of the training of the teacher and of the teacher researcher of elementary school in a critical-reflective conception. Next, we will introduce some elements of the research of the Observatory of Educational Research of the Inconfidentes Region.

<sup>3</sup> For a systematic critique on these conceptions and their repercussion in Brazilian education, see *Professor Reflexivo: construindo uma crítica* by Pimenta (2002).

<sup>4</sup> Caleidoscópio research group, which discusses training and diversity; Teacher Training and Profession Research Group (FOPROFI – Formação e Profissão Docente), which discusses the teacher training and professional development, both from the Federal University of Ouro Preto.

## Observatory of Educational Research of the Inconfidentes Region

We understand that the course of Pedagogy and the Postgraduate program in Education of the Federal University of Ouro Preto (UFOP), articulately, are important academic spaces in the pursuit of integration between theoretical and methodological reflection on the educational practice and the daily life of school relations, having the educational research as support. In this sense, we created the Observatório Educacional da Região dos Inconfidentes (OBERI – *Educational Observatory of the Inconfidentes Region*), aiming to systematize information along with the educational actors of the Inconfidentes Region, to provide subsidies to the debate and to the intervention capacity of these actors in the discussion and implementation of educational public policies in the municipalities covered by it.

The OBERI is translated in the unfolding of our practices of research, teaching and extension in the educational institutions of public elementary schools in the cities and districts of Ouro Preto, Mariana, Itabirito, Acaiaca and Diogo de Vasconcelos. This microregion encompasses an estimated population of 180,000 people, with a school public of, approximately, 5,000 education professionals and 52,000 students. These initial data summon us to propose a diagnosis of the elementary school problems, as well as the investigation of practices that may aid in the diagnosed problems, organizing, systematizing and disseminating information and the results of the researches performed in the axes of the Observatory based on the collaborative relation with the elementary school of the region (Report of the Observatory..., 2015).

When developing a training study in this region, we felt the need to know and systematize disperse data on the reality and the school institutions that compose it, as well as the elements of training, profession and teaching condition, of the diversity and inclusion around issues of social class, gender, sexuality, ethnical-racial and of age group, of the evaluation processes that involve teachers and students and the educational practices developed to meet the specificities of the students of the region.

In this way, the development of the first research performed by the Observatory, financed by the FAPEMIG<sup>5</sup>, was structured from three axes: educational policies, initial and continuing teacher training, condition and professionalization of teachers and history of regional education, systematizing educational data from the municipalities through six subprojects<sup>6</sup> linked to the research groups indicated above. The research sought to answer the questions related to the educational daily life in the microregion, highlighting the profile of the subjects, practices, educational levels and other related issues. As methodological paths, the research was conducted from quantitative and qualitative data.

### What the research data on elementary school teachers in the region reveal

The educational realities of the microregion of Ouro Preto point the following issues: 1. The difficulties and necessities of the target population, who have sought in other Higher Education institutions, and not the UFOP, studies and advisories to solve the issues of the region; 2. The need to contribute, while university, with the training of the professional of education in all teaching levels; 3. The importance of basic education and the need to overcome the causes of school failure; 4. The strengthening of research in the educational field that will benefit all the existing degrees in the UFOP; 5. The formation of a teacher researcher in the ways of humanizing educational practices that begin to analyze and actively incorporate the products of the reflective process; 6. The formation of a teacher researcher with possibility of pedagogical intervention in the social practices outside the school and who knows, for this purpose, how to analyze the historical and social conditions of each context, integrating in the collective questions of humanity. In addition to being a reader and consumer of culture, they should be able to work within the principles of the participatory planning, as well as to lead and manage educational projects and processes; 7. The training of a professional in the area of education, mediator of knowledge in the teaching-learning process, who seeks to develop a relation with knowledge as a subject.

Considering these questions that emerge from the educational demands of the region, we felt the need to synthesize the data on the reality of the teachers of the Inconfidentes Region. The referred data were organized from three axes: profile, training trajectory, career trajectory and teacher malaise.

<sup>5</sup> Notice CAPES-FAPEMIG 07 2013-2015.

<sup>6</sup> Profile of the teachers in the Inconfidentes Region; Being an educator in contemporaneity: the challenges of the school practice in the narratives of educators; Beginner teachers in youth and adult education: social representations and the classroom; Teachers of early childhood education: charms and disenchantment at the beginning of teaching; The Juvenilization of Youth and Adult Education: understanding the phenomenon and seeking alternatives for education in this modality; The malaise of teaching and the problems of children and adolescents.

In order to know who the teachers of the Inconfidentes Region are, 600 questionnaires were distributed, with 33% return, totaling 200 collaborators. The questions addressed the socioeconomic and cultural profile, in addition to the formation and career trajectory. We found that 97% of the teachers are women and 66% are married. Of these, 82% are in the age group of 30-49 years. Most, 43%, declared themselves brown. On the socioeconomic data, the incomes of the teachers of the region show that the subjects (25%) receive **two to three minimum wages, and 21% earn from three to four minimum wages per person in their household. We verified in** the research that 76% of the teachers work in the elementary school and 15% in early childhood education.

From these general data, the teaching profile in the region, in relation to sex, agrees with the data from other researches on the feminization of the teaching profession. The research conducted by Oliveira and Vieira (2010) shows that, in Minas Gerais, 86% of the teachers are women. According to Gatti & Barreto (2009), women are responsible for 77% of the jobs in education, considering all the levels of education, although the proportion between men and women changes according to the schooling level of the teachers and the level of education in which they perform. Women have a greater prevalence in early childhood education and lower prevalence in high school (Gatti & Barreto, 2009).

Regarding the age group of most female teachers, it was observed that they are in a period in which teachers are entering the so-called intermediate phase of their career, according to Huberman (1995). Moreover, in this age group there is, predominantly, a worsening of the physical and mental health conditions of women (Diniz, 2001).

Regarding race, the data shown point to the racial non-identification, since 43% declares themselves brown in a context historically marked by afro-descendance, in which the slavery past of Ouro Preto and other cities of the region have an impact on the composition of the color/race of the population, although only 15% declare themselves black.

The socioeconomic data indicates the same trend mentioned in other researches (Oliveira & Vieira, 2010) that state that most educators are in the salary range of up to three minimum wages.

In relation to the training trajectory, it was verified that most of the teachers in the Inconfidentes Region completed elementary school in the public network (72%). The initial formation in higher education is balanced between the public (43%) and private (42%) network, and most studied Pedagogy.

Although it is consensus in literature that students from public schools constitute the group that occupies most of the seats of private universities, the results from the research point to the access of these teachers to the public institutions in the region, especially the UFOP.

We have noticed that, over the last years, the number of teachers with postgraduate degree has grown in Brazil. Gatti and Barreto (2009) point to the growth of the quantity of teachers that resort to varied courses, whether a face-to-face or a distance course, or both. In this research, we confirmed the national tendency: 60% of the educators have a postgraduate degree, and the most sought-after course (49%) was Psychopedagogy. We also verified that most of them graduated in distance courses.

Regarding the time they had practiced teaching, we observed that, generally, the average time in which the studied subjects had worked with Education is from 16 to 20 years, representing 29% of the total. To Huberman (1995), the moment that these educators are in their career shows a passage between the stabilization phase to an experimentation stage regarding their professional path, reflection on the uncertainties and the possible changes in their professional trajectory.

In this research, we sought to know the institutions that offered actions of continuing teacher education. Our observation is that most of these actions is still offered by the Municipal Departments of Education; we also identified that the number of teachers who participate of training actions organized by universities is quite small, confirming a certain distance between initial and continuing education, therefore, between university and school.

On teacher malaise, we used the Conversation methodology, which guided us in the analysis qualitatively. We listened to the statements that referred to the insistence and repetition of a generalized impotence of female teachers, which caused us to return to the gender category in its interface with the feminine.

Almost all the statements point to the difficulty in dealing with the student, with situations that are not recurrent, that are 'abnormal' within the sociocultural logic preestablished by the school. But the emphasis in the teachers' speeches was due to what concerns the feminine, which, in turn, affects the body of the

female teachers. Based on the writings of Lacan (1992a), thinking as Miller (2003), it was possible to reflect on these dilemmas. An understanding and intervention possibility of this and in this feminine that appears, hiding in the dissatisfaction that sickens and hampers female teachers in an attempt to erase the differences. We could think that such difficulties with differences go through difficulties with the difference of being a woman.

On the question proposed here regarding the feminine, in the psychoanalytical field, there is a difference between the feminine and the gender issue. From the point of view of the unconscious, Kehl (1996) says that the difference is minimal and depends on the inscription mode of the subjects, men and women, under the phallic order that organizes desire. Femininity and masculinity are distributed between men and women in different combinations, pointing the author to a sexuality that is of each individual. There is, Birman (2002) states, a psychical body that subverts the anatomical body. Psychoanalysis thinks sexuality as construction, a possibility to become a man or woman, consequence if a process of psychical elaboration from the complex of castration and the confrontation with culture.

At the same time, we should consider the ideas circulating around gender diversity, and it is important to mention the contributions of Butler (1998) from her gender (de)construction on the subversion of identity, and of Louro (2001), with her words that announce the Queer Theory and its effect on education. The author discusses the differences from a peculiar look, thinking beyond the subjectivity and from the social aspects that are dormant, in the understanding of the difference beyond diversity and its dilemmas. She indicates possible outputs when we think of the teaching practice and also of training, questioning the ineffectiveness of the current training models.

The intervention-research, in the study on the teacher malaise axis, adopted the device of conversation, based on the works by Freud and Lacan and on poststructuralist perspectives, in an approach that considers the division of the female teacher by desire, making her the subject within a social context. Opposed to universalization, psychoanalysis goes toward the singular position of a subject that is not only spoken of, but that can also speak.

Miranda (2010) conceives the Conversation as an extension of the 'free association' method by Freud, a fundamental technique of psychoanalysis. What one says, in a group, may touch the other and generate unprecedented perspectives. The construction of new knowledge, Miranda states, is what gives to the Conversation the possibility to intervene and cause changes, in addition to allowing material for analysis to be collected there. Speaking, Miller states (2002), implies opening the possibility of circumscribing the experience from what affects and not from what the other expects. To Miller (2003), what matters is not what the subject can say about themselves, in the sense that they give to their acts and desires, but what escapes them and is shown in the stumbling of their speech, in the 'hiance' between what is said and what is meant.

Professionals who lead conversations do not need to be psychoanalysts, they may have any profession, however, it is necessary that they are going through the 'word experience', someone who experienced and is sensible to the disagreement between what they say – enunciated – and what is meant (or what is said unintentionally) – enunciation. It is not enough to be someone well informed or benevolent, that 'gives the floor' to children and adolescents, or to teachers, but to support the points of non-knowing, of suspension or failure in the speech of those who come to the conversation.

In this proposal to listen female teachers, Conversations and narratives of life history, one connected to the other, since the Conversation, when it questions the teacher on her malaise in light of teaching, can disagree with the questions that refer to that which is proposed by the method of narratives. It is important to note that, in this way, they meet as a new possibility to listen from a perspective of the implication in the educational act and not of blaming, considering the subject, the subject of the unconscious. Diniz (2005) speaks of the possibility, from the psychoanalytical listening inserted in research/intervention, of penetrating in concrete and hidden things through elements little noticed or unnoticed, working with evidence and the so-called 'blind zones' also in the teacher training processes.

And what to do with the lack of space verified in schools to discuss, reflect and work subjectivity? How to consider going beyond theoretical knowledge and to think pedagogical proposals, considering the division of the involved subjects? Would it be possible to train educators to deal with the liquidity of the teaching and learning process? Would it be possible to teach without the subject being lost in the cement of the social and school floor? There is in us the insistent concern to think the teachers not only as reflective,

multipliers, but as mobilizers — of themselves, of others, of a process — with less paralysis and more mobilization of these subjects of social, historical, affective and also unconscious peculiarities. These were the reflections that we conducted in other encounters of conversation with female teachers from the Inconfidentes Region.

In Conversations, the bet is done in the possible displacement of the speeches of female teachers, by the bias of the feminine that emerges in education, thinking, in particular, of possible mechanisms to be invested, constructed and sought by themselves, in a way that female teachers can reposition in their practice, in their subjectivity, as well as in light of the differences that their students have. A positioning capable of reflecting on the teacher and learning process and on their professional teacher development (PTD), which may even soften complaints related to the low levels of education and to the teacher malaise. However, we must not forget that there is always a point in which the subject finds no answer both in their relationship with knowledge and in their lives, and, perhaps, the path of invention is necessary (Diniz, 2005).

### **The research in the Observatório de Educação Básica (OBEDUC – *Elementary Education Observatory*): between theory and practice**

This item shows some statements of teachers who have gone through a process of theoretical formation combined with the permanent discussion of their pedagogical practices, in order to make known, with narratives, the relations established collaboratively between university and public elementary school.

The subjects involved in the research revealed, in different ways, how their continuing education process within the project has been constituted. All indicate that the meeting with research and their respective performance in a research in which they land their experiences and teaching practices in the theoretical material and of the empiricism in which they are working, constitutes a privileged locus of formation. We will analyze some fragments of the narratives:

Continuing teacher education is necessary for every teacher. Participating in the Observatory of Education – OBEDUC is my second opportunity to discuss education in Brazil, the initial and continuing teacher education and their professional development. The importance of knowing one of the educational public policies aimed at the initial teacher education, the Programa Institucional de Bolsas de Iniciação à Docência (PIBID – *Institutional Program for Teaching Initiation Scholarships*), studying it renews my feelings and my fighting spirit in favor of equal and fair education for all, but without losing the awareness that another generation will harvest this transformation. After almost 20 years dedicated to teaching with a specialization course in Mathematics Education, I feel privileged to be part of the OBEDUC group, since the Observatory of Education provides us with readings, intense discussions, production of texts, debates and seminars on initial and continuing teacher education. Heated discussions reveal the anguishes and setbacks of teaching. Given this context, we see ourselves in the place of beginner teachers, just as at the beginning of our careers, when we didn't know how to act in the classroom, we perceive ourselves with the desire to be researchers, to continue our education. We look at our classrooms with the desire to transform them in real locus of the long-dreamed quality education (Beth, 2015, OBEDUC/UFOP).

Beth, a mathematics teacher, although she has participated in several courses in her professional life, even graduate courses, highlights that the research experience made her resize her gaze on the work she performs in the classroom. And this experience, sometimes, placed her in a place of a beginner teacher, that is, in the discovery of new directions for her professional development.

Another colleague, Mitiko, who collaborates with the research, also a mathematics teacher in the municipal network of Mariana, narrates her entry in research and indicated the continuing education process in a unique way. In fact, this is not an event in this research, but what we want to emphasize is continuing education through research in projects of collaboration between university and elementary education, as is happening in the Observatory of Education Program/CAPES.

It was almost a year ago that I went through a selective process for collaborating process in the project Professional Teaching Development and Pedagogical Innovation — an exploratory study on the PIBID contributions supported by the Education Observatory Program – OBEDUC. It was inserted in a completely different project, something new to me, a challenge. It's not just about seeking a project, the expectations are different now, the posture, the experience and the behavior after years of teaching would do me good. Well, I won't deny, but the first meeting didn't comprise anything. But, as the meeting went on, the reading of books of training teachers, and the awareness of the action and practice were the beginning of the elucidation of the dimension of



the project. 'The seminars are the strength of the project, the readings of theses, texts on the teaching profession are, at any time, triggered in a range of knowledge on the practice as a teacher that evidences the variety of theoretical deepening in the profession' (Mitiko, 2015, OBEDUC/UFOP).

Teacher Joel, also a teacher in the field of mathematics teaching, reports that, in the midst of so many experiences of continuing education, the participation as researcher has become a watershed in his performance in teaching and as mathematics 'educator'. Joel has been a teacher since he was an undergraduate student in Engineering in Minas Gerais, in the early 1980s, teaching mathematics in the state education network as an authorized teacher. He is a professor at the end of his career, but who, after having a contact with research, redefines his practice and his professional development as unique within the project.

Joining the OBEDUC gave me a very great expectation, I realized that I was an extremely practical teacher, but with little theoretical basis regarding educational studies. It was scary because I, who always mastered the classroom practice, suddenly was completely unprotected in front of a new knowledge, brought by reading and studying texts focused on continuing education and professional development. At first, when I saw the doctorates, masters and researcher students, I felt empty, but when they opened discussions where I could speak, I was comfortable. As Paulo Freire says, "There is no knowing more, nor knowing less, there are different knowledges" (1987, p. 68). I start to understand that, despite having the practice, it's with theory that you'll advance in knowledge. It gives you support, reason, confidence and even the right to disagree (Joel, 2015, OBEDUC/UFOP).

And he finishes demonstrating how the experience with research led him to resize his practice from the theory/practice binomial. That is, it indicates that research modifies the teaching practice, even if it does not have any flavor of 'Innovation', it is a resizing of a practice already experienced and, therefore, a transformation in the development of the pedagogical doing and of the continuing education for teaching.

The experience in the OBEDUC made me see that I need to know this other side, the academic, theoretical side, and that it is necessary to know how to ground our arguments in order to be heard. My practice, at first, is only mine, but in order to pass it on and share it, I need to write it, to theoretically ground it, because, alone, it is empty. Discussions in the OBEDUC make me think that the PIBID proposal should work continuously. It shouldn't be only a project in which only some participate, it should be for all students, inserted in the licentiate course program. My participation in this research materialized a thought that I had for a long time, that I don't want to be a mathematician, I always sought to become a mathematics educator. I have no doubt that this experience will help me, in the future, to be able to obtain a master's degree in mathematics education (Joel, 2015, OBEDUC/UFOP).

The analysis from the statement by Valdete, from Humanities, licentiate in the Letters course, active in the municipal network of Mariana, MG, help us to understand the place of research in elementary education. Valdete, an experienced teacher, according to Huberman's classification (1995) on career cycles, is also at the end of her trajectory as a teacher:

Over the years, more experienced in the teaching practice, I started to understand that my professional development was attached to my continued education, and that both happened in the relationships I established with my colleagues, with the students in the classroom, in the way I planned the classes and in so many other moments that I experience. After joining the OBEDUC program, in the research 'Professional Teaching Development and Pedagogical Innovation: exploratory on PIBID contributions' as collaborator, I have experienced, along with fellow elementary education teachers, the rich opportunity to develop reflective processes, either through the intense reading we performed, or through our participation in seminars, forums, congresses, among other formative moments in which we discuss the thematic proposed in the research. Until then, the possibility to be placed on the same level with undergraduates, graduates, doctorates and fellow elementary education teachers, to discuss such relevant issues on teacher training seemed distant. My way of thinking, being, acting and reacting was reviewed and rethought in this training process, many knowledges were added, other clarified and many others revisited. The appropriation of knowledge and the reflective processes have been instrumental in this process of my teaching career. Today I can understand more clearly the stages I've been, and still am going through (Valdete, 2015, OBEDUC/UFOP).

It is based on these assumptions that we emphasize the relevance of the teacher to reflect and re-signify their practice. However, we also understand that the reflective procedure is something subjective and that depends on a professional maturity, since "[...] nobody trains nobody, and training is, inevitably, a work of reflection on the pathways of life (Nóvoa & Finger, 1988, p. 116).

Throughout my teaching career, I've participated in many seminars, lectures, courses and other events aimed at education. I've acquired some of these experiences on my own will, and others were offered by education networks. Many of these courses, throughout my career, contributed little or not at all to my professional formation, since they didn't provide a critical reflexivity, which allowed the 'permanent (re)construction of a personal and professional identity', as Candau (1996) points out. Of course that, only at this point of my teaching career, I am clear about the fragility of this pseudo-formation that has been provided to us over the years. One of the causes of the lack of results of such courses might reside in the fact that their proponents don't consider the knowledges of the teacher (Vera, 2015, OBEDUC/UFOP).

In a critical positioning, this excerpt of Vera's narrative, who was always based on referential readings in the field, indicated that the continuing education courses in which she participated (Vera has 25 years of practice) do not consider, for numerous reasons, the knowledges and multiplicities of knowledges that teachers carry in their luggage. For this reason, the research gave her a place for critical reflexivity, as she calls, in order to provoke a unique professional development at the end of her career. Vera, in her long training path, accumulated discussions that reveal and constitute her as a very important collaborator researcher to the group. She shows how, in a posture of personal search, managed to develop professionally. However, she does not consider this the best way for continuing teacher training:

Studies show that, In Brazil, continuing teaching training features mainly two foci: one that focuses attention on the teacher subject in which there is personal development without exchanges between teachers, and without impact on school culture, and another aimed at the development of pedagogical teams, with a collaborative approach. In this perspective, the professional development only makes sense if it is able to trigger pertinent and necessary changes in schools to help them to meet more and better the needs of their clientele. It seems that continuing education as personal demand, despite offering professional development for the teacher, has a very little impact on school culture, since 'without a collaborative atmosphere in school, educators will hardly recognize training as a benefit both individual and collective' (Davis et al., 2011). That is why, more and more, teachers have felt the need to discuss the pedagogical doing from their praxis. According to the researchers conducted by Candau (1996), 'the daily life at school is a locus of formation'. The author states, however, that this formative daily life should identify the issues in the classroom, understand them and allow one to work them collectively. That the school is a privileged training locus seems a consensus between most of the teachers that I know, but, at least in our case, the professional context does not favor this formation (Vera, 2015, OBEDUC/UFOP).

She continues her statement pointing out that the research project in which she is involved in the last three years has made her more mature and provoked what she had been looking for in isolation. After pointing the correlations of the theoretical questions that she appropriated in this investigative field, she concludes:

All these reflections emerged especially from my participation in the research project 'Professional Teaching Development and Pedagogical Innovation: an exploratory study on the PIBID contributions' of the OBEDUC. From the contact with the suggested bibliography and the exchange of experiences among the members of the project, I notice an awareness on my initial training and on my practice and, no doubt, despite the reality shock, I am increasingly willing to invest in quality public education for all (Vera, 2015, OBEDUC/UFOP).

In the teachers' perception, the knowledge from professional experience or the knowledges on practice compose the bases of their competence and enable them to evaluate their initial training and their competence throughout their career. These knowledges, as Tardif (2012, p. 49) points out, are practical knowledges, integrated into the teaching practice, and form "[...] a set of representations from which teachers interpret, understand and guide their profession and daily practice in all its dimension".

Thus, we are, step by step, appropriating the elements of collaborative research in teacher training and, to some extent, through projects, attending, as university, the interpellation of public elementary school in the collaboration of the training of its actors. The OBERI is inserted in this conjuncture, seeking to aggregate the research programs that are in this tune and to stimulate the training of the teacher researcher. Being the university a training agency, it cannot avoid this political commitment with the public school.

With this commitment, we do not want to simplify the academic research in general of the Education Sciences, but, on the contrary, to strengthen it in dialogue with the training school of the subjects in the regional society of the Inconfidentes. Referring to the argument of Zeichner on the relation between university and school researchers, so that, in the conduct of educational research, there is a defense of a

greater interaction between the voices of teachers and academics, a more decisive role of the teachers in decision-making, a greater respect for teacher knowledge and of an ethical standard more accentuated by academics in their research relationships with teachers and schools.

We defend, therefore, an interaction between university and elementary school in the training process of men and women of this historical time that we have to experience, emphasizing that the fellow elementary school teachers, excited by the reflection process in the training spaces, found in the referred research a propitious ambience for their needs to rethink their professional teaching development.

## Final considerations

The first intention of this article was to show relevant aspects of long-term researchers (2014-2018), discussed throughout the article, and how they contributed to building a relationship between university researchers and the training of elementary school researchers, rupturing with the dichotomy between these education researchers (Zeichner, 1998) and their respective universes of professional exercise.

The Observatory proposed to be a locus of continuing collaboration between the university and elementary school in the municipalities of their surroundings. We can understand this partnership as a two-way street in which the academy and community are benefited. On one side, the community is consolidated in a field for scientific work developed in the university, which, in turn, gives back to the community the knowledges produced in it in the form of projects and actions that provide educational improvements. Thus, to systematize information along educational actors of the Inconfidentes Region may provide subsidies to the debate and to the intervention capacity of these actors in the discussion and implementation of local educational public policies.

We know that the research in its quantitative aspect, aiming to systematize general data of the region, as well as specific data of each involved district or municipality, is of paramount importance to guide us in the search for improved education in the Inconfidentes Region. But we also know about the insufficiency of only obtaining data, and we did not intervene in the daily reality of the schools in the region.

So, we defend, in the qualitative aspect, that both the narratives and conversations produce different effects in teacher training and, consequently, in their workplace, the school. The research, by the bias of the narratives, performed by the OBEDUC, does not intent an intervention *a priori* at the school. On the other hand, the research through conversations has as principle the intervention as possibility to re-signify, along with the teachers, the meaning of education, considering the subjective processes, fostering new practices of teacher training focused on aspects that contribute especially for the ideas of self-management of the school, citizenship, of people's right to participate in the decision making processes and in their own training process, from the logic of implication.

Faced with the image that we noticed in the research and the paths that are being taken by us, researchers, there is a challenge of questioning the ways, uses and results of research: what to do with this rich material? There is the possibility to reflect on and question teacher training and research, in order to constitute firmly the links between the several aspects that compose the educational field — subjective, political, cognitive, social, affective.

In this way, in this discussion, before seeing a disability and/or specific need that the subject has, or any specificities of gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, paralyzing the subject faced with learning, it is essential that we can perceive who is the subject that has such characteristic. And also consider, thus, their singularity, their history, in order to avoid perpetuating the dichotomic character between theory and practice, objectivity, subjectivity in the tireless defense of the universal character of the right to a quality education for all. That is, in the tireless defense of the recognition to difference, the bet on subjects in their uniqueness and the challenge of the construction of possible social ties.

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**José Rubens Lima Jardimino:** Graduated in Philosophy (1995) and Theology (1986), Master in Sciences of Religion from the Universidade Metodista de São Paulo (1993) and PhD in Social Sciences from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (1997). He conducted post-doctoral studies in History of Education in the Université Laval - Québec, Canadá, (2007); Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia - UPTC, Colombia (2008) and History in the Universidad Pablo de Olavide (2016/2017). He is a professor at the Federal University of Ouro Preto – UFOP, Department of Education – DEEDU, and was coordinator of the PPGE/UFOP (2012-2015). He is a visiting professor and researchers at the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia and at the Universidad Pablo de Olavide en Sevilla, Spain. In the field of scientific editorship, he was a founder of the Eccos journal Education and its editor until 2010; Editor of the journal Formação Docente – Revista Brasileira de Pesquisa sobre Formação de Professores (2014-current). He is a member of the Editorial Board of national and international journals in the field and of the publisher of the Federal University of Ouro Preto (UFOP). Member of the GT.08 in the Scientific Committee of the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education – ANPED (Vice-coordinator 2014-2015); he is a member of the Board of Directors of the Sociedad de Historia de la Educación Latinoamericana – SHELA, its chairman (2007-2011) and current vice-chairman (2016-2019); Coordinator of the Research Group FOPROFI/Cnpq/UFOP; vice-dierctor of the Research Group HISULA – Historia de la Universidad Latinoamericana, Colciencia/UPTC-Colombia. He was a fellow of the program Pesquisador Mineiro – PPM of the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de Minas Gerais – FAPEMIG (2015-2017); ad hoc member of the CA Education in CAPES; ad hoc international advisor of the Consejo Nacional de Acreditación – CNA – Ministry of Education – Colombia. He has experience in the field of Education, working in research and teaching in the following themes: History of Education, Teacher Training and Educational Policies.  
ORCID: <http://orcid.org.0000.0003.2394.9465>  
E-mail: [jrjardilino@gmail.com](mailto:jrjardilino@gmail.com)

**Margareth Diniz:** Graduated from the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais, Master and Doctorate in Education from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Psychoanalyst, Associate Professor of Psychology at the UFOP, Coordinator of the Observatory of Educational Research CAPES/FAPEMIG and Leader of the research group Caleidoscópico/UFOP/CNPQ. Coordinator of the Research/Extension Program Caleidoscópico. She also participated in the research groups on training and teaching condition – PRODUC-UFMG and in the Laboratório de Estudos e Pesquisas Psicanalíticas e Educacionais sobre a Infância Seção Minas (LEPSI-MG). Member of the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education (ANPEd) in GT 8 – Teacher training. She researches themes of the field of Psychoanalysis-Education, especially related to subjectivity, the inclusion of people with specific needs, to gender and sexual diversity and to difference. She seeks to question teacher training and the inclusive educational practices from the subjectivity of the researcher, trainer and of the teacher, using the clinical method and the cinema as training device. Considering education as relational field, she investigates the educational relation teacher-student, teacher illness and malaise, especially female teachers. She investigates the relation with knowledge and with the difference in children and adolescents.  
ORCID. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6852-5389>  
E-mail: [dinizmargareth@gmail.com](mailto:dinizmargareth@gmail.com)

**NOTE:**

The authors were responsible for the conception, data analysis and interpretation; writing and critical review of the manuscript, and also the approval of the final version to be published.